

Somalis have been leaving their country for the last fifteen years, fleeing civil war, difficult economic conditions, drought and famine, and now constitute one of the largest diasporas in the world.

Organized in the framework of collaboration between UNHCR and different countries, this research focuses on the secondary movements of Somali refugees. It was carried out as a multi-sited project in the following countries: Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, the Netherlands, South Africa, Switzerland and Yemen.

The report provides a detailed insight into the movements of Somali refugees that is, their trajectories, the different stages in their migration history and their underlying motivations. It also gives a comparative overview of different protection regimes and practices.

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*The Path of  
Somali Refugees into Exile*  
*A Comparative Analysis of Secondary Movements  
and Policy Responses*



*Joëlle Moret, Simone Baglioni, Denise Efionayi-Mäder*

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Picture caption : Home for Somali family, edge of Kebribeyah Camp  
(Ethiopian/Somali border)

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## Foreword

On the initiative of the Governments of Switzerland and South Africa which acted as facilitators of the strand dealing with irregular secondary movements of refugees and asylum-seekers within the framework of the UNHCR Convention Plus Initiative<sup>1</sup>, the Swiss Forum for Migration and Population Studies (SFM) was commissioned in 2004 to coordinate an important study to obtain a better understanding of irregular secondary movements. The longer-term aim of the co-facilitators was to be in a better position to address the causes of such movements, amongst other things by clarifying the roles and responsibilities of states towards asylum-seekers and refugees through a caseload-specific study. To obtain information on different aspects of the phenomenon, a combination of different methods and angles of approach was adopted, targeting the populations concerned, governments, UN officials and key informants from communities as well as NGO’s. As one of the largest and most widely scattered diasporas, the Somali community was of particular interest in this context. A group of States (core group) established in the context of the strand on irregular secondary movements agreed to multi-sited research in the following countries: Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, the Netherlands, South Africa, Switzerland and Yemen. The study was financed by Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland.

The present report sets out the overall findings of the study, based on the analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data collected in the eight countries surveyed. The individual country reports are available on the website of the SFM. We hope that a better understanding of the motivations and conditions leading to irregular secondary movements will contribute to a well-informed discussion on this phenomenon and avoid policies being based on assumptions.

## Acknowledgements

Throughout the project, the research team received tremendous assistance and information from individuals. We would like to take this opportunity to thank them for supporting the project, facilitating contacts, and providing helpful suggestions about the content and analysis of the study.

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<sup>1</sup> Convention Plus is an international effort initiated and coordinated by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, which aims at improving refugees protection and finding durable solutions for refugees worldwide through multilateral co-operation in a spirit of solidarity and burden and responsibility sharing.

We are particularly grateful to those who initiated and supported this ambitious research project, namely the Governments of Switzerland and South Africa and the Convention Plus Unit of United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). A special word of thanks to Anne-Grethe Nielsen, Michel Morf, Tania Dussey-Cavassini, Andrea Binder-Oser and Nathalie Goetschi (Switzerland), Laura Joyce (South Africa), Jean-François Durieux, Vincent Cochetel, Carina Van Eck and José Riera (UNHCR), for their trust, support, and constructive remarks during the process. We are also indebted to the Governments of Denmark, Norway, the Netherlands, Sweden and Switzerland who provided the financial assistance for the project.

We wish to thank the researchers who carried out the fieldwork and wrote the country reports: Mulki Al-Sharmani (Egypt), Daniela Da Rugna (Ethiopia), Nathalie Gomez (Kenya), Maggy Grabundzija (Yemen), Farrah Hussein (Djibouti), Kathryn Hoeflich, Hussein Solomon and Gerrie Swart (South Africa) and Carina Van Eck (Netherlands). They all did outstanding work, despite the limited timeframe for completing it. We would also like to acknowledge and express our gratitude to the assistant researchers and to all the intermediaries and translators whose help has made this project possible.

Thank you to the members of the Scientific Advisory Board: Jeff Crisp, Diane Goodman, Walter Kälin, and Rodreck Mupedziswa. Their encouragement and guidance has been welcomed and appreciated at all stages of the research.

We extend a collective thank you to all the countless others who contributed to the success of this project in one way or another – whether in the preparatory stages, the fieldwork or during the final stages of the report; to Alberto Achermann for the legal proof-reading of the final text and Farrah Hussein and Joan Reilly for revising the language. A former abridged version of the text was also assessed by José Riera, Betsy Greve and Kirsi Vaatamoinen (UNHCR).

Last but not least, we extend our greatest appreciation to all the Somali refugees in all eight countries for agreeing to share their narratives and experiences – often by revisiting complex and emotionally sensitive memories – which had been accrued over decades. We made a commitment to disseminate their experiences, realities and aspirations and we are pleased to have achieved this objective. We sincerely hope that this research will have a positive impact in improving their social conditions, irrespective of their location. We thank the government officials, UNHCR staff, community leaders, experts, and NGO representatives for sharing their time, advice and expertise.

Denise Efonayi-Mäder (project leader), Joëlle Moret and Simone Baglioni

## List of abbreviations

AMDA	Asian Medical Doctors' Association
ARRA	Agency of Refugees and Returnees Affaires (Ethiopia)
EHCR	European Court of Human Rights
FOM	Federal Office for Migration (Switzerland)
HQ	Headquarters
IO	International organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
ISM	Irregular Secondary Movement
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
OAU	Organization of African Unity
ONARS	Office of National Assistance for Refugees and Disaster Prevention (Djibouti)
RSD	Refugee Status Determination
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
WPF	World Food Programme

## Executive summary

The purpose of this research on "irregular secondary movements", conducted within the framework of the UNHCR's Convention Plus Initiative, is to provide a better understanding of the movements of Somali refugees and asylum-seekers, i.e. their trajectories, diverse stages in migration history and the underlying causes or motivations, and to elucidate states' responses to these situations.

The findings are based on eight case studies carried out in Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, the Netherlands, South Africa, Switzerland and Yemen. Extensive fieldwork was carried out in every country with a total sample of 814 refugee respondents and approximately 100 diverse experts and community leaders.

At the state and policy levels in all countries examined, there is evidence of a shift towards a more restrictive admission policy with regard to refugees and asylum-seekers. Somalia's four neighbouring countries have hosted a disproportionate share of the refugee population, especially at the height of the influxes (beginning in 1989), but are now, for myriad reasons, less inclined to accept new refugees or enable them to integrate. All countries in the region have high refugee recognition rates, but there are serious gaps between policy and practice which deprive the refugee population of the rights to which they are entitled (in terms of social assistance, employment and education notably). Most governments in the South are implicitly opposed to local integration, fearing that generous asylum policies will strain meagre resources and act as pull factors for increased refugee intake. Moreover, European and other industrialized countries have become less willing to accept new refugees and many have imposed drastic measures to safeguard their economies through increased border security and policy pressures to implement region-based solutions.

In spite of many differences among the countries surveyed (in terms of national refugee laws and institutional frameworks), there were emerging parallel trends in all countries which induced onward movements of refugees.

In terms of refugee movement strategies, in-depth analysis clearly reveals that the main reason motivating refugees to undertake secondary movements is linked to the lack of a legal status conferring protection. In many countries, access to registration is problematic and documentation is often non-existent, inadequate or unrecognised by the host states. Appropriate registration and documentation are not only essential prerequisites for protection, but they also provide identification which is critical in gaining access to employment, education and other services available to the refugees in their new society, including durable solutions. Identification acts as proof of legal status which

is equally critical in protecting refugees and asylum-seekers against police harassment, arbitrary detention or possible refoulement. The lack of these rights or privileges becomes a major contributing factor in the movement of refugees.

The study reveals that refugees in Somalia's neighbouring countries tend to avoid camps or leave them after some time. The causes for such movements are two-fold: (i) in many instances, refugees have a difficult time accessing the refugee institutions or UNHCR office in order to register their claim; and, (ii) refugees are deterred from camp living simply because conditions are extremely inhospitable. Factors such as harsh living conditions in camps (inadequate and constantly reduced food and water rations, lack of adequate health services, etc.), security concerns, lack of opportunities for self-reliance, are important motives causing them to opt for urban life, even though this does not confer any legal status granting protection. It is worth noting that movements from camps to cities, rather than being seen as stepping stones to international secondary movements (though they may be that in some cases), constitute an alternative to such movements.

In most cases examined, secondary movements are motivated by the search for legal and socio-economic security and can be viewed as collective coping strategies aiming at diversifying both the risks related to refugee situations and the resources of the extended family. In this sense, relatives sometimes deliberately choose to live in different countries or different settings (i.e. refugee camps and cities) in order to deal with legal insecurity as well as with economic and social vulnerability under conditions which are largely unpredictable and beyond the control of the refugees. Furthermore, while social networks in the region and abroad most often play an important role in the financing and the organisation of the movement, smugglers are equally necessary intermediaries when it comes to reaching faraway destinations.

The analyses of the trajectory taken by the interviewees revealed a tendency for the journeys to become shorter and more direct over time. While most of the refugees who left at the beginning of the 1990s initially fled to a neighbouring country and planned their further movement from the host country, it appears that refugees who left more recently (especially after 2000) reached their final destination much faster and with fewer transits.

In terms of refugees' aspirations, the study reveals that a majority of interviewees wish to leave the African continent, whereas many of those already in Europe wish to move to another industrialized country. Despite wishful thinking, the findings also show that only a small fraction of the population has concrete plans or the means to do so in the immediate future. At the same time, a significant proportion of interviewees are simply not able to imagine any future plans, or else wish to return to Somalia. With the

absence of mechanisms for integration, secondary movement remains an indispensable option for those able to secure the means to leave the host country and region.

Although irregular secondary movements are of particular concern to the international community, it is worth noting that this form of movement plays only a minor role in the overall strategies employed by the Somali refugee population. Indeed, with the increased access to information technology and human resources, smugglers are able to transport refugees and asylum-seekers more efficiently and with fewer transit settlements than ever before. Though entry into European countries mostly occurs through illegal channels, increased resources and efficient planning have in many cases eliminated the need for multiple settlements which make up the bulk of irregular secondary movement.

The findings in this study underscore the inextricable connection between legal status, which confers protection and socio-economic subsistence, and secondary movement of refugees. It is fair to assume that the longer refugees and asylum-seekers remain without appropriate legal status, and its entitlements, the higher the likelihood that this population will devise alternative means to escape their situation as best they can. That being so, this study draws attention to the need for host countries to become actively involved in (re)defining and implementing refugee policy, in collaboration with UNHCR and the international community. It is clear that the challenges posed by secondary movements can only be adequately resolved through collaboration and partnership between concerned actors: host states, refugees, humanitarian organizations and the international community.

“My father was already in Switzerland. I arrived a year later with my mother and my youngest brother. My mother suffered a lot because she had to leave her five other children behind; they stayed in Somalia with my aunt. I felt responsible for that, because she did it for me, to prevent me from being raped. I know it was hard for her. Then my aunt said she could not look after the five kids, on top of her own. That is when we sent my sister (the eldest after me) to another aunt, in Saudi Arabia. She was 12 and my mother had the same fears that she had had for me. She stayed there for four years, helping in my aunt’s house. But it wasn’t a life, she couldn’t go out, she was living there illegally. My aunt said that she didn’t have any future there, that she was in prison, so she and her husband helped us pay someone to bring her here. She has been in Switzerland for eleven months now. My three brothers and my sister went to Ethiopia when my mother could pay for them to go there. They live in an apartment with other people in Addis Ababa. But they had to move often because the neighbours knew that they had family in Europe and thought they were rich; they used blackmail on them. So we saved enough to pay the trip for my little sister. I worked a lot, on top of my apprenticeship. We paid 4500 dollars cash. She has been here for five months now. Before that, we made a request to the authorities in Berne to be allowed to bring them all to Switzerland. We just received the news that my two little brothers will be allowed to come legally, but not the third one, who has turned 18 in the meantime. Things are getting better but it is as though there is always something that is wrong. We don’t want to leave my brother alone in Ethiopia, he doesn’t have any family there.”

Somali refugee woman, Switzerland

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Context of the Study

The study on *Movements of Somali Refugees and Asylum-seekers and States’ Responses Thereto* was carried out by the Swiss Forum for Migration and Population Studies (SFM) on the initiative of the governments of Switzerland and South Africa who acted as facilitators for the Convention Plus Initiative<sup>2</sup> strand on irregular secondary movement. Together with other interested states and the UNHCR, they identified a vital need to conduct an assessment in an effort to gain greater knowledge about the causes and conditions leading to irregular secondary movements which would contribute to a well-informed discussion amongst relevant partners and policy-makers. The objective of the research is therefore to provide a better understanding of the movements of Somali refugees and asylum-seekers – that is, their trajectories, the different stages in their migration history and their underlying motivations. It is also meant to give an overview of different protection regimes and practices; in addition, it provides crucial numbers and characteristics of Somali refugees and asylum-seekers in different countries.

The study has been financed by the governments of Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland. Though it is obviously relevant for the formulation of policies, the research process has remained independent and impartial. It was clear from the start – and this is confirmed in the findings – that a combination of factors influence the movements of asylum-seekers and refugees, and not all such factors are state policy-related. The study, therefore, adopted a broad pluralistic approach encompassing the sub-national micro-level of the communities, individuals and NGOs concerned, as well as national and supra-national dynamics.

It is a multi-sited research project conducted in eight countries: Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, the Netherlands, South Africa, Switzerland and Yemen. These countries were chosen according to several criteria: the size of their Somali refugee population; policy relevance and particularities; strategic position in (presupposed) routes, and political interests. Somalia’s four neighbouring countries – Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya and Yemen – were

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<sup>2</sup> Convention Plus is an international effort initiated and coordinated by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, which aims at improving refugees protection and finding durable solutions for refugees worldwide through multilateral co-operation in a spirit of solidarity and burden and responsibility sharing.



essential because of their important role as primary host states since Somalis began fleeing their country at the start of the civil war. Two other African countries – Egypt and South Africa – have been included, as these can be considered as both destination and transit points to Europe or North America. In Europe, Switzerland and the Netherlands were chosen not only because both states financed the study and host a substantial Somali population, but also because of the dissimilarity of their asylum and integration policies, which thus provides for an even more interesting comparative framework.

## 1.2 Somali Population, Refugees and Diaspora

For more than fifteen years, Somalis have been leaving their country and seeking asylum and/or better living conditions in other countries for numerous reasons – including but not limited to – civil war, breakdown of law and order, difficult economic conditions, drought and famine, to name but a few. Somali refugees and asylum-seekers are amongst the largest refugee populations in many countries in the world, and the Somali diaspora is very widely scattered. Although it is difficult to estimate of the total Somali population in and outside of Somalia, according to figures from the United Nations Population Fund, the population in Somalia in 2003 was a little over 10 million<sup>3</sup>. UNHCR estimates the refugee population at the end of 2004 at approximately 390,000 persons. These statistics, however, do not account for all Somalis living outside Somalia; that figure is considered to be much higher since many of them have meanwhile been naturalized, live undocumented, or are still waiting for their asylum application to be processed and are therefore not included in UNHCR statistics.

Although Somalis have a long history of migration (Gundel 2002; Piguet 1994), the majority of exiles left their country as refugees at the outbreak of the civil wars: starting in late 1988 in the northern part of the country (Somaliland), and from 1991 in the rest of the country when the end of Siyad Barre's regime resulted in a devastating civil war (see map in annex).

Since then, relative peace has returned to the north-western parts of Somalia. Although the region declared its independence in May 1991 as the Republic of Somaliland, its sovereignty has not been recognized by the international community. Similarly, the north-eastern region, better known as Puntland,

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<sup>3</sup> www.unfpa.org. This figure is an estimate as no census has been conducted since 1975. Data collection is further complicated by the huge nomad population as well as the movements of a sizeable refugee population.

declared its autonomy in 1998 and continues to be another enclave of peace and stability.

In contrast, the south and central regions of Somalia remain generally unstable, although there are intermittent periods of relative peace. The formation of a new transitional government – first based in Kenya and then in Somalia (but which has not as yet been able to establish itself in Mogadishu) – and presided over by Abullahi Yusuf Ahmed has given some impetus to hopes of restoration of peace and stability. Since the end of 2005, however, it seems that these efforts might be defeated by the resurgence of violence, particularly in regions under the control of warlords.

With regards to asylum-seekers and refugees, there appears to be a clear delineation between exiles from the northern part (Somaliland and Puntland) and those from the south/central regions of the country, according to the international community, specifically the UNHCR. Somalia is currently perceived as two separate entities – north and south – and this has important implications both for new asylum claimants and voluntary repatriation programmes. While the northern regions of the country are considered safe, this is not the case for the other areas. A UNHCR position paper published in 2004, concerning the return of rejected asylum-seekers to Somalia, clearly states that due to the human rights and humanitarian situations, no rejected asylum-seekers should be involuntarily returned to central and south Somalia. The description given is powerful, stating that “throughout the country, human rights violations remain endemic. These include murder, looting and destruction of property, use of child soldiers, kidnapping, discrimination of minorities, torture, unlawful arrest and detention, and denial of due process by local authorities. Gender-based violence is prevalent, including rape, female genital mutilation and domestic violence” (UNHCR 2004: 2). Such civil unrest prompts the continuous surge of refugees from Somalia, not only to neighbouring countries, but also beyond<sup>4</sup> to Asia, Europe and North America.

Somalis constitute an important diaspora in the world. In addition to Somalia's neighbouring countries (Kenya, Ethiopia, Djibouti and Yemen), Somalis settled in countries with which they had colonial links (Great Britain, Italy); countries in which they had traditional and historical labour opportunities (the Gulf states) or regions considered as “lands of plenty” (Pérouse de Montclos 2003) such as Canada, the Netherlands, or the Scandinavian countries. Today, as many as one million refugees have

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<sup>4</sup> For instance, more than 10,000 new applications were filed in 2004 only in industrialized countries, according to UNHCR figures (UNHCR 2005b).

repatriated (UNHCR 2003), especially from African countries, and many others have gained citizenship of their host countries, particularly in industrialized states.

The Somali diaspora has sometimes been described as encountering integration problems in many host countries, and of always being attached in their minds to their country of origin (Pérouse de Montclos 2003). A particular feature that has been extensively explored by many scholars is the considerable amount of remittances sent by the members of the diaspora to Somalia or to members of the family living in neighbouring countries (Ahmed 2000; Horst 2002b; Horst and Van Hear 2002). Somalis have even developed their own system of transferring remittances, called the Hawalad, which is a safe and efficient method of sending and receiving money. Although there are no accurate figures of how much money is channelled through this system, Gundel (2002) provides an estimation – considered as conservative by other authors – that approximately US\$500 million are remitted annually.

### **1.3 Trajectories and Secondary Movements**

While numerous studies have examined the causes of refugee movement and the legal/ public policy issues concerning such movements have been explored, asylum movements and trajectories have only recently become the subject of empirical enquiry. In such cases, the sociological studies tend to focus on the decision-making processes - either at the start of the migration process or during the following stages (choice of the routes and of the intermediaries). Research undertaken within Europe has focused primarily on how and why asylum-seekers choose their particular destination or host countries (see chapter 6.2.2 for a short review of literature).

In some instances, the studies focused on the secondary movements of asylum seekers, refugees and migrants in general, but exclusively within Europe: for instance, the movements of Algerians from France to the UK (Collyer 2002, 2003). More recently, movements of naturalized European-Somalis to the United Kingdom have gained a lot of attention and this is currently at the centre of policy decisions (see for instance Momatrade Consultancy 2004), as well as many research topics (Bang Nielsen 2004 for the case of Denmark; Van den Reek and Igeh Hussein 2003 for the case of the Netherlands).

This study is concerned specifically with the secondary movements of Somali refugees both in Africa and Europe. In particular, it explores the underlying causes and motivations which prompt refugees to leave the host country (first country of asylum), especially in African countries and Yemen, but also in two European countries, in order to seek refuge or better opportunities in a

second or third country. Secondly, it documents the trajectories and strategies the community uses to reach their destination. A specific emphasis is placed on all aspects of the asylum system and the rights of refugees – both in theory and in practice. It includes a thorough analysis of essential elements such as: access to the asylum procedure, documentation, assistance and shelter, health services, education, employment and self-sufficiency, and lastly “durable solutions”. Since the context of protection and living conditions alone cannot explain secondary movements of refugees, our analysis also takes into account processes of collective decision-making and transnational strategies; the criteria related to the choice of a new host country, as well as social and smuggling networks.

### **1.4 Content and Structure**

This report presents the overall findings of the study, and although it is based on the eight country studies, it is not a condensed and aggregated version of these reports. Instead, it analyzes the quantitative and qualitative data collected by using comparative analysis.

After the first methodological explanation, chapter 2 briefly presents the eight case studies in order to give the reader an opportunity to grasp the social, economic and political contexts of each country study. This chapter is essential in that it provides the basis for the comparative nature of this analytical work, which is concerned with specific issues rather than the countries themselves (although many examples are provided from each case study). For each of the countries, the characteristics of the Somali population, the national legislation and the state’s general attitude toward Somali refugees are described in detail. The situation of the Somali refugees is examined in terms of their protection and living conditions. Trajectories, with a focus on previous and future secondary movements, are also presented.

Chapter 3 is devoted to the legal frameworks of the countries studied. International and national legislations, institutional framework and asylum-related issues such as registration, documentation, asylum procedure, and the rights and entitlement of refugees are analysed. The aim of the chapter is not only to describe these aspects in theory, but rather to illustrate the actual practices at the national level. The analysis is drawn from interviews with key experts and the refugee community itself, and from the literature. This chapter also highlights the general conditions of protection and living in the different contexts studied, from the standpoint of the refugees.

In subsequent chapters (4 and 5), movements in general, and (irregular) secondary movements of Somali refugees and asylum-seekers in particular, are investigated in detail. Again, the data for this analysis is based on the interviews conducted with refugees, experts and community leaders. Chapter

4 explores the main trajectories found (be they direct or with secondary movements). Other issues examined include the aspects linked to camp refugees versus undocumented exiles in Somalia's neighbouring countries.

Chapter 5 is dedicated to Somali refugees' secondary movements as such, looking at them first from the point of view of their scope, then focusing on the motivations that push people to undertake them. The central importance of the legal status in the causes of secondary movements will be demonstrated, as well as other causes that are linked to the legal status. In the last section, the explanatory model of (irregular) secondary movements is completed with a paragraph about the elements facilitating or enabling such moves (such as social and smuggling networks) and a glimpse of the collective livelihood strategies of many Somali families, of which secondary movements are often part.

Concluding remarks (chapter 6) will review the main results of the study, as well as shedding light on a few important points. The main trends in the attitudes of the host states and societies are summarized, and the responsibilities of the different actors involved pointed out. Lastly, the importance of understanding the Somali refugees' strategies and creating policies that take these strategies into account will be examined. A few general recommendations are presented at the end of the report and concern the individual level, the meso level (implementation at the local level) and the national and international level of global refugee policies.

## 1.5 Terminology<sup>5</sup>

The term **refugees** is used in its generic sense, referring to Somali nationals who left Somalia because of the war and settled in another country, regardless of their official legal status (for an overview of the statuses included in the sample, see Table 38 in the annexe).

Specific terms referring to legal statuses are also used. **Asylum-seekers** are defined as persons who have applied for international protection and are awaiting determination of their claims/applications. When referring to persons with formal refugee status, the term **recognized refugees** is used, irrespective of whether they are recognized on a *prima facie* basis or according to a refugee status determination (RSD). **Subsidiary protected persons** are persons who were not granted a Convention refugee status, but whose need of protection was nevertheless recognized. As such, their

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<sup>5</sup> The following terms are used as working definitions in the study and do not have any legal or policy implications.

protection is assured only on a subsidiary basis. **Undocumented** persons are Somalis living illegally, or without any legal status, in the city/country of residence; it does not include camp-based refugees. In contrast, **urban refugees** are individuals living in urban areas (non-camp) and who may or may not have formal, legal registration.

The focus in the legal and political debates is on **irregular secondary movements** (ISM). ISM refer to the illegal crossing of international borders which take place without the authorization of the country(ies) involved and/or with no or insufficient valid documentation required for travel. In addition, the study also includes regular secondary movements in its analysis and uses the terms secondary movement and **onward movement** interchangeably throughout the report. Furthermore, there is a time threshold for the definition of **secondary movements** in order to narrow the scope of analysis. Due to limitations implied by narrow legal definition<sup>6</sup> when working with a complex empirical phenomenon, "secondary movement" was defined in this research as the onward international movement of a person who has settled in a country for at least one month prior to undertaking additional movement. A **settlement country** is defined as one in which a person stays for at least one month. Consequently, a **direct journey or trajectory** comprises the series of transit stops made by a mover without involving settlement (i.e. less than one month).

Lastly, an explanatory note on the contentious name **Somalia**. It is a country in Eastern Africa (specifically the Horn) which is bounded by the Gulf of Aden to the north and the Indian Ocean to the east. It was constituted as an independent republic in 1960 by the union of British Somaliland with the trust territory formerly known as Italian Somaliland. In the text, there are references to north-east Somalia, (i.e. the current autonomous region known as Puntland) and north-west Somalia, (i.e. the self-proclaimed independent territory of Somaliland), as well as southern and central Somalia which constitute the rest of the country. In all other instances, Somalia refers to the entire national territory as currently recognized by the international community (i.e. region at independence). Although **Somalis** (i.e. nationals of Somalia)<sup>7</sup> are the focus of the research, specific references to region of origin

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<sup>6</sup> Although Excom Conclusion 57 includes a definition of (irregular) secondary movements, it is not unanimously followed in the practice. For a comprehensive discussion of definitions and concepts of so-called "safe third countries" or "first countries of asylum", see Legomsky (2003).

<sup>7</sup> The difference between "Somali" and "Somalian" does not always find a consensus. In French, for example, the term Somali refers to ethnicity whereas in English it denotes either ethnicity or nationality.

will occasionally be indicated by the distinction “Somalilander” to denote Somalis inhabiting or originating from Somaliland.

## 1.6 Methodology

This report is based on the results of eight country studies carried out by independent researchers, in close cooperation with the coordinating team (SFM) of the study (see summaries in chapter 1). A research team, preferably local, although this was not always possible, was appointed in each of the countries surveyed, and the survey was conducted using a common methodology, with possible adjustments and flexibility of the research instruments when and if necessary in each country study. Three workshops were organized at different stages of the research process in order to facilitate meetings and discussions between the team leaders and the coordinators on the various aspects of the research project. These workshops were crucial in enabling a thorough discussion on the research methodology (number of interviews and sample, questionnaires, transcription, software, etc.), the challenges and problems encountered in the field, and the final results.

Unlike the other country studies, specific arrangements were made for the Dutch and Kenyan studies. The Dutch survey has been included in the course of the overall study and consisted, for practical reasons due to particular time constraints, of a smaller sample compared to other cases. As for the Kenya case, unanticipated events by the selected team caused the cessation of the project, thus necessitating the appointment of a new team. For these reasons, the case study had to be condensed – in terms of budget, time and organisational structure – in order to complete the overall project on schedule. As a result, the study is based on interviews in Nairobi city only; no interviews were carried out with refugees in the camps, although testimonies from refugees who previously resided in the camps prior to moving to the city are utilized. Moreover, a relatively large corpus of secondary literature on Kenyan refugee camps gives voice to the realities of life for encamped refugees and thus partially fills the gap in the composition of the research (mainly Campbell 2005; Horst 2003; Human Rights Watch 2002; UNHCR 2005a).

The country studies were carried out between September 2004 and July 2005. Each of them took on average four months. In each of the countries, three major areas of investigation were included in the study:

- An overview of refugee protection regimes, including law, policy and practice;
- An examination of the motivations and movement strategies of Somali refugees and asylum-seekers; and,

- A collection of available statistical data (aggregated) and analysis of data to describe both movements (indirectly) and the populations concerned.

The study therefore consisted of the analysis of available statistical data and documentation (official and grey literature), as well as of the interviews with the concerned parties – refugees, experts, and community leaders – which constitute the core data of the country studies.

### 1.6.1 Interviews with Experts and Community Leaders

In each country, interviews were carried out with community leaders, “privileged observers” and other experts, including representatives of the government, UNHCR, NGOs, lawyers, researchers, etc. These interviews were conducted using flexible questionnaires, which were adapted to each context and each interviewee. The aim was to achieve good insight into the current practice (rather than only the legal provisions) of refugee reception conditions and asylum procedures, as well as the state’s overall attitude towards Somali refugees. Community leaders, apart from being key informants, have also been very useful in helping researchers access and gain the trust of potential refugee interviewees.

*Table 1: Sample of experts and community leaders interviewed*

	Government	UNHCR	NGOs	Lawyers / researchers	Community leaders	Other
Kenya	-	1	1	-	3	1
Ethiopia	3	6	7	1	10	2
Djibouti	4	5	2	-	1	3
Yemen	3	1	2	1	2	-
Egypt	3	3	8	-	2	1
South Africa	-	2	4	4	-	-
Switzerland	4	-	3	2	5	-
Netherlands	7	-	2	1	-	-

Notes: More than one interview partner was present in some of the interviews. The category “other” refers to UN agencies or international organizations (IOM, WFP, UNESCO), representatives of foreign embassies, and a refugee camp doctor.

Table 1 gives an overview of the number of experts interviewed in each country. The number and distribution of the interviews between the different categories were at the discretion of each country investigator, depending on his/her need for information, as well as the concrete opportunities for gathering data. For example, despite numerous attempts, the South African team was unable to obtain an interview with a government representative.

## 1.6.2 Interviews with Refugees

In terms of numbers, approximately 120 (to 165) interviews were conducted with Somali refugees in each country<sup>8</sup>, with a total number of 814 interviews (Table 2).

In all countries, the interviews were conducted using the same semi-structured questionnaire, which contained open-ended questions to allow for qualitative analysis, as well as standardized questions for quantitative data analysis. The questionnaire was flexible enough to suit very different situations, but specific enough to allow for comparisons. Interviewees were selected through the researchers' pre-existing networks or contacts with community leaders and NGOs; and in almost all cases, particularly in the urban areas, snowballing methods were used to reach potential interview partners.

The overall **research sample** consisting of 814 refugee interviews is built on criteria corresponding to the empirical reality of the contexts (gender, age, education, clan, time of departure from Somalia, time of arrival in the host country, etc.). These data can thus be considered as portraying a realistic picture of the situation of Somali refugees in the eight countries studied<sup>9</sup>.

Interviews were carried out by the country team leaders, with the assistance of skilled interviewers trained by the country leaders. The issue of building trust between the interviewer and the interviewee was critical to a successful outcome (Hynes 2003), and different methods (for example, the commitment of the principal researcher to volunteer in some of the Somali community activities) were used to attain this goal. Particular attention was paid to attaining a good mix of gender and language skills amongst the teams. When necessary, the interview was done with the help of an interpreter to avoid systematic bias in choosing persons proficient in English or in the official local language. Anonymity and confidentiality of the interviews were carefully stressed amongst the researchers, as well as with the refugees during the actual interviews. The research objectives were carefully explained in order to avoid giving rise to unintentional expectations<sup>10</sup>. The neutrality and independence of the research and the researchers – particularly

<sup>8</sup> Except in The Netherlands and in Switzerland, where respectively 49 and 60 interviews were carried out.

<sup>9</sup> Though it is not possible to claim statistical representativity.

<sup>10</sup> Some interviewees believed, for example, that the researchers were affiliated with resettlement programmes. A clear and concise explanation of the interview was thus crucial in avoiding interviewee bias.

vis-à-vis official bodies (governmental and UNHCR) – was emphasized in an effort to gain balanced, impartial information on the refugees' social conditions. Two of the teams were headed by Somalis, while some of the teams included Somali assistants. The issue of researcher/interviewer of the same origin as interviewees is often discussed in the methodological literature (Bloch 1999; Jacobsen and Landau 2003), and is considered to be both advantageous – especially in terms of linguistic and cultural knowledge, and access to the community – and disadvantageous because it poses problems of bias and lack of confidentiality.

*Table 2: Overall sample by current host country*

Country	N
Kenya	60
Ethiopia	120
Yemen	120
Djibouti	120
South Africa	120
Egypt	165
Switzerland	60
The Netherlands	49
Total	814

Recording the interviews proved to be a problem for many interviewees and this method was discontinued in favour of note-taking. Detailed summaries of the transcriptions were made into an Access (software) mask prepared by SFM for all country teams. In order to ensure that all transcriptions into the Access mask had been done completely, accurately and in the same fashion, an extensive “cleaning” of the database was performed before merging the eight databases for the overall analysis. The data was then transferred to a software also allowing for statistical analysis (SPSS).

Table 2 illustrates the number of interviews carried out in each country. More specifically, the tables describing the sample (annex 1) illustrates gender equality – equal number of women and men interviewed in the overall survey, although differences exist between specific country studies. The majority of the interviewees are young – 64% of them between the ages of 20 and 40 years old at the time of the interview – and married (55%). The level of education (including the education received in the host country) varies, with important differences between the host countries. Of the total population surveyed, 43% were illiterate (no education at all), with many of these cases residing in South Africa, Djibouti and Ethiopia, and fewer cases in European countries. Only 7% had attained university level education and they reside in all countries surveyed, although Netherlands had a slightly higher population

of educated refugees. In terms of their employment/professional activity, 55% of the sample were unemployed, while the rest were occupied with one or more income generating activities.

The legal status of the interviewees varies according to each context: the sample contains Convention, OAU and *prima facie* refugees, as well as undocumented persons, asylum-seekers and subsidiary admitted persons. Both camp refugees and urban refugees were interviewed.

### 1.6.3 Analysis

The overall database of more than 800 migration/flight histories is a rich source of information, and the combination of methods utilized allows for the identification of well-documented trends. Interviews with refugees have been analysed using both a qualitative approach – mainly inspired by grounded theories (Glaser and Strauss 1967) – and a quantitative one (mainly consisting in bivariate and multivariate analyses carried out through a statistics software program). Both methods allowed exploratory analyses that have provided viable evidence to support existing theories, as well as new hypotheses concerning refugee movements. Moreover, the findings of the analysis of the interviews have been compared with the results of more than 100 expert interviews carried out in all settings, as well as with secondary literature (scientific literature, administrative, official and grey documentation, statistical figures, etc.).

### 1.6.4 The Scientific Advisory Board

A **scientific advisory board** composed of experts followed the progress of the study. Its functions were:

- To stimulate critical reflection on the research process regarding both substance and methodology (in accordance with the project outline)
- To provide advice on various aspects of the research, including the applicable legal frameworks and discussions on managing unexpected issues/concerns arising from implementation of the research
- To facilitate, whenever possible, access of researchers to the field and to different actors (governments, NGOs, etc.) through existing contacts
- To deliver opinions on the presentation of results and relations between research interests and the Convention Plus initiative, and deal with information strategies towards participants and partner organisations

The scientific experts of the scientific advisory board are: Dr. Jeff Crisp (Global Commission on International Migration), Mrs. Diane Goodman (Human Rights Watch), Prof. Walter Kälin (University of Bern) and Prof. Rodreck Mupedziswa (University of Zimbabwe).

At different stages of the research process, the methods, findings and analysis of the project were presented during several workshops with the researchers and with members of the scientific advisory board.

## 2 Case Studies

The summaries of the case studies, presented in alphabetical order, contextualize each country study, thus developing a basis for the overall comparative analysis<sup>11</sup>. In every case, the characteristics of the Somali population, the national legislation and the state's general attitude toward Somali refugees are briefly described, as well as the situation of the Somali refugees, in terms of protection and living conditions. Finally trajectories, with a focus on previous or future secondary movements, are presented. Table 3 indicates the number of the refugee (or total) Somali population in the countries surveyed.

Table 3: Estimations of Somali refugee population (bold) in 2004

Country	Somali refugee population (estimation)
Kenya	~ <b>154,000</b> refugees in camps (UNHCR) and 20,000 – 60,000 in urban areas (unregistered)
Ethiopia	<b>13,000 – 17,000</b> camp refugees (government, UNHCR) and 15,000 to 45,000 in urban areas
Yemen	<b>47,000 – 64,000</b> refugees; majority in urban areas, of which 7,500 in camp (UNHCR)
Djibouti	<b>11,000 – 17,000</b> refugees in camps (UNHCR); ~3,000 in urban areas (unregistered); important reduction compared to 2003
Egypt	~ <b>4,000</b> registered refugees (UNHCR)
Sth Africa	~ <b>7,000</b> refugees (including 4,700 asylum-seekers) (UNHCR, government)
Switzerland	<b>3,700</b> refugees, most with subsidiary protection, 5,000 Somali citizens (government)
Netherlands	<b>11,200 refugees</b> (UNHCR); ~27,000 of Somali origin (government)

**390,000** Somali refugees in the world at the end of 2004 (UNHCR 2005b)

Note: In several countries consistent figures were not available for various reasons (definitions, differences between government and IOs, between IOs at local and global level, etc.); in this case we decided to indicate the range of numbers indicated in various sources. Estimates about urban population concern unregistered refugees (sources: literature, experts, media, etc.).

<sup>11</sup> The country reports are available on request and most of them will be accessible to the interested public.

### 2.1 Djibouti

Djibouti, being part of the Somali-speaking region (it was called La Côte Française des Somaliens before independence in 1977) was a natural destination for Somalis seeking refuge and safety since the late 1980s when the civil war broke out in northern Somalia (currently referred to as Somaliland) and later on when the country dissolved into anarchy and chaos. In 2004, according to UNHCR, there were approximately 17,000 Somali refugees and asylum-seekers receiving protection and assistance in Djibouti. This number does not include undocumented migrants, and approximately 8,440 refugees who were repatriated back to Somaliland. In addition, such figures cannot be considered as fully reliable because all attempts to carry out a thorough counting/registration of refugees have consistently failed over the last eight years. All registered refugees and asylum-seekers live in three camps – Hol-Hol, Ali-Addeh, and Aour-Aoussa – which are based on a range of about 100 km from Djibouti City. The majority of Somali refugees hosted in Djibouti originated from Somaliland (roughly 70%) while a smaller population comes from south/central Somalia.

Djibouti is a signatory state to the 1951 Convention and its 1967 Protocol, and though it has not signed the 1969 OAU Convention, it applies *de facto* its principles. In 1977, the country adopted a national refugee law which adheres to international norms and principles and established ad hoc organizations, like the National Eligibility Committee, the Refugee Eligibility Office, and the Office of National Assistance for Refugees and Disaster Prevention (ONARS), in order to manage refugee matters. Responsibility for reception and registration of refugees, as well as the delivery of basic services, are shared between the Djiboutian government (mainly the Ministry of Home Affairs through the above mentioned agencies) and UNHCR, which occupied a prominent role in refugee reception prior to 1999. Until the late 1990s, when refugee status determination procedures were sometimes provided, a *prima facie* policy was adopted towards Somali asylum-seekers.

Although the legal framework for asylum is quite developed in Djibouti compared to other African countries, its practical implementation is very problematic. While most refugees find entry into Djibouti simple and straight-forward (border crossing is facilitated by porous frontiers and traditional migration paths), procedures for registration and identification are complicated for some, and non-existent for many. After 1999, the general decline in refugee flow prompted UNHCR to transfer the acceptance process to the country's authorities and this shift of responsibility has engendered a deterioration in the asylum system. Bribes, discriminatory actions favouring Issa clan members (due to their kinship with the majority clan in the country), and general mismanagement of the offices have been reported by most refugees and asylum-seekers surveyed. This resulted in the indefinite closure



of the office in charge of registration and identification and, with the exception of a temporary and partial RSD session in late 2003-2004, it remains non-operational. The closure dramatically affects those who urgently require immediate assistance; indeed, asylum-seekers can no longer be referred to any governmental authority to attempt registration in Djibouti. The situation has been strongly censured by the humanitarian community, including UNHCR, which has called for a complete restructuring of the asylum institutions.

In August 2003, the Republic of Djibouti introduced a new policy aimed at curtailing the influx of illegal migrants into the country. The new policy set a deadline (31 August 2003) for the forcible expulsion of all undocumented migrants. Those remaining behind risked detention or deportation to their homelands. All urban-based asylum-seekers were forced to accept camp settlement at Aour-Aoussa, a newly established refugee transit centre. The outcome of this procedure has led to the rejection of all applicants from Somaliland, on the basis of peace and stability in their region of origin, whereas nearly all south/central Somali refugees were granted *prima facie* status due to ongoing civil strife in the country.

Apart from education and health services which meet refugees' basic needs, nearly all refugees surveyed revealed that living conditions in Djibouti range from sub-standard to inhabitable. Refugees in camps note that of the numerous problems they face, lack of adequate food is the primary concern, followed by lack of personal security. For the past ten years, refugees have received a quota of rations according to family size, but in the last two years, a combination of factors has resulted in the drastic reduction of food distributions. All interviewees revealed that the rations they receive are inadequate for the number of family members in the household. In almost all cases, there appears to be a major discrepancy between actual family size and the number of dependents indicated in the family ration card – as there has not been an accurate re-registration of refugees since 1997. The lack of up-to-date statistics means that no children born after the last registration have been recorded in ration cards and therefore families do not receive the proper quantities of food needed.

As noted in other surveyed countries, WFP has dramatically reduced food distributions to all refugees, in addition to blocking food supply to all Somaliland refugees living in Aour-Aoussa camp since they rejected the initial offer of repatriation. It thus appears that cessation of food aid to Somaliland refugees at Aour-Aoussa is a deliberate policy aimed at enforcing voluntary repatriation, in addition to conserving limited food stockpiles. At present, this group remains status-less and has no access to food and medical care, although it continues to live in the camp. Most affected by the food

ration policy are the vulnerable groups – children, elderly, pregnant/lactating women.

Personal security has been reported as a major concern especially by refugee women living in Aour-Aoussa: more than half of the women surveyed expressed fear of rape in or around the camps. According to respondents, conditions are slightly better in Ali-Addeh and Hol-Hol camps, but they are still deemed to be unsatisfactory.

The situation of urban exiles is not much better than those in camps. Although many Somalis consciously choose to live in the city and avoid the asylum process, they nevertheless suffer from the harsh living conditions of working illegally in a foreign country. Police harassment, threats of detention for engaging in illegal employment, and threats of consequent refoulement, exploitation and mistreatment make refugees' life particularly challenging.

Less than a third of the individuals surveyed reported that they had undertaken multiple movements from one country to another in search of better asylum opportunities. Most of them had previously sojourned in Ethiopia or in Kenya. Those who have experienced secondary movement are generally refugees from south/central Somalia, who initially fled to Ethiopia because it was the closest zone of safety. After reaching Ethiopian frontiers, most refugees undertook multiple movements until they either temporarily settled within the country, or began their secondary move towards Djibouti. A frequent explanation for many secondary movers from Ethiopia to Djibouti includes the desire to be amongst Somalis in a Somali setting. Others simply found living conditions in Ethiopian camps unbearable and opted to move on to a "Somali territory", where better treatment was expected. Many assumed that resettlement opportunities were available in Djibouti.

In contrast, those not having experienced any movement are mainly rural people who led extremely difficult livelihoods as pastoralists and who find the immobility in camp life, although poor, somewhat preferable to their previous existence. Allegedly, the refugees not having experienced secondary movements or not willing to do so fall into two categories: (i) Somalilanders who have acquired Djiboutian citizenship, or (ii) Djiboutian citizens who are desperate to escape their poverty and thus claim asylum as Somalilanders. Considering the size of this population, such allegations have prompted humanitarian agencies to demand government action in undertaking a thorough counting and re-registration of refugees or else risk the possibility of certain camps being permanently closed.

Finally, almost all the interviewees surveyed are willing to leave Djibouti for another place (one third for the homeland and the rest for various destinations), although only few had concrete plans to leave. The dramatic impact of such outcome can be better appreciated if we consider the lack of



lasting solutions in this country. Indeed, the lack of economic opportunities makes local integration impossible; there has been no resolution to the suspension of UNHCR resettlement programmes which have effectively curtailed legal migration from Djibouti since 2001, and lastly, voluntary repatriation is an opportunity available to Somalilanders at present. UNHCR's goal for 2005 is to repatriate 8,000 refugees to Somaliland, although the great majority often withdraw their initial consent because of the lack of concrete development opportunities in their homeland which, unfortunately, makes Djibouti more habitable than Somalia.

## 2.2 Egypt

After the Palestinians and the Sudanese, Somalis are the third largest group of refugees in Egypt, with approximately 4,000 persons registered by UNHCR<sup>12</sup>. Egypt has signed both the 1951 Geneva Convention and the 1969 OAU Convention and the commitment to these international conventions translates into fairly generous admission rights for refugees, namely, renewable temporary residence permits and the right to non-refoulement. However, five reservations made to the 1951 Convention, notably on the articles concerning labour legislation and access to education and the lack of comprehensive national legislation regulating refugee affairs, suggest that the Egyptian government would prefer Egypt to be a transit country rather than a permanent host country destination for its refugee population. The "transitory" situation of refugees is also perpetuated by the fact that they are not eligible for Egyptian citizenship.

The Egyptian government delegated the management of asylum procedures for all refugees (with the exception of Palestinians) to UNHCR Cairo office. These activities include registration, status determination procedure, durable solution interviews, etc. UNHCR works closely with the ministries of Foreign Affairs and of Interior Affairs in the administration of refugee affairs (e.g. distribution of residence permits and matters relating to detention). UNHCR staff are aware of many of the problems encountered by refugees in Egypt and have been undertaking efforts to address them, both by negotiating and lobbying the Egyptian government, and by working directly with refugee associations.

A small number of Somalis lived in Cairo before the civil war; some were students, some were diplomats and their families, and others were

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<sup>12</sup> An unknown number of unregistered Somali migrants reside in Cairo, mostly awaiting emigration to the industrialized countries.

transnational Somali families whose breadwinners worked in Gulf countries. The first large wave of refugees arrived in the early 1990s, either directly from Somalia or from Saudi Arabia/other Gulf countries where they had been living previously. The majority of this group had a high educational level, and most of them have since resettled in the industrialized countries. The vast majority of those currently residing in Egypt arrived after 1999 and they have a much lower educational level, many of them being single mothers with children.

According to UNHCR data, refugees with a history of secondary movements constituted a large sector of the total Somali refugee group in the late 1990s, while the majority of the Somali refugees who arrived recently came directly from their homeland. A recent trend, however, is that of Somali families resettling in Egypt after obtaining citizenship in industrialized countries. Approximately 200 Somali families (often mothers and children) live in Cairo in an effort to raise the children in an environment culturally comparable to that of Somalia. These moves are also methods by which families maximize available resources.

Somali refugees are predominately concentrated in two poor neighbourhoods in Cairo and their vicinities (Ard il Liwa and Nasr City) where they mostly share small, shabby apartments with many other families or single people.

The current recognition rate of Somali refugees is close to 100%. They are recognized either on the basis of the 1951 Geneva Convention or on the basis of the 1969 OAU Convention<sup>13</sup>. This very high recognition rate is a fairly new trend, based on a UNHCR position paper published in 2003 that recommended giving refugees originating from southern Somalia a refugee status or at least a complementary form of protection.

To assist refugees with sustenance and access to educational and health services, UNHCR offers recognized refugees several forms of assistance through partnership with NGOs. However, only a small number of vulnerable refugees are financially assisted by UNCHR and many note that obtaining the funds is often problematic while the health services are insufficient. Education grants provided by UNHCR only partially cover the school fees and are only reimbursed after the parents prove payment. A government decree in 2000 allowed Somali refugee children access to free education in public schools but this has not been implemented on a regular basis and

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<sup>13</sup> The main difference between the two statuses is that under 1951 Convention refugees may qualify for resettlement while OAU Convention refugees are not considered for a durable solution interview with UNHCR officials.

remains unclear in terms of what and how many institutions are involved in this programme. Few families can afford to send their children to private schools; in many cases, refugee children attend schools run by Al-Azhar University which offer a combination of religious and secular curriculum to non-Egyptian Muslims. Still, many Somali refugee children remain without any kind of formal schooling. Many Somali families have a negative opinion of the public schooling system in Cairo. Many believe that these institutions are inadequate in preparing their children for life and schooling in industrialized countries, which is where most families want to resettle<sup>14</sup>.

With regard to employment, Egyptian law treats refugees like foreigners; in other words, refugees must go through a difficult and costly procedure in order to obtain a work permit and, as a result of these legal and economic constraints, none of the refugees are able to obtain a work permit and work legally.

Many Somali refugees in Egypt are secondary movers. According to experts interviewed, the secondary movements of asylum-seekers do not legally influence their status determination, especially if they had “valid reasons” for moving from the former country of settlement<sup>15</sup>. In practice, however, these movements make it less likely that they will be granted recognition according to the 1951 Convention, which ultimately reduces their eligibility for resettlement. In the sample, the primary countries of settlement prior to arriving in Egypt were Saudi Arabia and Kenya, followed by Ethiopia, Yemen and Libya. In these cases, a majority of refugees spent, on average, about two years prior to undertaking a secondary movement.

Most of the Somalis who lived in Saudi Arabia were undocumented and worked illegally, and their motivation for further movement was lack of legal protection, abuse and exploitation by employers, and the lack of education for their children. Interviewees who migrated from Kenya noted abuse by police officials (harassment, money extortion, and intimidation), difficult and unsafe living conditions in refugee camps, precarious legal status in the cities and the lack of employment possibilities as crucial reasons for moving onwards. Refugees from Ethiopia noted difficult camp conditions (particularly insufficient food), lack of education for the children and lack of access to employment as key reasons for moving. Interviewees who stayed in

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<sup>14</sup> This view was expressed both by some refugees, NGO representatives and government officials.

<sup>15</sup> “Valid reasons” are, according to UNHCR, risk of refoulement, arbitrary detention, physical assaults, absence of educational and employment possibilities, and the non-availability of long-term solutions.

Yemen complained about the living conditions in the camps (lack of basic needs such as food and health services) and the difficulties in finding a job, especially for the male refugees. The main problems reported by refugees who had lived in Libya include lack of protection by UNHCR, abuse by employers and public experiences of racism. All these reasons were motives for moving and seeking protection, access to better education and healthcare, and an opportunity to seek resettlement elsewhere, namely in Egypt.

In order to enter Egypt, whether by air, land, or sea, all refugees were required to display a visa and passport. In most cases the visa was purchased with the help of middlemen or family members already in Egypt. For the most part, refugees travelled with Somali passports purchased in an unofficial office in Mogadishu which were nevertheless recognized by the Egyptian government<sup>16</sup>.

Since access to the labour market is very difficult, if not impossible, the refugees’ main sources of income are remittances, small income generating projects<sup>17</sup>, and community-based assistance. Most refugees lead harsh and precarious lives and feel they have no viable future in the country. The challenging economic conditions and the lack of opportunities for integration thus contribute to the desire to seek better perspectives elsewhere, mainly through resettlement programmes in industrialized countries. Frequently, this search for the possibility of a life with long-term stability is part of the refugees’ collective strategies. In other words, refugees often move not only for themselves but also for a transnational circle of inter-linked family members, which makes the desire (or necessity) for resettlement even stronger. However, the resettlement rate of Somali refugees remains very low (between January and September 2004, only 271 Somali refugees were resettled) and industrialized countries seem more and more unwilling to resettle Somali refugees for a number of reasons, including previous experience of unsuccessful integration of resettled Somalis, fear of terrorism and anti-Muslim sentiments among local populations.

### 2.3 Ethiopia

Ethiopia has been an important asylum country for Somali refugees. Since 1988, it hosted an estimated 630,000 Somali refugees, including an important

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<sup>16</sup> This is a rare gesture of goodwill given that the international community rejects Somali passports as valid travel document

<sup>17</sup> These are mostly informal activities such as domestic work, petty sales, teaching and are contained within the Somali community.

number of Ethiopian returnees who had fled from Ethiopia to Somalia mostly during the Ogadeen war in 1977<sup>18</sup>. Large repatriation schemes have been implemented in Ethiopia with a degree of success. According to UNHCR statistics in 2002, approximately 250,000 Somali refugees had voluntarily repatriated from Ethiopia, mainly to Somaliland. Moreover, a large number of camp refugees have been locally dispersed, which suggests that many locals or returnees had settled in the camps. Out of the eight original refugee camps, only Kebribeyah camp remains open as of May 2005.

Today, Somali refugees in Ethiopia can be divided into three major categories – encamped, urban and undocumented. According to UNHCR statistics, there are officially 10,344 camp-based refugees, although in reality this figure could be upwards of 14,000, since children born after 1997 have not been registered. Statistics also note that there are 229 urban refugees living in Addis Ababa (mainly for medical or protection reasons). According to unofficial sources, however, there are 30,000-45,000 unregistered refugees living illegally in the capital city.

Ethiopia's 2004 Refugee Proclamation has incorporated the fundamental principles of the 1951 Convention and the 1969 OAU Convention, to which it is signatory, into domestic legislation. However, several articles remain ambiguous in terms of their practical implementation while in other cases, the implementation of the policy has been delayed<sup>19</sup>. Ethiopia has also made two reservations to the Geneva Convention, regarding access to employment and education, which is a clear indication that the Ethiopian government is not interested in enabling the refugee population to integrate locally.

The Agency of Refugee and Returnee Affairs (ARRA) is the governmental agency charged with all matters pertaining to refugee affairs – including decision-making on refugee claims and management of refugee protection and assistance programmes. Officially, UNHCR has observer status only, but in practice it is heavily involved in all refugee matters, including the

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<sup>18</sup> These persons are officially not considered as refugees by UNHCR, although a number of them settled in the Somali refugee camps in Ethiopia. Somali-Ethiopians and Somali refugees share the same cultural background and language and some even belong to the same clan or sub-clan. This makes it difficult to differentiate between genuine refugees and the local opportunists.

<sup>19</sup> Article 17 of the Appeal Hearing Council is for example not implemented yet and its implications in practice are still unclear, particularly as regards the “reasonable” period of time within which the refugee will be notified about the Council's decision which is not specified in law.

financing of ARRA. Both agencies are interdependent as neither is able to accomplish its mandate without financial or political support from the other.

During the large influx of Somali refugees fleeing the civil war, collective admission on a *prima facie* basis was the rule. In 1996, an RSD procedure was set up for all new refugees with RSD reviewing performed for all camp refugees<sup>20</sup> in 2004. In theory, the procedure was designed to identify “genuine” refugees who required protection and assistance; to repatriate refugees originating from north-west and north-east Somalia (Somaliland and Puntland, respectively, as these regions were deemed to be safe zones), and lastly, to disperse the locals who had settled in the camps and received assistance since the arrival of the refugees. In reality, the initiative was confined to a simple re-registration rather than an actual RSD review and no revalidation of the camp population was done at the same time (e.g. no adaptation of the ration cards to the actual family size was made). A computerized revalidation, a Progressive Profile Project, is envisioned for the near future.

Camp refugees as well as experts report major hardship in the camps due to insufficient food rations, scarcity of water and firewood, and insufficient or incompetent health service. Different official and unofficial reasons are mentioned for the constant reductions of the food rations: budget reductions, lack of up-to-date statistics on family size, fraud and corruption surrounding food distribution. Many interviewees also report abusive behaviour by the ARRA staff toward refugees (especially harassment, abuse, and intimidation) and the non-intervention of UNHCR in those incidents.

In terms of access to education, while primary and secondary education is available, school enrolment remains under 50% according to official statistics. This is notably due to the high level of child labour: children, especially girls, are sent to work as domestic servants in nearby towns to help supplement family income and to supply essential items such as clothes. The situation of youngsters above school age is also highly problematic, as they have no opportunity for education, training or employment. This leads to high levels of frustration amongst teenagers, often resulting in violent behaviour.

As for unregistered refugees, they live in the capital city on relatively peaceful terms as their stay, albeit illegal, is tolerated by the government (which is on good terms with the Somali government), by the police forces

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<sup>20</sup> In reality, only the head of the family, mostly male, was interviewed on behalf of his dependents/family.

and by the general population. However, since they are not considered as refugees by the government or UNHCR, they have no access to protection or assistance. They rely on their own networks for survival, with their social conditions ranging from grave, especially for the most vulnerable persons (widows and single mothers with children notably) to fairly good for those who can obtain employment, send their children to private schools and finance their medical care and other basic needs. Although many urban refugees receive remittances from abroad, some resort to purchasing Ethiopian ID cards (which seem easy to obtain especially in the Somali region of Ethiopia) in order to gain access to legal residence and employment. Those unable to access such resources are forced to live in difficult conditions, with very little income, insufficient food, no access to education or health services or adequate housing.

There are numerous reasons for the high number of Somali refugees who did not register in the camps. The primary rationale is that many believe that Somali refugees are not accepted in the camps anymore. It is difficult to ascertain the accuracy of this idea, although many refugees report that they were unable to register at the camps in recent years. The small number of applications (none in 2003, 26 families in 2004) officially registered by ARRA provides a clue as to the challenges many refugees face in accessing the asylum system. On the other hand, many refugees prefer not to register because they know of the harsh living conditions in the remote camps and the lack of opportunities for self-sufficiency (higher education, vocational training, and working opportunities) and durable solutions.

In terms of trajectory, most of the Somali refugees in Ethiopia came directly from Somalia. However, among the unregistered refugees, a significant number spent a few years in refugee camps in Kenya, returned to Somalia and, because of the ongoing civil strife, moved to Addis Ababa where they hoped to find a better livelihood than in Kenya. Other refugees spent time in Djibouti, Yemen or Saudi Arabia before coming to Ethiopia and their reasons for leaving the first country of settlement are akin to those found in the other country studies: difficult living conditions (particularly in the camps), restrictive policies limiting mobility of refugees (Djiboutian directive expelling all undocumented migrants), and the common expulsions of illegal residents from Saudi Arabia to Somalia.

The majority of refugees choose Ethiopia chiefly because of its proximity and ease in crossing borders without documentation. Unregistered refugees specifically choose Ethiopia because they have the possibility of living and working there without penalty, as well as the prospect of raising and educating their children in a relatively peaceful environment. Yet others opt to come to Ethiopia in order to have access to the resettlement opportunities, particularly through family reunification programmes.

Regarding prospects for future movements, a distinction has to be made between camp refugees, unregistered urban refugees and recognized urban refugees. Camp refugees find living conditions in the remaining camps so inhospitable that if given the option they would prefer to return home rather than remain in exile. Given that refugees from south and central Somalia are ineligible for voluntary repatriation, they are forced to remain in the camp, unless they can secure the resources required to return independently, which happens rarely. Local integration is not possible and resettlement programmes are becoming increasingly infrequent and are available to urban refugees only. As a result, encamped refugees are literally bound to remain in the camp unless or until alternative solutions are created.

Unregistered urban refugees, on the other hand, can be categorized in three groups (equal in our sample): those who wish to remain in Ethiopia; those who would prefer to move onward to an industrialized country, mostly through family reunification programmes, and lastly, those who remain uncertain about their future, and who belong mainly to the poor and vulnerable sectors. Very few unregistered refugees consider returning to their homeland, while nearly all urban refugees hope to resettle abroad. On the whole, only a few refugees reported plans to leave the country by their own means or through smuggling agents. However, this is countered by findings in further countries (Egypt, Switzerland and the Netherlands) that Addis Ababa appears to be a relatively important transit country for Somali refugees wanting to move onward. Moreover, only a small percentage of those hoping for family reunification will succeed: those who fail might well turn to illegal ways to travel and join their family members abroad.

In conclusion, it appears that refugees with personal resources or networks can find a way toward durable solutions by themselves, either because they have family members abroad with whom they can be reunified (in a few cases through irregular means), or because they purchased an Ethiopian ID which allows them to live and work legally in the city<sup>21</sup>. In contrast, few amongst the most vulnerable refugees can hope to access UNHCR resettlement programmes. The remaining population consists of refugees with limited or no resources leading difficult lives in the camps and cities, without any protection at all if they are unregistered, and with very insufficient and inadequate protection if they are recognized refugees.

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<sup>21</sup> The high number of refugees who preferred to be “dispersed” rather than voluntarily repatriated when the camps closed, although probably mostly composed of Ethiopian locals, also shows a possible local integration for a few “genuine” refugees who chose this option.

## 2.4 Kenya

For Somalis forced to escape the civil war, Kenya, like all other neighbouring countries, represented a safe destination. Due to its geographic proximity and traditional migration paths (a large Somali-speaking population lives on the Kenyan side of the border between the two countries), hundreds of thousands of Somali exiles crossed the border since the Somali civil war began. According to UNHCR, by March 2005 Kenya had hosted some 245,000 refugees, of which 162,000 were Somalis. Since Kenya has an encampment policy, the largest majority of Somali refugees and asylum-seekers reside in Dadaab camp (145,000 in March 2005); there is also a substantial population (approximately 22,000) based in Kakuma camp. While a small number of refugees are allowed to reside in Nairobi for medical or security reasons, a substantial population (ranging from 15,000-60,000) live without authorisation in Nairobi, mainly in the Eastleigh area. The overwhelming majority of these exiles originate from south and central Somalia, whereas most of those originating from the northern regions of Somalia have since returned.

Kenya is a party to the 1951 Geneva Convention, its 1967 New York Protocol and the 1969 OAU Convention, although it has never incorporated these principles into national legislation. Hence, there is no national, legal or institutional framework for refugee protection available. As a result of intensive co-operation between the Kenyan government and UNHCR, a Refugee Bill has been presented in Parliament in 2003, though it has not yet been approved. Consequently, refugee matters fall under the general Aliens' legislation even if *de facto* local authorities take into account prescriptions of international refugee law such as the *non-refoulement* principle. There is a National Refugee Secretariat, responsible for the management of refugee matters, which is currently under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Immigration and Registration of Persons. However, due to the lack of staff and enforceable legislation, the role of this office remains unclear.

Despite the lack of national law, Kenya had, until the early 1990s, a refugee status determination procedure under the 1951 Convention. According to UNHCR, in mid 2004 about 12,500 refugees still enjoyed that protection (which allowed for freedom of movement and right to employment). But following the massive influx of refugees from Sudan and Somalia from 1993 onwards, the responsibility for refugee registration and status determination has shifted to UNHCR and a *prima facie* policy has been adopted. Whether recognized after an individual status determination or on *prima facie* basis as is the case for Somalis, the great majority of the refugees and asylum-seekers registered in Kenya are regarded as 'mandate refugees'. Such status foresees a more limited standard of treatment of refugees. However, a limited part of the refugee population (20% according to UNHCR) holds individual

documentation which confirms their status and thus protects them from potential abuses. Furthermore, different types of documents produced over the past years such as alien identity cards for government-registered Convention refugees, Refugee Certificates for mandate refugees living outside camps, movement passes for refugees in need of transit between camps or city, and ration cards for camp-based refugees, do not contribute to improving the situation.

Life in camps is reported to be harsh in Kenya, as in other surveyed countries. The most salient concerns raised by refugees are: food scarcity (malnutrition dramatically increases cases of neonatal deaths); physical insecurity and sexual abuses suffered by women collecting firewood; and scarce or non-existent opportunities for education and jobs. Primary school is attended only by a limited number of children and the offer of secondary education is well below the refugees' needs. However, the survey also illustrates that education opportunity, although restricted to a part of the refugees, is the main reason families with children register and remain in the camps while the husbands seek work in the city. Indeed, employment in the camps is limited to income generating activities, short-term stints with humanitarian actors or menial odd jobs in or around the camps. Local authorities recently imposed a ban on animal husbandry and farming in Dadaab camp when refugees began fencing land belonging to the Somali Kenyan host community.

To escape the situation in the camps, a considerable portion of Somali exiles move to urban centres like Nairobi or to the small towns of the North-eastern province, which are populated by Somali-Kenyans. However, this movement entails the loss of protection guaranteed by UNHCR and access to basic services offered in camps. Moreover, local labour laws which prohibit refugees from engaging in economic activities oblige them to seek employment in the informal market. Hence, most Somali refugees are employed as casual workers in shops, lodges, households and restaurants, while a minority, mostly comprising refugees from the early influxes, are able to engage successfully in business activities in partnership with Kenyan-Somalis (i.e. shopping malls in Eastleigh) and thus appear to be well integrated in the urban context.

Refugees who choose to live outside the camps ('illegals') are exposed to severe risk of detention and police persecution: almost all the Somali interviewees based in Nairobi had been arrested at least once since their arrival in the city. Somalis seem to be a particular target for local police: indeed, most of the interviewees admit to having paid bribes to the Kenyan police to avoid detention. It appears that recent threats by the Kenyan government to repatriate Somali refugees are encouraging similar deviant behaviour by police officers.

Two types of movements emerged in this case study: one relating to displacements within the country, mainly from camps to cities, and the other concerning movements from Kenya to other countries. Because of the difficult conditions refugees encounter in camps, those who possess intellectual and material resources (including remittances) prefer cities to camps. As in other surveyed countries, the most resource-deprived individuals remain in the camp whereas others try to find a better life in town. Reasons for in-country movement relate to: difficulties in camp registration (25% of the refugees interviewed in Nairobi applied for asylum in camps but their request was never registered); physical insecurity, especially for cultural minorities; and search for employment opportunities. However, once in Nairobi, 40% of those interviewed still did not experience any significant improvement in their situation and therefore envisage further movements. Such movements will only occur if they can assemble resources required to undertake the journey (i.e. family or kinship networks abroad as well as some savings). Though the majority of interviewees declare willingness to live elsewhere, only a strict minority appear to possess the means to prepare such concrete plans. UNHCR maintains that resettlement is the only effective, durable solution for refugees in Kenya, but that it represents a real solution for only a residual part of the people in need.

The situation presented above helps illuminate why, both in this study and in other research, Kenya emerges as a major platform for onward movements. Indeed, almost half of the Somali interviewees having undergone such a movement mentioned Kenya as the country where they settled before reaching their current destination. Hence, Kenya hosts the largest component of Somalis seeking refuge but it cannot offer them long-term solution (i.e. inadequate protection and integration), and as a consequence refugees remain in the country as long as they need to organize their departure towards a preferred destination. Finally, such movements are facilitated by an experienced network of brokers, based mainly in Nairobi, which is able to facilitate non-authorized migration.

## 2.5 The Netherlands

The national law which provides the legal basis for asylum and immigration in the Netherlands is the Aliens Act of 2000. The Ministries of Immigration and Integration and of Foreign Affairs are responsible for migration and asylum policies, while different departments of the Ministry of Justice are involved in their implementation (status determination procedure, reception, issuing of documentation, etc.). The Netherlands grants asylum according to the 1951 Convention, but also on subsidiary grounds, as stipulated in Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights; under Article 3 of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading

Treatment or Punishment; on humanitarian grounds, or more generally as a result of a particularly difficult situation facing the asylum-seekers in the country of origin (group-based protection). Asylum-seekers who are granted asylum (on whatever ground) receive a temporary residence permit for a period of five years, after which they can apply for a permanent residence permit. Refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection are provided with the same level of rights and benefits as those of Dutch citizens. These include the right to welfare assistance, access to education, employment, and access to health services.

The Netherlands hosts the largest Somali community in Europe, second only to Britain. In 2001, the Somali population in the Netherlands reached its peak with an estimated 30,000 exiles; since then, however, the figure has been on the decline, with approximately 27,500 persons in 2003<sup>22</sup>. The decline has been attributed to the substantial number of Somalis who, after obtaining Dutch citizenship, have moved on to the UK. Exact numbers are hard to establish since not all persons notify the municipalities of their departure, but experts estimate the exodus to range anywhere from 10,000 to 23,000 persons.

Practically all Somalis applied for asylum upon entry into the Netherlands. The recognition rate – with the great majority obtaining subsidiary protection – reached its highest in 1992 at 66%; since then the figures have tended to fluctuate, with an average recognition rate of 39% being granted between 1989 and 2004.

Many successive changes have occurred in the policies regarding Somali asylum seekers. While all were granted a “tolerated status” until 1994, this was formalized in a resident permit on humanitarian grounds that same year. In 1996, this policy was changed due to the amelioration of social and political conditions in the northern areas of Somalia, whereby policymakers considered this region as safe areas for return, depending on the clan or sub-clan affiliation. This resulted in a rather complex status determination and increased the duration of the overall procedure. Since then, gradual restrictions have been introduced in the asylum policy, particularly for Somali applicants, which amount to a complex scheme of persons entitled to an asylum status. First, individuals ineligible for refugee status but who cannot be forcibly returned (persons belonging to minority clans without protection in the safe areas); and secondly, persons capable of returning to the homeland. Together with the UK and Denmark, the Netherlands is one of the only countries within the EU to carry out forced returns to Somalia.

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<sup>22</sup> These figures include all persons in the asylum system as well as naturalized Somalis.

In comparison to Switzerland, the other European case study, the Netherlands tries to apply a policy of strict and rapid selection of its asylum seekers. For example, while the authorities grant extended rights for accepted cases (subsidiary form of protection), they are quite strict with those rejected, notably by eliminating assistance and returning some Somalis to the northern areas of the country of origin<sup>23</sup>.

The great majority of Somali interviewees (88%) are secondary movers and had made a long and complex journey before entering the Netherlands. Most of them arrived in the Netherlands or another European country by plane from one of Somalia's neighbouring countries, with a transit stop in the Middle East (UAE, Saudi Arabia, Egypt). While some interviewees asked an agent to organize their journey and accompany them on the trip, the majority resorted to intermediaries only to buy or rent travel and identification documents. Unlike the Swiss study, many interviewees organized their journey through their personal networks, often borrowing passports belonging to family members or friends already established and naturalized in the Netherlands (or in rarer cases in another European country), a practice known as the use of "look-alike passports". A few interviewees had stayed in other European countries, mainly Germany (but also France, Italy and Romania), and had sometimes lodged an asylum application, before moving to the Netherlands either because of a negative decision regarding their application or by choice (for instance for family reunification).

The primary country of settlement for exiles in the Netherlands is Kenya, followed by Ethiopia, Yemen, Djibouti and Saudi Arabia. Only a minority of interviewees (10%) applied for asylum in their first country of asylum, mainly in Kenya, and some noted that they had returned to Somalia before undertaking additional movements. Although a few were unable to file an asylum claim due to lack of information, the majority preferred not to register because doing so would have implied staying in a refugee camp, a situation considered as generally harsh, unsafe and without employment opportunities. Therefore most interviewees resided, and often worked, illegally in the cities of their first countries of settlement. The main difficulties encountered in the cities are linked to the lack of any legal status: harassment, summary arrests and bribery in the police force (especially in Kenya) and among locals, difficulties in accessing employment, exploitation and (sexual) abuse by

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<sup>23</sup> On the contrary, Switzerland grants subsidiary protection to most Somali asylum seekers, but the rights they are granted are just slightly better than those of asylum-seekers. However, no forced returns of Somali asylum-seekers have been carried out since 1996.

employers and fear of being returned to Somalia (particularly for those coming from Saudi Arabia). These are clear and compelling motives for Somali refugees to seek better protection and living conditions in other countries of residence.

The choice to live in the Netherlands often depends on the presence of family members or on specific expectations (high standard of living and social welfare). In many instances, such decisions are made or influenced by the agents or middlemen. However, the Netherlands is not always the desired choice for all its refugee community. One in five persons in the sample ended up in the country as a result of illegal entry and police detention while en route to the sought-after destination, which is usually the UK.

Having obtained an asylum residence permit or Dutch citizenship, the majority of interviewees enjoy a stable legal status and the rights and benefits endowed to nationals. However, while a few are satisfied with their social conditions, many are clearly not. All feel that their general situation in the Netherlands, as immigrants as well as Muslims, has worsened in recent years, notably due to the rise of anti-immigrant political discourse and its echo in the society. The majority point to the lack of, or limited, employment opportunities as a crucial problem, despite the fact that there are no formal restrictions preventing their access into the labour market. Many Somalis obtain temporary, unskilled, menial jobs, and are generally unable to obtain accreditation for their previous educational qualifications. Others simply have no access to higher education, particularly at the university level, which forces them to remain in the low-skilled job markets.

In other arenas, the exiles bear the brunt of an interventionist state. The state's selection of asylum-seekers' housing, the complex procedures entailed in establishing private enterprise, as well as the narrow definition of the term family for family reunification purposes are a few illustrations of what asylum-seekers refer to as "imprisoning" rules. This sentiment is corroborated by experts interviewed for the study, who support the view that Somalis' integration in the Netherlands is problematic. As a result, only half of the surveyed population envisages living in the Netherlands in the next years. The others remain uncertain, with many contemplating a possible return to their homeland or further movement to another industrialized country. Currently, the United Kingdom is the most attractive destination for all the interviewees, followed by the USA, Canada and Scandinavian countries.

As noted previously, the movements of Dutch Somalis and Danish Somalis to the UK are being closely monitored. The interviews, along with a recent Dutch study, reveal numerous motivations for this new trend in migration. First, economically-motivated Somalis believe they will have better

opportunities to have their diplomas and skills recognized, to access higher education or to set up their own enterprise in other countries. Secondly, many Somalis object to the segregation of the Dutch education system which isolates their children in so-called “special schools”. This system of residence and education also denies the community the possibility of diversifying the education of the children, which includes the espousal of traditional, cultural and religious values within the curriculum. Thus, the wish to establish a strong Somali community becomes critical and, by no coincidence, this is one of the motivations underpinning the desire to resettle in a culturally diverse society such as that in the UK. This society allows newcomers the freedom to live life following their own rules and customs. According to experts and refugees interviews, families, especially those headed by women, tend to migrate more easily to the UK, whereas young, skilled persons are interested in countries which pose little or no barriers to their quest for educational and economic independence and self-sufficiency<sup>24</sup>.

## 2.6 South Africa

Although South Africa became a destination for refugees only after the democratic transition in 1994, it nevertheless hosts a considerable refugee and asylum-seeker population. According to the 2003 World Refugees Survey, 65,000 refugees and asylum-seekers – among which approximately 7,000 Somalis – reside in South Africa, the majority coming from the continent’s long-lasting and most cruel conflicts: the Congo, Somalia, Angola, Burundi and Rwanda.

Due to its history of isolation and apartheid regime, adopting and enforcing asylum policies are a relatively new phenomenon in South Africa. Before the adoption of the Refugee Act of 1998, the only legislation dealing with cross-border entry was the Aliens Control Act 96 of 1991 which is widely considered by immigration, refugee and constitutional lawyers as an impractical and unconstitutional piece of legislation. The post-1994 government established the bases for a thorough legal framework of asylum and in 1996, South Africa became a party to the 1969 OAU Convention on the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa as well as the 1951 Geneva Convention and its 1967 Protocol. The first democratic government further established a Task Team to draft a Green Paper on International

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<sup>24</sup> Although illegal movements of rejected asylum-seekers also exist, the movements described are regularly undertaken by new EU citizens. This trend is interesting in illustrating the “need for additional needs”, despite having access to adequate protection and assistance benefits.

Migration, which provided the basis for new migration policy and legislation, including refugee law. Later on a ‘Refugee White Paper Task Team’ was created to draft the White Paper on those issues.

The Refugee Act of 1998 enforces the right to apply for asylum in South Africa and makes provisions for a hearings-based determination procedure. A most controversial clause prohibits asylum-seekers from accessing employment and education services during the application process. This is a contentious position, given the lack of subsistence or welfare support for asylum-seekers from either UNHCR or the South African government. Officially, this clause has been scrapped, instead allowing asylum applicants the right to study and apply for employment if their status is not determined within six months. However, the law is silent on how other public services such as housing or health care can be accessed during this time. The Constitution states that every person is entitled to welfare rights, but it refers mainly to permanent residents. The Bill of Rights enshrined in South Africa’s Constitution clearly affirms that equality means the full and equal enjoyment of all rights and freedoms, although no constitutional jurisprudence yet exists on the rights of asylum-seekers. The Refugee Act of 1998 also stipulates that a refugee is entitled to the same basic health services and basic primary education as the inhabitants of the Republic. Not surprisingly, there is incongruence between the law and its actual implementation, enforcement, protection and provision of these rights. Many South African citizens lack access to even the most basic of rights, freedoms and services. It is, therefore, inconceivable to imagine that refugees will fare better in accessing these restricted services.

A problem that is systematically encountered by applicants in the early phase of their status determination is that no permit is granted until the first interview. Hence, asylum-seekers remain exposed to arrest as a ‘prohibited person’ under the Aliens Control Act before the first interview.

Although South Africa applies a full Refugee Status Determination (RSD) based on individual interviews with asylum-seekers, a form of *prima facie* asylum determination is *de facto* also in use for applicants whose country of origin is considered as a ‘refugee generating country’. Somalis belong to such a category (along with Angolans, Rwandans, Burundians, Sudanese, etc) thus their acceptance rate is higher than others (90%). However, lodging an application is not easy; indeed, the study shows that public officers limit the number of applicants by refusing them entrance to the building or by demanding bribes from asylum-seekers. Moreover, bribes seem to be a widespread practice in this field – interviewees also revealed that they had to pay in order to obtain proper refugee documents.



Having said that, it is understandable that the most relevant problems refugees and asylum-seekers face in South Africa concerns documentation and inefficiencies in the refugee application process, as these aspects deeply affect their lives. Moreover, xenophobic and discriminatory behaviour towards them is becoming more frequent. In fact, in the last few years Somalis living in South Africa have been the target of xenophobic attacks, their shops have been often burned or destroyed. This has been most prevalent in Port Elizabeth in the Eastern Cape.

According to current legislation, recognized refugees are entitled to services offered at municipal levels such as safety, housing, clinic services, libraries, etc. In reality, however, not only is there a lack of awareness at the local government level of the rights of refugees, but there appears to be no plans for ensuring that services are extended to refugees. The lack of access to public low-cost housing is problematic for asylum-seekers, who are not allowed to work. They have to rely on friends, relatives and their social and religious community networks for assistance. The homeless, forced to remain on the streets, are exposed to frequent and violent attacks and harassment, particularly in the Johannesburg area.

As regards settlement within the country, the majority of Somalis tend to live in the urban centres of Cape Town, Johannesburg, Port Elizabeth and Pretoria, with important differences in the living conditions existing among diverse urban settings. Johannesburg is cited as the nexus of the most dramatic and pressing concerns, whereas Cape Town and Laudium, a suburb of Pretoria, are home to a more cohesive and organized community. These urban hubs are an important destination for Somalis due the relative ease in finding employment, particularly in small business sectors such as shops or restaurants which enable them to gain a decent livelihood. In general, Somalis based in South Africa not only tend to live amongst other Somalis, but they interact almost exclusively within their community. Due to language, religious, and cultural barriers they tend to group in specific sections of town, typically amongst Indian communities, where they feel 'protected' by religious associations. For instance, the study reveals that the Somali community in South Africa feels more comfortable amongst Muslim Indians than in the black communities. Furthermore, the Mosques and Muslim networks in general play a crucial role in that they act as alternative to state-public services. These networks welcome new arrivals, advise them about the host country asylum system and provide for basic needs.

Compared to other countries included in the survey, a considerable portion of Somali refugees interviewed in South Africa can be categorized as "secondary movers". The trajectory linking Somalia to South Africa includes a stop-over in Kenya and Tanzania or Mozambique by boat from the Somali

coasts. The majority of refugees crossed the South African border without documentation, although only a few utilized the services of smugglers.

Similarly to European countries, South Africa is considered a final destination or at least a country of long settlement, which is evidenced by the disproportionately high number of Somalis willing to remain in this country as compared to other African host countries. South Africa is not only one of the few democratic and socially and politically stable countries in the continent, but, unlike other African states, it does not employ encampment asylum policies, which contributes to making it a natural destination for Somali exiles. The lack of mobility constraints enables refugees to live and work (to some degree) in the city with relative freedom of movement. Finally, the relative economic wealth of the country strengthens South Africa's appeal as the "land of milk and honey", an inaccurate image which quickly wears off once exiles become conscious of the harsh reality of trying to make a living in a foreign country.

Despite its relative attraction, the survey also indicates that there is a component, though residual, of interviewees willing to leave the country for other destinations which are mainly in northern Europe. Indeed, the possibilities of durable solutions in South Africa remain rare because of the drastic reduction in opportunities for resettlement in the last few years. Local integration is even more infrequent, given that most of the interviewees have little or no information concerning the possibility of acquiring permanent residence after the initial period of legal settlement.

## 2.7 Switzerland

Although known for its humanitarian tradition, Switzerland has seen its legislation regarding asylum matters become more restrictive in recent years. The legislative power over asylum matters (and over foreigners in general) lies with the Confederation, which is responsible for the Asylum Act of 1998 and the Law on the Stay and Sojourn of Aliens of 1931, as well as many other decrees, which are currently under review. The most important actor is the Federal Office for Migration (FOM), which is a branch of the Federal Department of Justice and Police. FOM is mainly responsible for the determination of asylum applications at first instance, although it works in tandem with the cantons (states) in areas such as asylum procedure, reception, social welfare, and promotion of voluntary repatriation, to name but a few. In the past years, an average of 10% of all asylum-seekers were granted refugee status, while approximately 25% received subsidiary status (provisional admission); the applications of the remaining 65% were rejected.

Switzerland is not a traditional or historical host country for Somalis, and the current population arrived as refugees in the last 12 years, with a total

population of about 5,000 persons. According to 2003 statistics, the majority (67%) possessed subsidiary form of protection, while the rest held an annual residence permit (16%), a permanent residence permit (9%) or are asylum-seekers (8%).

Contrary to EU States, the definition of refugee applied by Switzerland is still limited to persecution attributable to state agents<sup>25</sup> and, given that Somalia has been without a recognized government since 1991, Somali exiles cannot claim to be suffering from such persecution. This means that, with the exception a few beneficiaries of resettlement programmes (176 persons between 1992 and 1999, and none since) or those accepted through family reunification with those previously resettled, Somalis are not granted refugee status according to the Geneva Convention. However, because of their need for international protection, most of them receive a subsidiary form of protection, called provisional admission (F permit). Since 1997, single and adult Somali men who belong to a clan from Somaliland or Puntland, or who used to live in those regions, are increasingly having their asylum claims rejected. Despite the lack of appropriate legal status, no Somalis have been forcibly returned to Somalia (including to the northern parts) by the Swiss authorities, presumably because of the technical difficulties such a move would imply.

The rights and benefits to which provisionally admitted persons are entitled are subject to many limitations, and are only slightly better than those of asylum-seekers, even after many years of residence in the country<sup>26</sup>. Interviewees mentioned many of these limitations among the main problems they encounter in the long term, and often consider them as important reasons for a secondary movement from Switzerland to other European countries or beyond.

Apart from the difficulties linked to living with an insecure status and in a precarious situation for many years, Somali interviewees reported the restricted access to employment and to higher education among the main issues of concern to them. Provisionally admitted persons (with an F permit) are subject to various limitations in their access to the labour market, where priority is given to holders of other statuses (except asylum-seekers) or due to regional restrictions in regard to specific economic sectors. In reality, this means diplomas and previous working experience are not recognized or

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<sup>25</sup> A change of this practice is however envisaged.

<sup>26</sup> Switzerland's subsidiary protection scheme is different from that of other European countries, notably the Netherlands, which entitles subsidiary protected persons to rights similar to those of recognized refugees.

useful, relegating refugees to low-skilled, low-paid jobs. Similar barriers exist with regard to higher education. As vocational education is based on apprenticeships, young people with provisional admission face preferential and restrictive rules when they seek access to advanced education, as they do in the labour market.

Lastly, family reunification remains another contentious issue. Provisionally admitted persons are not entitled to family reunification, even if they are close relatives (spouses and children). An unintended consequence of this is that refugees will find illegal – often dangerous and costly – ways for relatives, especially their children, to join them in Switzerland. Even more restrictive is the fact that F permit holders are not entitled to travel documents and this lack of freedom of movement outside of Switzerland is considered as a form of “imprisonment” for transnational families who live in various countries.

An analysis of the journey of Somalis living in Switzerland shows that the more recently they arrived, the shorter the journey was. In comparison to exiles leaving in the first years of the civil war, it appears that refugees who left the homeland more recently had better opportunities to organize a more direct journey to their intended destination, using networks and paths opened up by earlier refugees.

Somalis who arrived in Switzerland during the 1990s came mainly from Somalia's neighbouring countries (mostly Kenya, but also Ethiopia, Djibouti or Yemen) as a result of unsatisfactory living conditions in the first country of settlement, combined with loss of hope in the political situation of Somalia. When concrete opportunities to travel materialized, many of the refugees opted to leave the continent. The great majority arrived illegally in Switzerland, mostly with the help of agents who organized the journey and the travel documents, and then accompanied them. The majority reached Europe by plane, often from a country neighbouring Somalia and/or via an Arab country (UAE or Saudi Arabia), while a minority undertook the risky journey across the Mediterranean Sea by boat. The journey from the arrival point (often Italy) to Switzerland is made by car or train.

The reasons pushing refugees to leave the camps or the cities and move onward are similar to those described in other case studies: difficult general conditions of living, lack of safety within and outside the camp, lack of opportunities for employment and self-sufficiency, and difficult access to education. Unregistered urban refugees are generally motivated to migrate by the lack of legal status and protection in urban areas, which leaves them at the mercy of police and surveillance authorities.

The choice of Switzerland as a settlement country is a by-product of a series of circumstances. While a large segment of the population is the result of

family reunification efforts, many others relied on an agent's choice and advice in choosing Switzerland as a host country. In several instances, interviewees arrived in Switzerland inadvertently, having been promised a different destination by the agent. The importance of Italy as an arrival point in Europe<sup>27</sup> also seems to play a role, given its proximity to Switzerland which is easily accessible (through the green border) and offers comparably good living conditions and access to the social welfare system.

Switzerland is commonly considered by the refugees as a transit country, even though the transition is often a long one. Similarly, Swiss experts consider the Somali community as secondary movers who are likely to undertake another migration, although many do not have concrete plans or the means to carry out such a scheme. Such a movement is likely because interviewees are often extremely disappointed with their situation in Switzerland, for the above-mentioned reasons, and are tempted to move on to countries which they feel will offer the legal, social and communal advantages they deem necessary to their well-being. So-called "dream destinations" are, most notably, the United Kingdom and, to a lesser extent, Scandinavian countries, USA and Canada, which are seen as offering permanent legal status, larger Somali communities, better employment and education opportunities, and more freedoms in general. Despite these temptations, not all refugees heed the call to undertake irregular secondary movements because of the increasingly restrictive asylum policies being adopted in many European countries (e.g. the Netherlands) and improved cooperation between states regarding border control and asylum-seekers.

## 2.8 Yemen

Somalia and Yemen have a long history of migration and communication which existed prior to the collapse of the Somali state. This link is rooted in the close proximity between the two countries and in their cultural and religious affinities<sup>28</sup>. This bond has enabled the Yemeni authorities and society to demonstrate a generous welcome to the exiled Somali population. Thus, when the civil war forced Somalis to leave their homeland, the choice of going to Yemen appeared to most of the exiles as a 'natural' one. For its part, the Yemeni government opened its borders to the asylum seekers by adopting a policy of *prima facie* recognition towards Somalis, from the early stages of the conflict to the present, although authorities are considering

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<sup>27</sup> Somali refugees consider Italy as a transit point only and rarely as a destination of settlement.

<sup>28</sup> There are hypotheses which suggest that Somalis might have originated from Yemen.

revising the regulations. According to the *prima facie* policy, all Somalis are recognized as refugees simply by virtue of their nationality.

According to UNHCR's 2004 figures, Yemen hosted 66,384 refugees, of which Somalis accounted for 63,511 (including 16,000 new arrivals); the rest comprised Ethiopians (1,990), Iraqis, Palestinians and Sudanese. Yemen is a party to the Geneva Convention of 1951 as well as to the 1967 New York Protocol, although it does not have a national refugee law. A draft Refugee Bill prepared with the assistance of UNHCR was indeed discussed in 2004, but it has yet to be approved. However, Article 46 of the national Constitution makes particular reference to refugee protection in its adherence to the principle of *non-refoulement*.

Responsibility for refugee administration is shared amongst different governmental bodies, including the Ministry of Human Rights, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Home Affairs, and the recently established National Committee for Refugee Affairs which is composed of representatives of the above-mentioned ministries and the UNHCR, although there is an apparent lack of coordination between the institutions. UNHCR and its implementing partners (mainly NGOs such as the French *Triangle*) are responsible for: (i) the management of asylum procedures, from the reception of asylum-seekers at the most important arrival port (Maifa); (ii) the distribution of refugee cards, which is done with the cooperation of the Yemeni Government; and, (iii) the administration of the only refugee camp in the country, including the delivery of basic services.

Due to systematic reports of serious mismanagement in the asylum system (inappropriate distribution of refugee cards; local authorities' refusal to recognize temporary papers, etc.), UNHCR and the Yemeni authorities launched a mass registration exercise for all Somali refugees from June 2002-May 2003, registering more than 47,000 persons during that period. An objective of this initiative was to establish a comprehensive refugee registration system by setting up six new registration centres, to which the government initially agreed, before later rejecting it and refusing to sign the agreement. As a result, refugees arriving after May 2003 (approximately 30,000 Somalis) have not been registered, while those previously registered possess refugee cards which have expired. At present, roughly 77,000 Somali refugees live in the country as undocumented refugees, despite the *prima facie* policy of the government.

Although Yemen has a refugee camp, compulsory in-camp residence is not fully applied and refugees can legally live in the towns. In fact, upon arrival, exiles are informed by UNHCR and the Yemeni police about the option to live in the refugee camp, Kharaz, or to live independently in urban areas with limited assistance. The large majority of Somalis opt for the towns, whereas a

minority, mostly women and children, accept the camp option. Kharaz camp is located in a desert area where living conditions are harsh and access to basic services such as health and education is limited. As in other countries examined, the World Food Programme's decision to reduce food rations has further jeopardized refugees' living conditions, making Yemen a country that is not conducive to any form of local integration.

Apart from the city of Taiz, where long-term refugee populations have become well-integrated, living conditions in cities are not always better than those in Kharaz camp. Refugees who chose to settle in towns live in unhealthy suburbs such as Basateen, in Aden, where access to basic services is even more difficult than in the camp. The advantage offered by life in the towns is the possibility of finding work and the networking necessary to organize onward movements. Income generating activities in towns are limited to informal employment as domestic workers, car cleaners, tailors, and small manual jobs. In general, refugee women are much better integrated than men through the informal economy as the demand for housekeepers is still high, whereas men are hardly able to find jobs.

Furthermore, to obtain a working permit refugees have to apply to the Ministry of Labour (although this Ministry recently informed UNHCR of the government's intention to issue regulations allowing recognized and documented refugees to take up gainful employment without having to obtain a working permit). However, employment authorizations are expensive and they require an HIV/AIDS test, which, if positive, leads to immediate expulsion from the country. This extreme policy, combined with employers' interest in maintaining cheap, illegal labour, explains why Somali refugees are concentrated in the informal labour market. However, working in the informal sector and lacking proper documents exposes Somali refugees, especially women, to exploitation (often sexual) and other forms of abuse, which reinforces their reasons for wanting to leave Yemen for other destinations. A further constraint motivating the onward migration is the lack of free universal education in the country, which forces parents to send children to private schools, an arduous challenge given their social and economic circumstances.

As a result, many interviewees consider Yemen as a transit country, a perception strongly supported by the quantitative data which show the percentage of refugees willing to live elsewhere to be higher than in any other country. It must be noted that, while proximity with the homeland and the relatively easy and cheap, albeit dangerous, passage to Yemen makes it a preferred destination for Somalis seeking refuge, it is also a transit point for onward movement. Such movement is encouraged by the harsh living conditions and the absence of opportunities for local integration or resettlement (few cases). The situation thus transforms what was once

considered as a "natural destination" to a "natural bridge" to other, more attractive targets.

Although the survey documented Somalis willing to leave Yemen for industrialized destinations such as Europe, the most attractive destination was the Gulf States, Saudi Arabia and Oman, where Somali refugees hoped to gain access to the informal job market. In so doing, they follow a traditional migration path of previous migrants who have been (illegally) employed in oil producing industries since the 1950s. Despite a modicum of success in accessing such informal markets, the mass influx of undocumented refugees in this region is being closely monitored, even restricted, because of the possible economic repercussions in the job markets and its impact on social cohesion. Such restrictions are also influenced by xenophobic attitudes towards Somali refugees among the native populations of different host countries, which have led to international pressure for the Yemeni government to increase and secure its border controls. A negative consequence of this international outcry has contributed to the government's decision to alter its asylum policy and its traditional openness to Somalis seeking refuge.

### 3 Legal Framework, Asylum Policies and Practices

The following chapter provides an overview of the legal frameworks and the rights granted to refugees in surveyed countries. Although it focuses specifically on the rights of refugees in a comparative perspective, reference is also made to enforcement and protection in practice at a national level. The viewpoints and perspectives of the refugees in various contexts are also presented in this chapter. While the legal framework is obviously intended to determine the rights and obligations of the legal residents (refugees, but also asylum-seekers and subsidiary admitted persons), this chapter also includes information on the situation of undocumented Somalis living in urban settings.

#### 3.1 Legal and Institutional Framework at National Level

All countries surveyed in this study are parties to the 1951 Geneva Convention and to its 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees. In addition, African states are also signatories to the 1969 OAU Convention on Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa, with the exception of Djibouti, although it has applied the law *in principle*. While the international treaties have been incorporated into extensive domestic legislation and have contributed to the emergence of a large body of case law in the Netherlands, Switzerland and, since 1996, in South Africa, legislation specifically addressing refugee issues<sup>29</sup> is limited or non-existent in the other countries.

Egypt refers to the right of political asylum and non-refoulement in its Constitution, although asylum policies are not codified in the law. Both Kenya and Yemen have discussed the adoption of national asylum bills, whereas Ethiopia and Djibouti have only summary national legislations<sup>30</sup> and institutions responsible for the implementation, although their actual operation is limited or depends on external financing. Overall, the constitution – or the reconstitution – of functioning state capacities are influenced by the deteriorating economic and sometimes difficult political situation, especially in Kenya, but in Yemen and Djibouti as well. A controversial political debate has been emerging concerning refugee affairs, with striking similarities to policy developments in the Netherlands and

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<sup>29</sup> Aliens Act 2000 in the Netherlands; Asylum Law of 1999 in Switzerland.

<sup>30</sup> Refugee Proclamation of 2004 and Ordinance 77053 of 1977.

Switzerland. Refugees are viewed by the host population and/or depicted by politicians as a threat to security, specifically due to trafficking of arms or drugs; they are perceived as taxing social services and straining the environment, particularly in the case of large camps in Kenya and Ethiopia.

In spite of differences in national law, it can be stated that refugees are, to a very large extent, subject either to *ad-hoc* government decisions or to regulations under the aliens and immigration law. This holds true for all African countries and Yemen except South Africa. In addition, with the exception of South Africa, UNHCR plays an important role at various levels of governance, irrespective of the governing institutional framework. In many instances, UNHCR intervenes in policy elaboration, assists in the drafting of asylum laws, as well as in the implementation of asylum procedure and financial arrangements. In all Southern countries except South Africa, reception and aid to refugees is to a large extent financed by international organisations or NGOs. For example, ARRA, the external state body responsible for the provision of assistance to refugees in Ethiopia – reporting (indirectly) to the Prime Minister – is financed by UNHCR.

The Kenyan government conducted individual refugee status determination until the early 1990s, but since then such duties have been transferred to NGOs and then to UNHCR, following the influx of refugees from Somalia. The necessary involvement of international actors may have been a catalyst for the decline in existing state structures and expertise in the refugee sector (HRW 2004, Kagwanja 2002). Today, the National Refugee Secretariat, which reports to the Ministry of Home Affairs is clearly under-staffed (only one officer in charge in 2004) and faces a somewhat conflictive relation with the more powerful Department of Immigration, which was formerly independent of the ministry. Similar difficulties have been noted in other countries such as Yemen, where responsibility for refugee affairs is shared by three ministries (Human Rights, Home Affairs and Foreign Affairs); the outcome is incompetence due to coordination problems. In Egypt, the ministries of Foreign Affairs and of the Interior are the main governmental entities working with UNHCR which remains responsible for the management of refugee issues.

The *de facto* division of competencies among national and international actors in the area of refugee registration, documentation and asylum procedures is illustrated in Table 4, even though differences exist between sub-sectors of refugee policy and there are changes over time. In simplified terms, one can state that governments play a minor (direct) role in Kenya, Yemen and Egypt, where the function of UNHCR and other international actors is clearly dominant, even if states are responsible for security issues, amongst other things. In Ethiopia and Djibouti, there is close collaboration between the two main protagonists (UNHCR and governments), whereas in

South Africa, the Netherlands and Switzerland, the government is in charge of refugee protection and reception. In these last three countries, UNHCR has a much more limited role in the asylum procedure, though it can intervene in individual cases. In all states, NGOs are involved as implementing partners commissioned either by governments or international organisations.

*Table 4: De facto role of major actors in registration, documentation and asylum procedure\* in surveyed countries*

	Yemen	Egypt	Kenya	Ethiopia	Djibouti	ZA	CH/NL
Government	limited	limited	limited (currently)	relatively limited	relatively limited	strong	Strong
Competent Ministries	HR, Intr, Forgn.	Interior, Foreign	Interior	Prime Minister	Interior	Interior	Justice
UNHCR Camp policy	dominant facultative	dominant no camps	dominant strict	important relatively strict	important strict as of 2003	subsidiary no camps	subsidiary no camps

\* In some cases assistance to refugees is also concerned.

It is beyond the scope of this survey to analyse and project the optimal institutional framework for refugee protection and its impact on secondary movements, but the findings in this study clearly suggest that an active state role is indispensable in improving the situation. This holds particularly true in protracted refugee situations when critical issues such as refugee self-reliance, local integration opportunities and challenges related to development affect the well-being of refugees and enhance the need for further movement.

The collaboration between different, and sometimes changing or conflicting, actors also calls for coordination and information-sharing, which appears to be insufficient in several countries surveyed – e.g. Yemen, Djibouti, Kenya, Egypt. This aspect is well depicted in the process of admission to the territory and registration, which may have far-reaching consequences for the situation of refugees and other actors.

### 3.2 Admission of Refugees

Broadly speaking, entering Somalia's neighbouring countries is not and has never been a major problem for Somali refugees, even those without valid identity documents. Either the checks are summary or else Somalis are accepted on the basis of their presumed right to protection. However, cases of bribery being essential in order to gain entry into the country have been reported, particularly in Kenya, where refugees are often accused of illegal entry, and in Djibouti, which has recently reinforced border controls in order to fight terrorism in the region. The situation is somewhat different in

Europe, where entry controls are strict, especially at airports. Hence, most refugees who are not accepted on the basis of resettlement or family reunification (which concern only a limited numbers of persons) enter the Netherlands or Switzerland with “borrowed” documents or with the help of smugglers, with very few of them applying for asylum at the borders.

The right of non-refoulement is, in principle, well respected in all countries surveyed. In practice, forced returns of (potential) refugees at the border are few and have only been reported in Kenya<sup>31</sup> and recently in Djibouti, when crossers have been considered to be undocumented immigrants. Roughly two-thirds of all interviewees consider their protection against refoulement to be satisfactory, but this proportion varies considerably between different host countries. Only 25% of the urban refugees in Kenya – most of whom are unregistered<sup>32</sup> – felt protected against forced return, as compared to 97% of the interviewees in Yemen (see Table 5). Obviously, the answers to this question reflect the situation as perceived by the refugees interviewed.

*Table 5: Interviewees satisfied with host country's protection scheme against refoulement (in %)*

Host country	Total	KE	ET	YE	DJ	EG	ZA	CH	NL
	67	25	59	97	56	83	49	74	72
N (respondents)	760	60	103	116	117	154	105	54	47

The Netherlands is among the few European countries undertaking a limited number of forced returns, and these primarily concern rejected asylum-seekers from the northern part of Somalia.

### 3.3 Registration and Asylum Determination

The findings concerning registration and documentation of refugees reveal a series of problems in most developing countries surveyed. For various reasons, which will be explained below (chapter 4.5), more than half the refugees did not try to file an asylum application or register at camps in the first country reached (Table 6). This figure increased significantly between 1991 and recent years – 46% to 66% in the sample. The proportion of applications filed and actually registered by the competent bodies, according

<sup>31</sup> For the case of Kenya, see also UNHCR 2005a.

<sup>32</sup> For recall, due to practical problems, interviews with camp refugees in Kenya could not be included in the sample.

to the statements of refugees, also decreased over time (from 97% in 1991 to 74% in 2002-2005; see Table 7).

*Table 6: Asylum applications filed in first countries reached (in %)*

		N
Asylum application filed	42	332
No application filed	58	468
Total	100	800

*Table 7: Asylum applications registered according to time of departure from Somalia (in %)*

		N
Application registered before 1991	97	119
1992 – 1996	91	76
1997 – 2001	76	82
2002 – 2005	74	46
Total (N 814*)	87	323

\* In 491 cases no application was filed or response is missing.

Numerous expert and refugee interviews point to the fact that registration has not always been possible, especially when camps or registration offices in urban areas were closed, or at least reported to be so. Evidence from refugees who tried in vain to access the authorities or UNHCR offices is reported in Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya and South Africa and, to a lesser extent, in Yemen. The results suggest that the fewer the opportunities provided for registering an asylum claim, the less likely refugees are to attempt registration. In other words, during periods when – or in countries where – the registration rate (number of applications registered) is lower, fewer attempts to register are actually made, which is not necessarily a reflection of a reduced flow of refugees in the country<sup>33</sup>.

<sup>33</sup> As will be stated later, problems in access to registration are only one explanation for refugees not registering in the first host country.

The police often harassed me. There was also a computer virus at the Home Affairs offices, which wiped out records of refugees, but they have refused to enter these refugees' details again! My application was one of the records they refused to enter back into the system, so I basically do not exist and could be arrested or worse -- be deported (South Africa, female).

Broadly speaking, a deterioration has been observed in registration and access to recognised documentation. This development is said to be influenced both by declining resources, particularly investments by international organisations, and by weakening national economies which compel governments to be less receptive to incoming refugees<sup>34</sup>.

It is a fact that providing proper registration and documentation is a complex issue, particularly when different actors are involved – governments, UNHCR, and implementing partners. In all Southern countries examined, the practices for registration fall far short of the recommended standards of modern registration methods. Specifically, only heads of families – mostly men – were interviewed and only one ration card issued; (re)validation of cards was done intermittently or not at all in some camps; lack of identification for other family members, including newborns.

In practice, the procedures for registration at camps and the distribution of ration cards differ greatly and are often complex and incomprehensible for both applicants and observers. The lack of communication forces refugees to seek additional information from community sources, which often proves inaccurate or misleading. Others opted to bypass the official registration procedures and simply purchase ration cards instead of enduring the long waiting periods, which were presumably designed to discourage local candidates from trying to gain access to assistance. Yet others avoided the asylum system in order to move on and apply in another country. Many interviewees recount situations where favouritism and frequent, inappropriate modifications in the system rendered it ineffective and thus susceptible to misuse.

There were additional problems associated with registration in Ethiopia, Djibouti and Kenya, including lack of up-to-date statistics. In these situations, new family members who are not included in the ration card – particularly newborns or spouses – do not receive assistance. Some experts justify this concern by noting an overall decline in the World Food Programme's available food stockpiles which necessitates a reduction in

<sup>34</sup> In Yemen and Djibouti, for example, refugees found jobs in the regular labour market and in the shadow economy during the 1990s and were thus self-reliant. At present, the economic situation and political climate reduces or eliminates such possibilities.

ration quantities. Others cite the large presence of impoverished natives/nationals in the camps masquerading as refugees in order to receive humanitarian assistance. Despite these justifications, it is evident that a reduction in food ration leads to discrimination; as a result, many families turn to community networks to pool resources while others resort to child labour as a means of survival. The lack of trust in the humanitarian system forces many to turn to deception or even abuse in order to maintain an adequate supply of food/assistance.

The case studies reveal several large-scale re-registration and revalidation initiatives, which could have served several purposes: (i) to assess camp population, excluding natives/nationals, which means locking up the camp; (b) to provide individual documentation; and, (c) to screen the reasons for continued protection and assistance (short refugee status determination). It appears that priority was given to substantiating the need for continued protection in an effort to commence the repatriation process for those eligible to return to north-east and north-west Somalia (Puntland and Somaliland, respectively). However, the strategies for conducting such assessments were poorly implemented and ended in failure, as was the case in Ethiopia (2004), Djibouti (2003/4) and Yemen (2002/3). According to experts, the reasons for such failures include insufficient financial and human resources, lack of political will to enforce such policies and lack of cooperation by the refugee population concerned.

Only 41% of interviewees consider their registration and legal status as satisfactory. This low figure indicates a significant concern among the refugees, even though the widespread discontent has different meanings in different contexts, as reflected in many individual testimonies. In Switzerland, which has a 37% satisfaction level, the discontent is linked to the limitations posed by a person's legal status (with 70% granted subsidiary protection) rather than to deficiencies in the registration/documentation process.

The highest rate of satisfaction related to registration, documentation and legal status is found in Yemen (81%) and the Netherlands (73%). The particularly high satisfaction rate for Yemen reflects the official policy which recognizes all Somalis as *prima facie* refugees on the basis of their nationality. In the Dutch case, the approval rate is linked to the legal status of the interviewees, most of whom were permanent residents or, in some cases, even citizens (cf. Table 36 in the annexe).

Although a considerable segment of interviewees in African states are recognised refugees – either *prima facie* or through individual status determination (South Africa and Egypt) – many others continue to live without documents in urban areas.

In South Africa and Egypt, Somali refugees must undergo a lengthy status determination process and remain asylum-seekers for some time before receiving a proper refugee status (or - in rare cases – a rejection of their claim). During this period, their means of survival are restricted to illegal, or under-employment and communal support networks, in the absence of government support mechanisms<sup>35</sup>. While asylum claims are usually rapidly processed in Egypt, the situation is much more difficult in South Africa, where asylum-seekers' documents are not always recognized, often leading to police harassment, summary arrest and detention. Acquiring official status is problematic as asylum-seekers are subjected to endless waiting periods of months, even years, before a decision is reached on their cases.

Such differences in legal status reflect discrepancies in asylum and immigration policies and also have an impact on the rights of the persons concerned in their host countries, which must be borne in mind when interpreting the results of the study. For example, social assistance is usually only provided to individuals in possession of legal documents which confer a legal status.

When all the consequences deriving from insufficient or inappropriate registration are considered, this aspect actually makes it a major problem for all stakeholders. Indeed, registration is linked to various other protection-related issues: protection against arbitrary arrest or refoulement, access to asylum procedure, distribution of food (ration cards) and a series of other rights (education, health care, sometimes employment, etc.). In most cases, the absence of proper registration dramatically increases the vulnerability of refugees or asylum-seekers. Hence, registration is an important instrument for states, NGOs, and the international community which can be used in programme design, monitoring and evaluating the population, and in implementing durable solutions (resettlement, voluntary repatriation and local integration).

### 3.4 Basic Assistance and Health Care

In several countries (Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya and Yemen), refugees are directed to camps where basic assistance and health care are provided. However, the degree of camp confinement varies from one country to another, depending on its asylum policies. Camp confinement is, in principle,

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<sup>35</sup> A similar situation is reported in the Kenyan camps, where recent arrivals have to endure long waiting periods, often years, before being registered. This forces refugees to rely solely on the support of other refugees for immediate assistance.



compulsory in some countries (Djibouti, Ethiopia, and Kenya) but not in others (Yemen). In most cases, the camp policy is not enacted in law or regulations promulgated by parliament. Administrative exceptions to camp confinement also exist and the movement of refugees between camps and cities or urban areas is sometimes tolerated in practice by local authorities. In Yemen, refugees are allowed to settle in the camp and cities, but assistance (food and shelter) outside the camp is minimal. In 2003, Djibouti introduced compulsory camp confinement by forcing all refugees, asylum-seekers and undocumented migrants living in the city to register at a camp. In Ethiopia and Kenya, only a limited number of refugees are allowed to live in the major cities, mainly for medical reasons. However, both countries have a disproportionately high number of undocumented Somalis living in urban areas.

Refugee camps were set up to cope with the influx of Somali refugees at the beginning of the 1990s. Originally, their purpose was mainly practical (effective distribution of humanitarian assistance), but later they came rather to serve a political or economic purpose (keeping potential competitors away from a poor labour market). To ensure adequate separation, encampment policies legally or practically limit freedom of movement for all refugees, thus engendering tremendous frustration amongst the population, particularly for those living in protracted situations. In most cases, those who bypass regulations forfeit protection and assistance, with many losing their status if living outside the camp area<sup>36</sup>. Undocumented urban refugees are particularly vulnerable, although some manage to obtain employment in the informal labour market and enjoy a relatively better livelihood than the encamped population.

The majority of interviewees – both experts and refugees – concur that the conditions of material aid in the camps have deteriorated over the last few years. They agree that food rations are insufficient to meet the basic needs of refugees, especially those of the most vulnerable categories (mainly infants and children, the old and elderly). Continuous reductions in rations, the inequitable distribution methods (inaccurate family statistics) and inappropriate delivery schedules engender discontent and distrust in the asylum system, in addition to fostering illegal modes of obtaining resources. Furthermore, non-food items are not equitably distributed, which compels refugees to sell portions of their rations in order to purchase these. A critical problem is the non-availability of cooking fuel, which forces females to

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<sup>36</sup> In many cases the camp ration card is used as documentation.

collect firewood in the remote areas surrounding the camp and risk great physical insecurity, besides causing irreparable ecological destruction.

My family has 14 members and the ration card we have is for seven people. We have been here for 15 years but we got means for shelter only twice. When we are taking the food we are ordered by ARRA to bring back the jerry cans in which they put the food. But we need them to fetch water; plus we are entitled to get the new ones and keep them. The food we get is only wheat and oil, sugar and some salt. The food is not balanced. The health care we receive is very bad. Two of my cousin's children got bitten by a dog, but they didn't get any treatment and they were not transferred to Jijiga either. This is just one example (Ethiopia, male).

As previously noted, the reduction in assistance is attributed to numerous factors, not all of which are comprehensible to the population concerned. And although the decline in international assistance - colloquially termed 'donor fatigue' - and corruption/fraud<sup>37</sup> in the camps are quite real, there is an inherent strategy underlying the call for asylum policy reform in all countries, particularly in Africa.

In both Djibouti and Ethiopia, expert interviews reveal that the reduction of food rations is meant to encourage refugees from Somaliland and Puntland, who are deemed to be "non-genuine" recipients of protection, to repatriate. Given the lack of official support for this controversial strategy, it is difficult to assess the validity of such allegations. However, an indication of the rollback in refugee protection can be seen in the signs of malnutrition amongst children and infants. This is substantiated by health professionals interviewed, although this is officially denied by the states and the international organisations concerned.

#### ***Dadaab camps (Kenya), a particular case among the camps studied?***

If the rights of encamped refugees are theoretically similar in all camps and countries surveyed, important differences can also be discerned, most notably in the degree of NGOs engagement in refugee camps and on implemented projects aimed at improving specific aspects of camp life.

However, Dadaab camps (Kenya) obviously show striking differences in the type of social structuring which can occur in a heavily populated camp in a protracted situation, in comparison to the other camps studied.

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<sup>37</sup> Interviewees in Djibouti and Ethiopia had suspicions that the majority of recognized refugees are actually nationals who live in camps in order to access free food and health care.

Even though power struggles and discrimination undoubtedly exist in all refugee camps, it appears that more sophisticated socio-professional stratification is present in Dadaab camp, where a large segment of refugees seem to be better off than their counterparts in other camps observed. This structural difference seemingly lies in the refugee community's ingenuity which has enabled them to establish an informal economy within the camp (small businesses, farming and herding, and services such as cleaning, driving, building, etc. for others) with clients that are not only from the local areas, but also among the camp population itself (Horst 2003). The size of the encamped population, plus communities in outlying areas, enable refugees to obtain employment and earn the additional income necessary for survival and self-sufficiency, particularly for those unable to access external financial assistance.

Refugees' autonomy is further advanced by the establishment of reliable means of transportation which enable them to move between camp and neighbouring cities. It appears from the Kenya study that (irregular) travels between camp, Nairobi and other important cities is quite common, reflecting, on the one hand, a relatively loose encampment policy, and on the other, the presence of financial resources that makes travel possible<sup>38</sup>.

A tentative explanation of the "Dadaab effect" lies in the legal limbo refugees in Kenya are subjected to, in comparison to other countries examined. For example, in other cases, refugees are eligible to reside and work in the cities either legally (Yemen) or illegally but with an informal acceptance by the local population and authorities (Addis Ababa and – until recently – Djibouti City). This means that, generally speaking, those with sufficient resources chose the city to make their living, while the very poorest stayed in the camps. In Kenya, on the other hand, living in the capital city, with the exception of the Somali neighbourhood, appears much more difficult, with frequent police harassment and arrests, whereby refugees and asylum-seekers are forced to buy their freedom via bribes. For relatively more affluent refugees, such an existence is not problematic because financial resources allow them to "buy" police cooperation, in addition to other services such as health and education. Poorer refugees must contend with the paradoxical situation of living with "better" personal security (no police harassment) but meagre assistance in the camps vis-à-vis an urban setting which is highly insecure but offers better incomes. For the many, the choice is to split family

<sup>38</sup> Campbell's description of the important movements of refugees between the camps and the city, and the fact that Somali entrepreneurs have even established bus lines between these different places, pleads in favour of this (Campbell 2005).

time between the city and camp in order to maximise available resources in both arenas (Campbell 2005).

In summary, the fact that these movements are possible, unlike in Ethiopia, and that urban living (in Nairobi) for the whole family is an option for only a minority explains – at least partially – the development of a more sophisticated social structure in Dadaab camps. Moreover, it must be noted that while the study does not contain direct data from the Kenya camps, interviewees who previously resided in the camps, in addition to important secondary literature, enable this comparison.

As for undocumented refugees, they are generally not entitled to any support from UNHCR. However, small-scale NGOs offer different services (emergency financial help, medical consultations, schools, literacy courses, etc.) to unregistered refugees. Assistance is offered on discretionary grounds and is generally available to the most vulnerable groups. The situation of undocumented refugees living in South Africa, Egypt and the European countries in the study are similar: individuals who are illegal residents and who lack financial support can only turn to private networks, charitable and religious organisations – and not the state – for assistance.

Thus, the standard of living of undocumented urban refugees, especially in Ethiopia, Djibouti and Kenya, varies greatly according to the personal situation: while exiles gain financial success through flourishing businesses ventures (see Campbell 2005 for the case of Nairobi), others survive marginally better than counterparts in the camps by means of illegal employment and remittances. The vast majority of vulnerable asylum-seekers live in miserable conditions in overcrowded houses or on the streets, with little or no food. Widows or divorced women with children, non-accompanied minors and orphans, disabled people constitute the majority of this group. All other aspects (access to health services, children's schooling, etc.) similarly depend on the economic situation of each person but, in general, the majority are not able to meet these needs at all.

*Table 8: Interviewees satisfied with their standards of living in their host country (in %)*

Host country	Total	KE	ET	YE	DJ	EG	ZA	CH	NL
	16	10	11	5	5	7	20	50	71
N (Respondents)	728	60	102	114	118	136	88	56	48

The level of satisfaction of interviewees (both camp refugees and undocumented persons) regarding their general standards of living in the African countries and Yemen is extremely low, with an average of less than one person in ten being satisfied (Table 8).

A variety of health services are available at all camps for permanent residents, as well as – in some instances – for inhabitants in neighbouring communities. The degree of satisfaction for services provided varies, with many interviewees complaining about difficulty in accessing care or improper treatment in Ethiopia, Kenya and Yemen. In Kebribeyah camp (Ethiopia), the situation is described as very tense due to the understaffing of the health centre and the reported abuses of power by the only doctor responsible for all camp refugees. In Kenya, many refugees living in the camps still awaiting registration do not have access to the health centre, which often compels them to move to Nairobi where they can expect to be treated. In contrast, health centres in the Djibouti camps are considered to be relatively better due to the presence of an Asian medical NGO (AMDA) which works in partnership with UNHCR. This agency is in charge of the treatment of both refugees and non-refugee patients from the region.

In Egypt and South Africa, where most refugees live in urban areas, governments plead scarcity of resources to justify the limited assistance offered, insisting that the generous admission policies towards Somalis impede their capacity to offer high levels of support. Hence, only individuals who are considered as particularly vulnerable are provided with monetary assistance from UNHCR and its implementing partners. In South Africa, whilst the asylum application is being processed, which can take several months or years, no subsistence or welfare support is provided (either from UNHCR or the South African government). Recognized refugees are entitled to welfare and health care, but given the disparity between the law and actual practices in effect, a majority of refugees and asylum-seekers remain without assistance, a problem which also affects South African nationals. Moreover, refugee services are not always accessible because of poor coordination between government ministries and implementing agencies. Refugees in these two countries therefore live in poor conditions in segregated “Somali” neighbourhoods, with little or no interaction with the local population.

In the Netherlands and Switzerland, asylum-seekers are provided with basic assistance and health care, and are housed in collective reception facilities or private flats. In Switzerland, the assistance provided for asylum-seekers and persons under subsidiary protection is substantially lower than that granted to nationals or recognised refugees. Given that the majority of Somalis hold subsidiary protection permit, their situation is considered difficult because of their protracted dependency on social assistance. The social system was designed for short-term recipients; the duration of assistance is increasingly

problematic in light of their inability to find adequate employment to substitute government assistance. Furthermore, asylum-seekers and foreigners under provisional admission are assigned to particular cantons (states) which limit their ability to move, reside or seek employment in an alternative area. This situation is reflected in the relatively low level of satisfaction (50%) of the Swiss sample regarding their general standards of living (Table 8). In contrast, subsidiary admitted persons (as well as Convention refugees) in the Netherlands are entitled to rights similar to those of Dutch nationals, with increased access to social services and primary and secondary schooling.

### 3.5 Employment and Education

At the time of flight, access to labour market opportunities and education for children or young adults was not a priority. However, after the initial period of shock and grief, acquisition of resources and skills is an essential survival strategy for all refugees, irrespective of country of origin. This need is further compounded in protracted refugee situations.

Legal regulations concerning access to the labour market for refugees are rather restrictive in African countries, with the exception of South Africa. Ethiopia and Egypt have placed reservations on the 1951 Geneva Convention concerning the right to work. In Ethiopia and Kenya, employment is prohibited; in Egypt, employment is possible, in principle, but necessitates extensive administrative and financial measures which are often unavailable to refugees. The situation is *de facto* similar in Djibouti, which officially allows employment to refugees, even providing for professional accreditation for qualified refugees, although in practice this proves to be not only impractical, but impossible. In Yemen, the practice is – or at least was – more liberal, though administrative barriers to obtaining work permits are in place and are becoming increasingly important.

Legal or administrative constraints further complicate the precarious employment situations in the surveyed countries. In essence, and with a few exceptions, most refugees either have no professional activity or are employed in the informal economy (domestic labour, small business, etc.). This insecure environment frequently exposes them to exploitation, abuse or general harassment. In Yemen and Djibouti, for example, an important share of Somali refugees have found activities in the informal sector as domestic workers, car cleaners, tailors, and in small manual jobs. In general, refugee women appear to be more integrated economically than men; they are able to participate in the informal economy because the demand for house-keepers is still high; men on average experience more difficulties accessing the informal job market. This economic and psychological instability is a fundamental

reason underpinning the need to migrate and attain a more secure and safe environment, particularly for families with children. In practice, work conditions and risks for refugees are therefore comparable to those of asylum seekers (especially in South Africa<sup>39</sup>) or undocumented foreigners, who are not allowed to work.

Some refugees undertake occasional humanitarian activities in the camps (e.g. food distribution, teaching) or volunteer work, but income-generating activities and labour opportunities remain restricted. Limited income and assistance often results in the creation of informal employment (small businesses in camps or in surrounding towns) and the decision to split the family and have some members (often young girls and husbands) seek work where such opportunities exist in cities.

This explains why only a minority (26%) of interviewees are satisfied with the opportunities of employment and education in their host country, as illustrated in Table 9<sup>40</sup>. According to interviewees, the higher satisfaction rates in Ethiopia are a reflection of the high degree of tolerance of informal employment shown by the government and the public, which has been reported by several interviewees.

*Table 9: Interviewees satisfied with employment and education opportunities in their host country (in %)*

Host country	Total	KE	ET	YE	DJ	EG	ZA	CH	NL
	22	10	55	13	10	13	15	28	46
N (Respondents)	724	59	101	120	115	130	94	57	48

Formal access to the labour market for recognized refugees is guaranteed in South Africa, the Netherlands and Switzerland, though in the latter, fairly heavy restrictions are imposed on beneficiaries of subsidiary protection (limitation to certain sectors, priority of residents). Many refugees find it difficult to obtain a job in practice. This is also true in South Africa where the competition for work opportunities frequently exposes refugees to xenophobic attitudes from the local population.

<sup>39</sup> Officially, if the status of the applicant is not determined within six months, the asylum-seeker is entitled to apply for permission to work and receive education.

<sup>40</sup> In the standardised part of the questionnaire, satisfaction concerning work and education was treated as one item.

Access to the labour market is prohibited for unregistered refugees, who turn to the informal sector, and mostly illegal employment. While some opportunities are available, they have no adequate protection, which results in numerous types of exploitation and abuse by employers. Among these abuses are below – minimum wages, irregular or non – payment of wages, harassment and sexual exploitation of women. Similar treatment has been reported in all countries examined, with women depicted as more vulnerable to such abuses, although legally authorized employees also suffer similar exploitation. This is particularly notably in Yemen, where an unclear labour legislation results in the hiring of many Somalis who find themselves at the mercy of abusive employers.

The situation of illegal residents and workers in Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates is described as particularly difficult. These countries are not signatory States of the 1951 Convention and therefore do not offer any protection to refugees. Somalis have historically provided a low-skilled work force in this region, largely as undocumented residents (Kleist 2004), and many have continued to do so since fleeing the civil war. Fear of being arrested and deported to Somalia is a daily experience; lack of a legal status also means that it is difficult (if not impossible) to gain access to education for children; while unregulated working conditions mean that employees are subject to all types of abuse.

In terms of education, the situation greatly varies from one context to the next. Though access to primary education should be guaranteed for all refugee children, as it is in the Netherlands and Switzerland, this is not always the case in developing countries. Egypt and Ethiopia make specific reservations to the Geneva Convention regarding access to education.

Primary schools exist in all camps, with the notable exception of Aour-Aoussa camp in Djibouti, which was set up in 2003 as a temporary transit centre but which continues to host thousands of refugees, including many children. The presence of schools, however necessary, is not sufficient to their development. It is impossible to indicate precise figures, but it appears that only a portion of school-aged youth actually attend schools, especially in Yemeni, Kenyan and Ethiopian camps. Furthermore, the proportion of uneducated girls is particularly high, though there are programmes in place to reduce gender inequality in education. In the case of Djibouti, NGOs and UN agencies are working together on crucial programmes to increase the enrolment of girls in school by providing individual material assistance

which can be used to supplement their family income<sup>41</sup>. This strategy is designed both to reduce the probability of girls dropping out, and to curb the desire to seek employment as domestic workers in the urban areas. In most camps, many children, a majority of them girls, are required to work in order to contribute to the family's meagre resources. Children work either in the camp (helping in small family businesses, or other odd jobs) or in the towns around the camp, as well as in the capital cities, usually as maids. Secondary education and professional/vocational training programmes are rarely available in the camps. Upon completion of primary level, the majority of youngsters remain unemployed and unskilled. This has earned them the label of a "lost generation".

In Ethiopia, better-quality education facilities are located in urban areas and refugees who can afford the fees generally send their children to private schools. In so doing, they are able to settle in the capital city rather than "sit and wait" endlessly in the camps where conditions are inhospitable and there is little hope of change. In South Africa, Yemen and Egypt, numerous problems associated with local authorities and the reimbursement of school fees complicate the position with regard to education, thus reducing or cancelling the possibility for school-aged children to receive knowledge.

In almost all countries, including the European ones, access to secondary, higher and adult education is problematic from both the legal and practical point of view. A combination of various factors, including legal status, income and country of residence generally work together to limit the social advancement of refugees and asylum-seekers, preventing them from acquiring education and other social development skills. Despite these constraints, some refugee families sacrifice much of their income in order to educate one or more of their children, especially at higher levels of education, in an effort to improve their prospects for the future.

It must be emphasised that despite the numerous obstacles facing the exiled population, there are important differences within the refugee community itself, with certain groups being more disadvantaged than others, particularly minority clans or castes.

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<sup>41</sup> In order to strengthen girls' interest in education, UNESCO partnered with WFP to supply each student with a monthly take-home ration of one gallon of high-grade vegetable oil which they could resell.

### 3.6 Security

Although ensuring the physical safety of the refugees is the primary role of the agencies in charge of asylum affairs, security issues are one of the major concerns in the discourse of camp refugees. On a general level, many camp refugees are afraid of raids by Somalis from across the border (especially in Kenya and Ethiopia), and of attacks by the local population when they leave the camp, notably to fetch wood. Women are particularly at risk and face regular sexual assaults or harassment. Insecurity and violence within the camp are also widespread. Coupled with discriminatory mechanisms, insecurity is a serious problem for refugees belonging to minority groups, as well as for members of the Somali clans fighting for power in southern Somalia, since representatives of all clan schemes are present in the camps and clan/political enmities are reproduced there. Kenyan and Djiboutian camps have often been described as notoriously dangerous for women, with high levels of sexual violence both inside and outside the camps.<sup>42</sup>

Girls are often raped when they go to fetch firewood. Men who have tried to get firewood have been badly beaten and sent back without any wood. Girls are raped but allowed to collect the wood and so girls and women continue to be exposed to danger because we need to eat to survive. The rapists are almost always local people who live in the area (Djibouti, Aour-Aoussa camp, female).

Important tensions exist in both Ethiopian and Djiboutian camps between refugees and camp management staff, the former being afraid of the latter and reporting the use of intimidation, harassment and abuse of power to silence the population into compliance.

Since they live with no official status, undocumented persons living in the cities of Somalia's neighbouring countries are very much exposed to all sorts of harassment and abuses. As previously described, the issue of security is particularly important in Kenya, where undocumented refugees live in very unsafe conditions, being subject to police harassment, in a xenophobic anti-refugee climate (Campbell 2005; Human Rights Watch 2002).

One day, the Kenyan police arrested me when I was selling clothes in Garisa Lodge Market in Nairobi. Many times I was caught and they would beat me and put a wooden stick under your cheeks and lift you up, which hurts your body. Nobody is protecting you in Kenya and your money is your only protection whether you are in a house or in a camp or in a market (Egypt, male).

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<sup>42</sup> Campbell's (2005) recent observations, however, challenge UNCHR statistics by noting a significant decrease in sexual violence or rapes in the Kenyan refugee camps.

On the other hand, undocumented Somalis in Addis Ababa live relatively peacefully, being tolerated by the local population and the authorities (including police officers), due to political affinities between the authorities in both countries. Exiles in Djibouti were likewise acceptably treated by the state and public until 2003, when the expulsion of illegal economic migrants indirectly targeted refugees and asylum-seekers as well. Currently, many refugees in the country report increased police harassment and extortion, in addition to a high level of labour and sexual exploitation by local employers.

Safety is also a concern for refugees in Egypt and even more in South Africa (with only 34% of interviewees feeling physically secure), where the local population in some instances espouses xenophobic and anti-immigrant tendencies, often resulting in violent attacks in the South African case. Although work for refugees is not forbidden in both countries, they are in the practice exposed to discriminatory practices which force them into the informal labour market.

On a different level, in Switzerland and the Netherlands, while personal safety is guaranteed, interviewees nevertheless mentioned discriminatory and xenophobic experiences and feelings from their encounters and interaction with employers, police officers, apartment owners, etc.

I sometimes feel more Dutch than Somali. I enjoyed a Dutch education. Nevertheless, I'm afraid that I will not get the same chances as a Dutch person. I noticed that when I started looking for a job. Some potential employers told me that they see me as an insecurity factor because I'm black and Moslem. That was a wake-up call for me. I was naïve, and thought that I would be treated like any other person. But now I realise that I will never belong to Dutch society. I have Dutch citizenship but I will never be part of it. That thought never goes away. I feel more suspicious now in my contacts with Dutch people (the Netherlands, male).

The sense of “not belonging” was frequently reported in Switzerland, as well as in the Netherlands. In the latter, even naturalised Somalis mentioned this feeling, which has – in their eyes – become stronger in recent years, particularly since the assassination of film-maker Theo Van Gogh by a Dutch man of Moroccan origin, who presumably belonged to an extremist Islamic group.

### 3.7 Access to Durable Solutions

In many cases, restrictions regarding access to employment and education, as well as camp confinement are clear signs of host governments' unwillingness to allow the local integration of refugees. This is confirmed by interviews with officials in Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia and Kenya, who underscore their countries' incapacity to accept permanent settlement of large refugee populations who are perceived as competing for public services or tight labour markets. Though self-reliance and employment in the informal sector

is sometimes tolerated *de facto*, as is the case in Ethiopia or Yemen, most governments stress their reluctance to promote any form of local integration. Although this stance does not preclude small refugee populations who have integrated without state approval, it shows that both African and European countries have concerns about the negative economic, political and cultural impact of refugee presence. This growing reluctance to accommodate large numbers of refugees also results from a perception that the more prosperous members of the international community are not duly committed to burden-sharing, particularly with poorer nations (Crisp 2003a).

Given this context, it is not surprising that **local integration** is not perceived as a durable option by the majority of refugees. The only exceptions are individuals who have close family or cultural links in the host country which makes settlement a viable option, as is the case for the members of certain clans in Ethiopia, Djibouti, Kenya and Yemen. A clear example can be drawn from the Djibouti case, where a segment of the Issa refugees population from northern Somalia (Somaliland) have been granted access to legal and economic integration by virtue of their clan origins, as well as through their clan and kin linkages with native Djiboutians. Understandably, similar opportunities are not available for members of other clans, even if they wish to stay or are in urgent need of protection.

Apart from local integration and voluntary repatriation, **resettlement** in a third country is commonly referred to as one of the three ‘durable solutions’ available to refugees. According to the UNHCR (UNHCR 2005b), approximately 66,000 Somali refugees have been resettled by industrialized countries since 1990, with or without UNHCR assistance. The United States was the main resettlement destination for Somali refugees (84%), followed by Canada (7%) and Australia (6%).

In terms of surveyed nations, only 176 Somali refugees have been resettled by Switzerland since 1992, the majority of them in 1993. Switzerland has officially frozen its quota since 1998, although single cases are still regularly brought to Switzerland by this method. Traditionally, the Netherlands have had a small annual quota for “invited” refugees, limited to 500 refugees at the request of UNHCR. When the number of asylum-seekers rose significantly in the mid-1990s, there was public discontent at the maintenance of the resettlement quota. In the end, the annual resettlement quota was sustained, but new provisions were added stipulating that family members would henceforth be included in the quota. According to UNHCR figures, 18 individuals were resettled in the Netherlands in 2001, 7 in 2002, and 15 in 2004.

Whereas significant resettlement programmes have been implemented in Kenya, Egypt and Djibouti, very limited numbers of Somalis have been

resettled from Ethiopia, Yemen and South Africa, and only then if they had a severe medical reason or an exceptional protection case. In Kenya and Djibouti, the UNHCR suffered a major credibility crisis because of corruption scandals in the late 1990's involving resettlement officers who sold resettlement opportunities to affluent nationals or wealthy Somalis instead of giving them to needy refugees.

Furthermore, the US, being the most important resettlement country in the world, became more restrictive in its admission requirements after the events of September 11, 2001, which had a knock-on effect, with other countries adopting similarly restrictive policies and becoming increasingly reluctant to receive Somali refugees. In Djibouti, the programme is still non-operational, not only because of organizational mismanagement, but also because of the attitude of external states which have become suspicious of refugees and thus reduced the opportunities available to Djibouti-based refugees. However, the overall resettlement level increased significantly in 2004, with more than 14,100 arrivals after a long bout of inactivity or low numbers<sup>43</sup>. This figure is nevertheless a fraction of the overall numbers – an estimated 270,000 Somali refugees in the four neighbouring countries.

As alternative means of emigration are rarely available to refugees, it is not surprising that the vast majority of respondents consider access to legal emigration opportunities as unsatisfactory (87%, cf. Table 10). Several cases of family reunification have been reported, especially in the USA, but these figures remain extremely low because many refugees, particularly in Switzerland, cannot request reunification, irrespective of the duration of their stay in the country, because of restrictions related to their legal status.

Table 10: Interviewees satisfied with opportunities for legal emigration (in %)

Host country	Total	KE	ET	YE	DJ	EG	ZA	CH	NL
	14	12	17	8	0	13	11	17	62
N (Respondents)	691	57	101	120	116	125	79	48	45

Finally, the third “durable solution”, which seems to be the most acceptable option to both host countries and the international community, is **voluntary**

<sup>43</sup> During 2004, Somalis resettled abroad accounted for 17% of the global number of resettlement recipients, making Somali nationals the largest diaspora community, followed by Sudan and Liberia (UNHCR 2005b).

**repatriation.** UNHCR (2005) estimates that 460,000 Somali refugees have already repatriated since 1993, the majority of them from Ethiopia and Kenya. In most cases, these refugees returned to the northern regions of Somalia (Somaliland and Puntland). But for many of those remaining behind in the camps, voluntary repatriation is not an immediately attainable solution because of the armed conflicts in their region of origin.

It also remains a controversial issue whether all refugees from northern Somalia are “genuinely” in need of protection or whether they have the potential to return, even though they belong to minority clans. In Djibouti and Ethiopia, refugee and expert interviewees observe increasing pressure to return the “Somalilanders” through what are often perceived as deterrent policies and practices on the part of UNHCR and its implementing partners (e.g. decreasing food rations, camps closures, and “food-for-repatriation” schemes). Unfortunately, concrete information about the actual purpose of such policies is not available, although many refugees state they are subject to an increasing push for repatriation. There are additional conflicting interests between national and international actors who diverge on the method and speed of the repatriation process for various reasons. On the one hand, the international community appears to support an expedited repatriation process, while on the other, national institutions are concerned about the loss of international support and employment opportunities associated with refugee maintenance.

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Many of the findings in this study underscore the far-reaching consequences of insufficient or inappropriate registration, especially in protracted refugee situations. Indeed, registration is not only relevant for access to asylum procedures or distribution of food (ration cards), but it is also linked to various protection-related issues, for instance security against arbitrary arrest, as well as enjoyment of a series of other rights, such as access to education, health care, employment, etc. As an example, nearly half of all refugees interviewed (44%) considered their physical safety to be at risk of attack, robbery, rape or detention, with a significantly higher number of respondents in South Africa, Kenya and Djibouti. Though insecurity (in a broad sense) is also widespread in camps, arbitrary detention is linked to a lack of recognised documents and thus greatly affects urban refugees.

In this sense, proper documentation proves to be particularly important in protracted situations where refugees live outside camps (Crisp 2003b). The absence of documents conferring protected status greatly increases the vulnerability of refugees in a broader environment, not only in legal terms, but also in social and economic terms. In fact, it is this vulnerability which



stands out as a motivating factor for onward movements, both by the refugees concerned and by their relatives abroad, as will be described below.

While there is a technical aspect to be taken into account, proper documentation refers, above all, to the ability or willingness of host countries – in partnership with international actors – to grant the protection and rights conferred on refugees by international law and national legislation. In protracted situations, which are typical in the case of Somalis, it is imperative to acknowledge that neither long-term “warehousing” of refugees nor immediate repatriation is a credible and sustainable option. Therefore, possibilities for local integration and resettlement, including family reunification, have to be explored from a new perspective. This vision should incorporate the unique and effective coping strategies devised by the refugees into a wider creative dynamic, rather than shifting responsibilities between states and various levels of governments. Such an approach involves a joint effort through a constructive North-South dialogue between states, as well as cross-mandate collaboration between international organisations and refugee communities. It may precisely be through the growing awareness of global interdependence, as illustrated by secondary movements of Somali refugees that a common commitment can be fostered (Betts 2005).

## 4 Trajectories of Somali Refugees

This section is dedicated to the description of the trajectories followed by the Somali refugees interviewed, whether direct (without a stop in one or more settlement countries) or indirect (with intermediary stops). It starts with a sub-section on the causes and the ways and means of the flight from Somalia, and goes on to describe the main types of travel routes, as well as the characteristics of these trajectories.

In the frame of this research, it was necessary to make a choice on what is considered a country of settlement, consequently of what is defined as a secondary movement. A country of settlement is defined as the locale where a refugee stayed for a period of at least one month (see chapter 1.5 on terminology)<sup>44</sup>.

### 4.1 Leaving Somalia

The analysis of the sample illustrates that a majority of interviewees in this survey came from Mogadishu, used to live there prior to the civil war, or are from other towns/regions in central and southern Somalia. A minority of interviewees is from the northern part of the country (Somaliland or Puntland).

*Table 11: Year of departure from Somalia (in %)*

Year of departure	Total	KE	ET	YE	DJ	ZA	EG	CH	NL
Before 1991	29	13	61	21	48	7	18	22	35
1992-1996	26	27	6	33	36	24	30	20	35
1997-2001	28	28	15	30	12	42	38	27	26
From 2002	17	32	18	16	4	27	14	31	4
N	801	60	117	120	119	114	165	60	46

<sup>44</sup> This methodological choice does not always correspond to the reality of the persons concerned, who may not consider themselves as having really “settled” in a specific country. In other words, the term can refer to several very different situations: a 10-year sojourn in a Kenyan refugee camp or the 1 month it takes a person to cross Tanzania or Mozambique on his/her way to South Africa. However, we considered one month a reasonable space of time for a refugee to lodge an application for asylum and/or to establish basic social ties which would allow him/her to consider viable opportunities for a permanent settlement.



The time of refugee flight or departure varies greatly (see Table 11). A few people left before 1991, especially from northern Somalia to Ethiopia and Djibouti after the outbreak of violence in 1988. The majority, however, left their home country either in the months following the fall of Siyad Barre's regime or the full eruption of the conflict in 1991; some left much later and are still continuing the onward flight.

Whatever the time of departure, the reasons that pushed Somalis to leave their country are all related to the civil war and its consequences: physical threats, extreme violence, persecution, general lawlessness, and anarchy. Many interviewees experienced attacks, rapes or kidnapping, and most of them had had members of their families killed or wounded in the anarchy. Often, the decision to move is prompted by an event that is particularly significant.

I endured the war for many years; the lack of security, the fear that my family would be harmed or that my property would be destroyed and my house looted. But it was when my wife and one of my sons got killed by bandits that I decided to leave. It was too much. I couldn't bear it anymore (Ethiopia, male).

Although the direct consequences of the political situation played a crucial role in the movement of refugees, many people mentioned the lack of education and employment opportunities, the absence of facilities such as schools and hospitals, and more importantly, the unfeasibility of building a future in Somalia as important reasons for leaving. As Efonayi-Mäder et al. (2005) explain in their study of West Africans' trajectories to Switzerland, it is the loss of hope in the country's social, economic and political development, rather than an individual's particular situation, which often pushes people to leave. The economic responsibility toward the family is also an additional burden prompting individuals to devise ways of moving<sup>45</sup>.

There are, however, differences in the methods of the flight. Generally speaking, while those who left at the outbreak of the war mostly did not have the opportunity to plan the journey, those who left later were often able to use existing routes, resources and networks to at least partially organize their itinerary. This also means that refugees who fled at the beginning of the 1990s mostly went to the nearest country to find safety, while those who left later – although they also often ended up in Somalia's neighbouring countries – could more easily make longer-term plans. In some instances, these individuals were able to choose more distant destinations, even if they

<sup>45</sup> Moreover, the migration is sometimes supported by family members already abroad, who see a way to pass over the responsibility for financially assisting the family (Piguet 1994).

involved transit stops in other countries, or make more concrete projects involving direct travel routes. Based on the distinction by Kunz (1973) (further elaborated by Johansson 1990) of anticipatory and acute refugee movements, Havinga and Böcker (1999) find similar results with patterns of anticipatory flight with more options on trajectories and destinations, and at the other end of a continuum, acute situations with less choice and greater role of immediate opportunities and circumstances. Richmond (1994) also built a continuum between what he described as "proactive" versus "reactive" migrants – the main difference lying in the degree of choice available – but noted that the majority of migrants found themselves somewhere along the line of the continuum.

Moreover, the increasing movements from developing to developed countries, rather than regional movements, in recent years mark a general tendency in all types of migration, facilitated notably by technological innovation in the fields of communication and transport and more effective networks (Martin 2001).

*Table 12: Intended destination at the time of the departure from Somalia (in %)*

Year of departure	Africa	Europe	Did not know	Elsewhere
Before 1991	66	4	11	19
1992-1996	45	10	16	29
1997-2001	42	16	19	23
From 2002	40	26	14	20
Total	49	13	15	23

Note: the category "elsewhere" includes all non-African and non-European countries, i.e. Yemen, Persian Gulf countries, USA, Canada, etc.

These two tendencies – from acute to anticipatory movements and from regional migrations to industrialized destinations – appear when analysing the intended destinations of interviewees at the moment of the departure (Table 12). The earlier refugees fled their homeland, the more they intended to stay in Africa (although in many cases, they did not think of any other possible alternative); while conversely, the longer they remained in Somalia, the higher the likelihood that their destination included Europe or beyond. An analysis of this data by host country shows variations in this general tendency, which is particularly clear in Switzerland, the Netherlands, and South Africa, and for urban undocumented refugees in Ethiopia. This means that interviewees in Europe who arrived recently had planned their destination from the start, which is less likely to be the case for those who arrived earlier. For interviewees in South Africa and Ethiopia, the study

confirms the “transit” character that these two countries have gained over the years, with many Somali refugees choosing them with the intention to move onward.

Naturally, the destination does not only depend on the time of leaving, but on other factors such as the social and economic resources of the refugees. Personal financial means, remittances, and social networks play a crucial role at the time of leaving, but also in the decisions made at a later date. These facilitating factors are important in the primary movements as well as in secondary movements, and will be analysed in a further chapter (chapter 5.4).

## 4.2 Travelling Routes: Direct and Indirect Trajectories

While it may be self-evident, it is nevertheless worth mentioning that the trajectories described in this chapter did not exist prior to fleeing since the majority of refugees did not have the luxury of time to plan their complete journey in advance. Most simply fled to the nearest zone of safety, or headed to a particular neighbouring country for personal reasons, with the intention to make subsequent decisions about their future – staying, moving within the current host country or to another one, going back to their home country – depending on new events, knowledge and opportunities.

*Table 13: Interviewees who settled in at least one country before their current host country<sup>46</sup> (in %)*

Current host country	% of secondary movers
The Netherlands	88
Egypt	87
Switzerland	55
South Africa	52
Djibouti	30
Yemen	19
Ethiopia	14
Kenya	12
Total	45
	N 814

<sup>46</sup> Settlement refers to a stay in a country for at least one month.

This sample reveals that more than half of the interviewees are currently residing in the first country they settled in after leaving Somalia, without having moved at all (Table 13). This population is disproportionately hosted in one of Somalia’s neighbouring countries – primarily in Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Yemen. The others settled in at least one other country, in many cases more than one (see Table 16), and/or moved from their first country of settlement only to return at a later time. This, however, is only a description of the sample and cannot be regarded as being representative of the general scope of secondary movements among Somali refugees (for the detailed discussion on the scope of secondary movements refer to chapter 5.1).

Table 14 shows the first country of settlement of the secondary movers of our sample. It may be that a trajectory includes a movement to one or more countries, with a possible return to the first country of settlement. When this happens, many secondary movers will count their current host country as first country of settlement, despite the fact that they have undertaken multiple movements since. For example, a refugee might have settled in Ethiopia, then moved to Kenya and later decided to return to Ethiopia. It simply means that they settled in a different country (in many cases, they returned to Somalia) in between their various movements.

*Table 14: First country of settlement for secondary movers interviewed (in %)*

	Total	KE	ET	YE	DJ	ZA	EG	CH	NL
<i>First country of settlement</i>									
Kenya	42	(57)	71	26	(6)	76	29	55	51
Ethiopia	21	(43)	--	30	88	(5)	15	21	12
Djibouti	5	--	(12)	22	(3)	(3)	4	(6)	(7)
Yemen	8	--	(12)	(9)	(3)	--	10	(12)	(9)
Saudi Arabia	13	--	(6)	(13)	--	--	28	--	(7)
UAE	2	--	--	--	--	--	4	--	--
Other*	9	--	--	--	--	16	10	(6)	14
N	363	7	17	23	35	62	143	33	43

\* The category “other” refers to Tanzania (5) Mozambique (4) and Zambia (1) for interviewees in South Africa; Libya (10), Sudan (2) and Syria (1) and Egypt (2) for interviewees in Egypt; Italy for interviewees in Switzerland; Egypt (2), Germany (2), Bahrain (1) and Rumania (1) for interviewees in the Netherlands. Figures between ( ) should be interpreted very carefully due to small sample size.

Kenya is clearly the principal first country of settlement, with 42% of all interviewees having stayed there for at least one month after having left their home country, with the exception of interviewees in Yemen and Djibouti. Naturally, the trajectory also depends on the region of Somalia from which the decision to seek refuge is taken<sup>47</sup>. Refugees fleeing from the northern parts of the country tend to go to Ethiopia, Djibouti or Yemen first. The central role of Kenya is confirmed in all periods studied, which is surprising in view of the fact that Ethiopia hosted the majority of Somali refugees until 2000, when it was overtaken by Kenya (UNHCR 2005b). This can perhaps be explained by the fact that, apart from those in Djibouti, the majority of the interviewees in this survey originate from southern Somalia.

A return to Somalia after having stayed in a first country of settlement is not uncommon. In the overall sample, 131 interviewees (16%) settled in two countries before their current country of residence; among them, 36% (47 persons) opted to return to Somalia. Most returnees stayed for a relatively long time (between 9 months to more than one year) before leaving again, often to a different place than the first country of exile. Using the above typology, this movement can be interpreted as showing that the first movement from Somalia was emergency-based (reactive), whereas second-time movers are able to gather other information and resources in the meantime that allow them to plan a more organized and detailed second exile (proactive manner).

It is clear that there is no such thing as a typical trajectory since it is influenced by many different factors: time, motivations, personal resources and networks, luck, etc. It is, however, possible to draw a typology of the main trajectories, keeping in mind that this is not exhaustive since only eight countries have been examined.

### 4.3 Typology of Main International Trajectories

Based on the research, we can identify four main typologies of trajectories. These may be direct – though possibly including airport transit or a stopover of a few days in a third country – or indirect, when they comprise secondary movements. It is important to recall that secondary movements are defined as previous stays of at least one month in another country.

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<sup>47</sup> International movements are often preceded by internal movements where refugees first seek security within their own country, and only then in neighbouring states or further afield.

#### 4.3.1 Somalia's Neighbouring Countries

The majority of Somali refugees in the world fled to and are still residing in Somalia's four neighbouring countries: Kenya, Ethiopia, Djibouti and Yemen. However, while the bulk of the Somali refugee population is located in these four countries after the mass outflows (since 1988), this percentage has gradually decreased and stood at 68% in 2002 (UNHCR 2005b).

In the first years following the outbreak of the war, Somalis fleeing their country mostly passed the borders without too many problems, and were even welcomed by international staff driving them to the refugee camps. Later, while those who fled to Ethiopia and Djibouti rarely mention any problems passing the border, those who went to Kenya often encountered harassment and extortion by border officials, police officers or even locals, on their way to the camps or to the city. The case of Yemen is slightly different since, unlike other neighbouring countries, smuggling is an essential element in crossing the sea. The hazards associated with the journey, which are minimum or non-existent in other countries, are incredibly high as countless people suffer or die, mainly from the heat or drowning during the voyage.

This type of trajectory, although characterized by short duration in comparison to other types of trajectories, is not always direct and simple. In the sample, *movements between neighbouring countries* have sometimes been reported, especially between Ethiopia and Djibouti (31% of the Djiboutian sample), and between Kenya and Ethiopia. In the latter case, the "typical" trajectory goes from Kenyan camps back to Somalia, with a subsequent movement to the capital of Ethiopia when returnees realize that the situation in Somalia is not conducive to permanent settlement. This is explained by the non-willingness to return to camp life and possibly the acquisition of new information and resources, or the setting of a new migration project in which Addis Ababa appears as a better opportunity than a return to Kenya.

Somalia's neighbouring countries offer two main types of opportunities, which are not mutually exclusive. First, protection (especially in refugee camps) is relatively accessible, although not always without problems. Secondly, working opportunities are to be found in safer conditions than in the country of origin, even though this does not confer legal status; this is true especially in Yemen, Djibouti until 2003, and Ethiopia, and to a lesser extent in Kenya. Besides the urgent need to find a safe place, most interviewees explain their choice of these countries by their geographic (and sometimes ethnic) proximity, as well as by the possibility they offer of crossing borders without the need for identification or travel documents.

For the secondary movers, these countries are almost a compulsory first step to further destinations<sup>48</sup>. The main cities in these countries (principally Nairobi and Addis Ababa, but also Djibouti City and Aden) are transit points for Somalis on their way to Europe. The journey, by plane, is often organized from there, after a stay that can vary from brief to relatively long (see further in this chapter).

### 4.3.2 The “Arab” Route

Some specific trajectories include one or several Arab countries, mainly Yemen, Saudi Arabia and Egypt, in this specific order<sup>49</sup>. Apart from a cultural and religious link with Somalia, these countries were also destinations of historic labour migration, especially the Gulf States (Gundel 2002; Kleist 2004; UNHCR 1999), and higher education for wealthier Somalis prior to the civil war.

Another characteristic shared by these countries is the relative ease of entering their territory, provided those refugees who choose these destinations have financial resources at their disposal. Many Somali refugees entered Saudi Arabia legally with an “*umra*” visa<sup>50</sup> and a Somali passport because Saudi Arabia is among the few states to formally recognize Somali official documents, together with Egypt and Arab countries. The journey from Saudi Arabia to Egypt is relatively easy, with documents readily available from Somalis living in Egypt; *umra* and entry visas are for the most part illegally purchased. In the interviews, it was often difficult to identify whether they were fake, borrowed or, in some cases, authentic. Moreover, interviewees themselves did not always seem to be aware of the type of documentation they travelled with. Prices of visas cost around \$300 for the *umra* visa and \$450-700 for an entry visa to Egypt, according to the Egyptian study. Those who cannot afford to fly opt for entering Saudi Arabia by land, through Yemen, under riskier but cheaper travel arrangement<sup>51</sup>. Egypt can also be reached by land through different African borders, either uncontrolled or with the resort to bribes.

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<sup>48</sup> Although the (flying) route via countries of the Arabic peninsula (Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates especially) is an alternative, especially in the recent years.

<sup>49</sup> The United Arab Emirates, Libya, Syria and other countries most probably also fall in this category, although we focus on those cited above because they are the ones on which we gathered the most information.

<sup>50</sup> The religious journey Muslims undertake to the holy sites in Saudi Arabia.

<sup>51</sup> According to various sources, as many as 60% of the Somalis in Yemen are in transit, mainly on their way to Saudi Arabia (see country report on Yemen).

When I came to Yemen the first time, I was with a group of women who knew the way to go to Saudi Arabia. We went together to Basaten and took a car to the border of Yemen. It took us 4 days to reach it. We were stopping before the checkpoints, going around avoiding them and taking the car back. We crossed the Yemeni border without problems, but we were finally arrested by the Saudis. They sent us back to Somalia. I could not stay in the country. I decided to go to Ethiopia. Finally, I left, less than one year after, to Yemen. I was looking for stability and a job (Yemen, female).

The importance of this trajectory is reflected in the Egyptian study, where 30% of all interviewees in Egypt settled in Saudi Arabia before coming to Egypt. Of this number, more than two thirds (68%) are women, who in many cases left their husband in Saudi Arabia for economic reasons while the family seeks a durable solution in Egypt. An important element of the trajectories including Saudi Arabia (and other countries such as the UAE) is the high probability of forced returns to Somalia, since these countries are not signatory States of the Geneva Convention and are not bound to the *non-refoulement* clause. The high percentage of interviewees in Egypt who returned to Somalia after a stay in Saudi Arabia (40% of those having settled in Saudi Arabia) is a clear indication of this, although it may be possible that some returned voluntarily to their home country.

In some cases, the “Arab route” is a stage in a trajectory to further countries (e.g. European countries), either with a long-term stay, or only as a transit point from Somalia or one of its neighbouring countries. The United Arab Emirates is often depicted as a transit point, rather than a settling country.

### 4.3.3 South Africa

South Africa constitutes a particular case in the typology. It was reached directly (i.e. without a stay longer than one month in an intermediate country) by half of the sample, while the other half entered the country following stays in one or many of the countries along the land route. South Africa is the only African country (along with Egypt) with both an asylum system and an economic and political situation somewhat comparable to that of industrialized countries. It is the only country which can be reached at a relatively affordable price (since it is possible to avoid buying a plane ticket and resorting to smugglers) and is perceived by refugees as a country conferring reasonably good legal status and providing better living conditions and work opportunities, in comparison to the other African countries. This case suggests that refugees’ trajectories are also determined by rumours and by ‘mythical’ testimonies. Indeed, the study shows that, in reality, South Africa falls far short of the illusion of fortune that refugees had imagined before they got there.

Comparatively speaking, South Africa is chosen by more males than females, the majority being single. An explanatory factor can be the long, treacherous

land route exiles use to reach the country, which is not conducive to family travel.

#### 4.3.4 Europe

Travelling to Europe requires substantial resources, both monetary as well as considerable social and smuggling networks (Koser 2004; Van Hear 2004). While direct paths between Somalia and Europe have been open over the years, via air routes from one of the neighbouring countries or the Arabian peninsula, most journeys to Europe consist of multiple steps and stops, some very short (transit) while others are much longer (settlement). The majority of interviewees – and this is supported by other studies – reveal that entry into Europe was done via air travel. In the great majority of cases Europe is reached by plane, as our interviews and the statistics of European countries reveal<sup>52</sup>: when the European country of landing is not the destination planned (which is often the case), the rest of the journey is then done by land, either by car, truck or train.

Those unable to fly to Europe cross the seas by boat (mostly through the Mediterranean Sea and after crossing Africa by land) in highly dangerous trips organized by smuggling networks and reach Europe via ports in Italy or Greece. Only a minority of interviewees, mostly young and single, entered Europe in this manner, despite numerous media reports of dramatic immigrant drownings on the high seas while attempting to enter Europe.

The opportunities for entering Europe legally are limited to instances of family reunification, resettlement, and certain limited cases. Increasingly restrictive policies are pushing refugees to resort to securing illegal means of travel, particularly the costly and risky use of smugglers, regardless of the legitimacy of their claim to refugee status (on this topic, see notably Nadig 2002; Noll 2003). This means that the majority of Somalis currently living in European countries, regardless of their status, travelled and entered the continent illegally. In an effort to curb this trend, travelling illegally by plane has become much more difficult in recent years, having in part been facilitated by the post-September 11<sup>th</sup> events, which have prompted stricter controls at airports requiring appropriate identification documents. The use of “look-alike” passports – the borrowing of documentation of individuals who “look alike” – particularly those of naturalized European Somalis, has

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<sup>52</sup> For example the unpublished report of INDIAC (Immigration and Naturalisation Service Information and Analysis Centre, in the Netherlands) estimating that 76% of the Somali asylum seekers arrived in Amsterdam by plane.

become – or was at least until recently – the most common method of travelling, despite the possibility of arrest or detention if caught.

Some interviewees reported that they borrow or rent passports through their own networks, while others pay agents to supply them. In the Netherlands, for instance, 20% of the interviewees found the necessary documentation through their personal networks, while 69% resorted to an agent; in Switzerland, 75% of the interviewees travelled with documents provided by a smuggler, with only a couple of persons able to furnish their own illegal documents.

Agents or smugglers offer a range of services, from selling and/or renting documents to the complete organization of the journey. In the latter case, the agent, also known as a “carrier” by Somalis, accompanies the person or family on the trip to the destination country (see also Farah 2000). A specificity of the agents and carriers used by Somalis is that they mostly, if not always, belong to the Somali community. The price of such a trip to Europe with a carrier varies from \$3,000 to \$10,000 according to the interviewees of the Swiss study (no estimation can be made of the interviews in the Netherlands)<sup>53</sup>.

Agents often play a role in the choice of the European country of destination, either by advising their clients according to possible resources and opportunities or based on the real needs/benefits of the refugees. It is a common knowledge that refugees who do not possess clear information about their intended destination are susceptible to fraud by such agents who often abandon them in a different destination than the one chose and paid for. Many interviewees in the Netherlands suffered from this deception, and although they did not intend to remain in the country, they nevertheless had little choice other than to apply for asylum when caught by the police at the airport of arrival. In total, roughly 20% of all interviewees in the Netherlands found themselves in such a predicament. The situations we found can be referred to the study of Van Liempt and Doomernik (forthcoming) describing three types of interaction between smuggler and smuggled persons: (i) the smuggler facilitates the journey chosen by the migrant; (ii) the choice of the destination country is solely in the hands of the smuggler; and (iii) negotiation takes place between the two actors.

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<sup>53</sup> Similarly, Koser (2004), in a study on illegal Pakistani migrants in the UK, finds that smuggling is acting as filter selecting only the more resourceful and better educated persons. The price of such a trip is estimated at around \$7000.

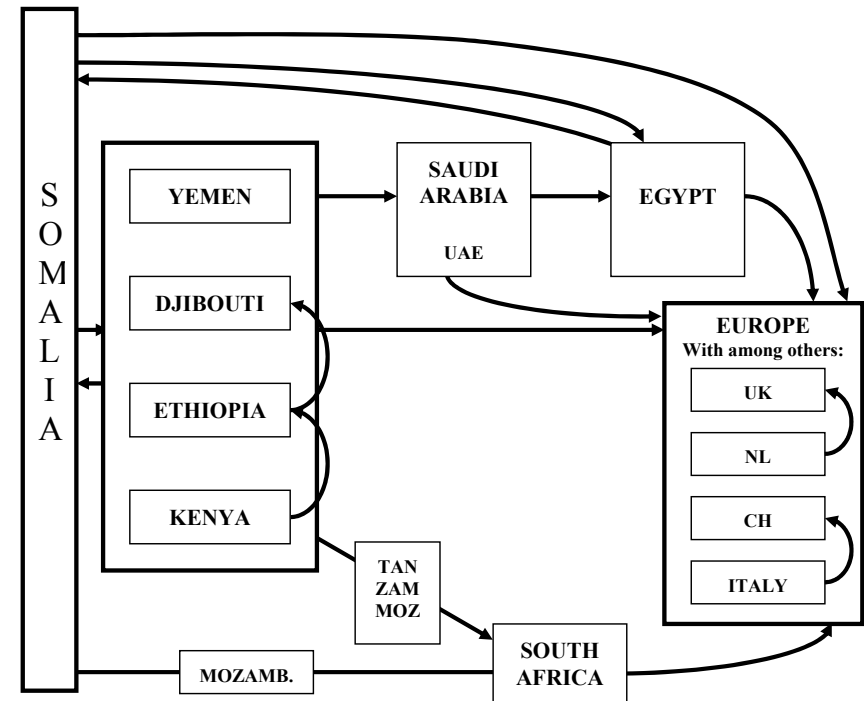
Regarding *secondary movements within Europe*, it can be stated that the EU development makes irregular movements increasingly difficult, especially with the Eurodac Database which allows identification of illegal migration, while at the same time facilitating the regular movements of Union citizens. This particularly affects naturalized European Somalis who enjoy expanded mobility rights on a par with other natives. In this sample, 14% of the interviewees in the Netherlands and 8% in Switzerland had settled in at least one other European country before entering their current host state. Intra-European trajectories depict a south-north tendency, where, for instance, a considerable segment of the refugee population in Switzerland entered from Italy (and less frequently from France).

However, the most striking fact is the desire of many interviewees, both in Switzerland and in the Netherlands, to move beyond continental Europe into the UK or, to a lesser extent, to the Scandinavian countries. The following testimony from a refugee woman in Switzerland who tried to travel to Denmark in 1999 expecting to find better opportunities for family reunification, is an example of the motivations behind such movements.

I had been in Switzerland for about six months by then and I really missed my children. At that time, other Somali refugees told me that in Denmark it would be possible to bring one's own children along after six months. That is when I decided to go to Denmark. I met a smuggler at the train station and gave him \$1000 for some papers. I didn't understand the documents because they were in German. I don't know if it was an ID or a passport but the man told me that I would be able to travel to Denmark and stay there with these documents. I went together with another Somali woman who also bought the same papers and wanted to go to Denmark as well. We took a train to Berlin and from there wanted to go to Denmark, but the police checked us in Berlin. They said that we had illegal documents and brought us to prison. We stayed in prison for 18 days! Most of the time I was in a shock. They took me to the hospital. I didn't want to stay in Germany. After 18 days, they brought me and my girlfriend back to Switzerland (Switzerland, female).

Figure 1 shows the main patterns of movements found in the study. Although not fully exhaustive, it provides an overview of the main trajectories, including secondary movements. An arrow ending in a box implies a "settlement" according to the research's definition, i.e. a stay of at least one month or longer.

Figure 1: Frequent patterns of movements of Somali refugees (as reported by the interviewees)



#### 4.4 Length of Stay

The figures of the time spent in the different countries of asylum show that, whatever the "rank" of the country in the trajectory (i.e. whether it is the first, second, or third country of settlement), the majority of the Somali interviewees tend to stay either for a short time (less than 6 months), or for a longer period of two years or more (Table 15 and Table 16). A closer analysis of the interviews indicates that the subsequent moves are often contemplated or partially organized before the arrival in a particular country, with the necessary means already partially available, or are decided after a lengthy period of time, when the situation seems unalterably dissatisfying and/or resources become available to undertake additional movement. The two following quotations are illustrations of both cases.

First, I went to Kenya to gather information on how I could go to Switzerland. I stayed there two or three days and met an agent but he said I didn't have enough money. So I went back to Somalia so my family and I could earn more money. After many months, I went to Ethiopia where I asked an agent to try to contact my daughter who was living in Switzerland, but I didn't know where. My aim was to go to Switzerland to get treatment for my health problems. Ethiopia was just a transitory situation. I stayed three months in Ethiopia, just enough time to organise my trip and then I left with the agent (Switzerland, female).

I stayed five years in Ethiopia, until I could not take it anymore. Life was so difficult. During my stay in Ethiopia, I planned to go to the US. I have relatives there who promised me their support. I did not choose to come here. My family in the US decided to help me to go to the US. A cousin of mine, who lives there, came to Addis to help me to leave the country. He had travel documents with him for me. And he also booked my flight. He could not get a direct flight to the US, but only one via Amsterdam. At Amsterdam airport I was stopped by the authorities, because my travel documents were not in order. I was afraid that I would be sent back, so I decided to apply for asylum (the Netherlands, male).

*Table 15: Time spent in the first country of settlement (excluding current host country) (in %)*

	Less than 6 months	Between 6 months and 1 year	Between 1 and 2 years	More than 2 years	N
Kenya	19	17	12	52	110
Ethiopia	38	22	13	27	69
Djibouti	(23)	(31)	(8)	38	13
Yemen	20	(12)	(12)	56	25
Saudi Arabia	11	(9)	(7)	73	44
UAE	(33)	--	--	(67)	6
Other	32	20	(12)	36	25
Total	24	17	11	48	292

*Table 16: Time spent in the previous countries of settlement (in %)*

	Less than 6 months	6 months to 1 year	1 to 2 years	More than 2 years	N
First country of settlement	24	17	11	48	292
Second country of settlement	34	9	20	37	131
Third country of settlement	43	(8)	22	27	37
Fourth country of settlement	55	(9)	(9)	(27)	11

Moreover, the further forward the country is in the ranking (i.e. first, second, third country of settlement), the shorter the time of settlement appears to be, as established in Table 16.

The analysis of the differences between the countries of settlement in terms of length of the stay shows at least two striking results. First, short-term settlement in Ethiopia appears to be relatively more important than in other countries studied. The transit character of Ethiopia, or more precisely of Addis Ababa, appears often in the interviews, whereby the city is considered as an important setting for organizing long-term travel plans. This is evident not only from interviewees who transited through Ethiopia to Europe and beyond, but also from those who continue to live in the city and hope for similar opportunities. Interestingly enough, Nairobi more than Addis Ababa is the city considered as the principal transit point in eastern Africa according to the literature in this field and is particularly known for its smuggling activities (as documented notably by Van Liempt and Doomernik forthcoming). However, while Nairobi's importance as a major transit point will continue to be observed, this study also establishes Addis Ababa's emerging influence as an important transit point for refugee and asylum-seeker movement.

Secondly, the high percentage of the Somalis' extended stay in Saudi Arabia appears worthy of analysis. The populations in Yemen, Djibouti, and the UAE also yield higher percentages, but not as striking or as statistically significant. It is in these countries that most Somalis find employment relatively easily and are not confined to refugee camps. Though access to the informal labour market is possible, it is mostly through illegal channels and with very poor wages for the uneducated majority. Despite these constraints, it is evident that the potential to obtain employment and maintain relative mobility rights fosters the likelihood of longer-term settlements. A possible interpretation can also be that such long-term settlements are not necessarily a reflection of general satisfaction, but rather a temporary reprieve to assemble the requisite financial and human resources and networks in order to organize more complex movements from the Middle East to Europe or beyond. This aspect will be developed further in the chapter on the causes of secondary movements (chapter 5.3).

#### **4.5 Registered Camp Refugees and Undocumented Urban Refugees**

In the four countries bordering Somalia, refugee camps were set up to cope with the influx of Somali refugees at the beginning of the 1990s. Most of these camps have now been closed, with the remaining refugee population grouped in the few remaining camps (see map in the annex for the location of



the remaining camps). Except in Yemen, strict encampment policies have been imposed on Somali refugees, and such policies continue to remain in force. UNHCR acknowledges that this situation is unsatisfactory, but has been unable to convince host governments to implement viable alternatives. While camps offer basic assistance and services to refugees, although these are not always sufficient or adequate, encampment policies also restrict their freedom of movement and deprive them of the opportunities to develop self-reliance. Only a few refugees are officially allowed to leave the camps, mainly for increased protection and medical reasons, and to remain temporarily or permanently in the cities. However, large numbers of Somalis did not register in the camps or have since left and now live and work illegally in the cities<sup>54</sup>. This sample reveals that nearly half of the surveyed population (46%) which reached one of Somalia's four neighbouring countries registered as refugees (Table 17).

Many Somali refugees choose not to register for reasons that have nothing to do with their objective right to do so or with the reasons for their flight. Their undocumented situation is often the result of a conscious decision not to register, but it can also derive from other factors including lack of information on the asylum system or the denial or obstruction in registering.

*Table 17: Percentage of interviewees who applied, or tried to apply for asylum in the first country reached (including those still living in the country)*

First country reached	%	N
Kenya	39	238
Ethiopia	42	199
Djibouti	32	97
Yemen	77	129
Saudi Arabia	0	42
UAE	0	22
Other*	30	86
<b>Total</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>813</b>

\* The category "other" includes the main following countries: Mozambique (36), Egypt (21), Libya (11) and Tanzania (5).

<sup>54</sup> Diverse unofficial sources estimate undocumented persons at 30,000-45,000 in Addis Ababa; 15,000-100,000 in Nairobi (not exclusively, but mostly Somalis), and about 3,000-4,000 in Djibouti.

Indeed, many interviewees reported that they did not know about the opportunity to register as refugees, or that they learned about it when they arrived in the city, but did not have means to travel on their own to the camps in order to register. In Kenya, Ethiopia and Djibouti, some refugees tried to register but were reportedly denied access. In many cases, they waited to be registered – sometimes for many months – but eventually gave up and moved to the city. Others, having heard of these experiences, did not attempt to register in camps and instead headed directly to the cities.

We tried to register in Hagadera in 2002. They said they were not registering. After seven days, my wife died. We had no shelter, no water, no food. Other refugees helped us. They had a ration card. We stayed with them two years. Two of my children went with a family and the other three with another family. I decided to come to Nairobi (Kenya, male).

The direct or reported experiences of camp life are another motivation for Somali refugees to avoid it altogether and live in the cities, even without appropriate documentation. Difficult living conditions (inadequate food and water rations, lack of health services), lack of opportunities for employment and the issue of security are the main reasons given for leaving or avoiding camp life.

Another important reason for settling in the city is linked with trust in the protective measures put in place by the host government and humanitarian agencies, as well as – more generally – with security. Some refugees – particularly those who served in the military – noted that they feared registration as it would make them "visible" to other refugees, especially those who suffered under the actions of the government<sup>55</sup>. Yet others who belonged to minority clans or historically marginalized clans were hesitant about registration and their ability to fare well with other refugees. Groups like the Bantus and Gaboye feared they would experience similar discriminatory mechanisms in the camps as was the case prior to the conflict.

Depending on migration plans and economic resources, going to a city can be a strategic choice for those who already intend to continue moving for various reasons. Cities offer more opportunities for earning money, communicating with embassies or international organisations for family reunification cases (an important proportion of interviewees in Addis Ababa, notably, are waiting for their cases to be processed), or organizing illegal ways to travel (access to information, communication facilities, and

<sup>55</sup> In Djibouti for instance, some interviewees reported insecurity in Ethiopian camps and eventually left because they feared retribution from other refugees, given their former profession in the armed forces and their clan affiliation with the old regime.



intermediaries such as agents). In essence, illegal residence is not only a mechanism to avoid state regulation (encampment policies) but is a contributing factor to agency and self-sufficiency.

The presence of family members or friends in the city is also a factor of attraction, as refugees can expect to be better off through family or community support in cities than would otherwise be possible in the camps. The following testimony, from an urban refugee in Addis Ababa, demonstrates how these reasons may interlink and result in the bypassing of the registration system in the camps.

We are urban people; many of us come from Mogadishu. We cannot live in rural areas, like the camp is. Then only certain clans reside in the camp. If you don't belong to that clan, you will encounter a security problem. Besides, in Addis you can do business. You can work, open a shop, a restaurant or something like that. There are many Somalis that we can do business with and the police don't bother us. In camps you can't work. You just sit around and wait. Another issue is the schools in the camp. They are not good, but we want to educate our children. Plus, in Addis we have relatives. Many of us are called to Addis by our relatives abroad for family reunification and a few get resettled. And the infrastructure in the camp is very bad, the camp is not attractive. Many refugees also believe that the registration procedure in Kebribeyah camp has stopped because of the ongoing repatriation from Aisha camp (and until June 2004 from Hartisheik camp) to Somaliland. I know of people who reported to Jijiga in 2003 and got rejected by ARRA. This information spreads around very fast. So why should we go all the way to Jijiga, pay for the bus ticket just to get rejected by ARRA? (Ethiopia, male).

Refugees in urban areas who remain undocumented do so either voluntarily or as a result of difficulties in accessing the registration system. For those who opt to avoid the asylum system altogether, the question of economic and social resources plays a crucial role, as those living in the cities can often afford to do so because they had savings or because they receive support from family members abroad or already living in the city. As Table 18 shows, the difference in the percentage of remitted refugees in both settings is striking in the case of Ethiopia, less so in Djibouti and not Yemen. It is also confirmed in the literature regarding Kenya, notably by Horst, who found that the Somali refugees who receive remittances often choose not to stay in the camps, being able to find better conditions in the cities with such support (Horst 2003). According to her, 10 to 15% of refugees in Dadaab receive remittances.

Table 18: Refugees receiving remittances in current host country

Country	Place of living	%	N
Ethiopia	Camp refugees	4	49
	Urban refugees	51	70
	All	32	119
Yemen	Camp refugees	15	26
	Urban refugees	15	94
	All	15	120
Djibouti	Camp refugees	1	101
	Urban refugees	5	19
	All	2	120
Kenya	All	14	57
South Africa	All	9	119
Egypt	All	67	165
Switzerland	All	10	59
The Netherlands	All	0	48

Table 19: Interviewees who applied for asylum in their current host country by year of arrival (in %)

	Ethiopia	Kenya	Djibouti
Before 1991	94	97	98
1992-1996	(60)	81	93
1997-2001	44	82	75
After 2001	37	53	(22)

Note: Yemen is not included in the table because all Somalis are accepted as *prima facie* refugees upon entering the country.

A chronological perspective (Table 19) reveals that the more recently Somali refugees arrived in neighbouring countries, the less often they applied for asylum, especially since 2002. Deteriorating living conditions in the camps (especially in terms of food rations) and more difficult access to registration are among the main explanations for this trend.

#### 4.6 Movements Between Camps and Cities

Not all refugees registered in the camps live there on a permanent basis and not all camp refugees are officially registered<sup>56</sup>. Many families are separated, some with members living and working in the city (mostly men, and

<sup>56</sup> Locals, but also Somali refugees, could for instance settle in the camps simply by buying a ration card entitling them to the different services provided.

sometimes older daughters), while women and children stay in the camps. Movements between camps and cities are therefore inevitably frequent, though difficult to quantify. The findings, which are confirmed by other researchers (notably Campbell 2005; Horst 2003), show that such movements are very common in Kenya, where they are fostered by good connections between Dadaab camp and Nairobi and authorizations to travel to the capital for specific reasons (medical, protection, education, etc.). Such movements also exist in Yemen and Djibouti, as the distance between camps and cities is relatively small, and the cities offer considerable work opportunities. In Ethiopia, on the other hand, such movements are not as prevalent because of the remote location of the camp. Furthermore, the relatively liberal attitude of the government towards undocumented Somali refugees living in the capital city underscores the fact that refugees remaining in the camps do so because of lack of alternative resources and coping mechanisms to enable them to move to the city (on these differences, refer to chapter 3.4)

An interesting question that arises from this segment is whether these internal movements from camp to city are related to or encourage further international movements. A first element to consider in answering this question is that the majority of irregular secondary movements start from the cities and not from the camps, given the availability of resources (transport, networks and intermediaries)<sup>57</sup>. Moreover, secondary movers need resources and are therefore more likely to live in cities rather than in camps, as has been described above.

The study reveals, however, that most of the Somali refugees interviewed in Europe who first settled in Somalia's neighbouring countries did not transit through the camps but went directly to the cities, either already intending to move further, or taking the decision later on. Only a small number resided in camps (exclusively in Kenya and Yemen), but their trajectories do not support the hypothesis that moving to the city leads to further international secondary movements. Most often, the decision to move abroad is taken while residing in camps and thus the movement to the city is only a transitional step. In other cases, after having stayed in a camp for some time, the person or the family decided to return to Somalia, where the strategy for international migration was implemented.

I decided to leave Kenya since life in the refugee camp was extremely difficult and unsafe. I lived there for two years and those were very difficult years. I just could not take it anymore. I had hoped that the situation would have improved in Somalia meanwhile. I preferred to go back to Somalia. But unfortunately, Somalia was still very unsafe and I looked for other solutions to leave the country again. I left the country as soon as I found an agent who organised my journey to go to the Netherlands (The Netherlands, male).

In summary, it is worth noting that refugees who move from camps to cities do so mainly because they expect to find better living conditions and/or better opportunities for self-reliance. In this sense, internal movements may be considered as an alternative strategy to international movements, though they may, in some cases, be a step in the long journey to resettle in another region.

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<sup>57</sup> However, regional international movements can also begin in camps.

## 5 Secondary movements

### 5.1 Scope of (Irregular) Secondary Movements

The exact scope of irregular secondary movements of Somali asylum seekers cannot be deduced from the (rare) existing statistics. However, by combining available statistics with the findings of this study, we can delineate certain trends<sup>58</sup>.

An important finding is the overall decrease in the numbers of Somali refugees from 800,000 in 1992 to 390,000 at present. The percentage of Somali refugees in neighbouring countries has also diminished, but has simultaneously increased in countries further afield, especially industrialized countries. According to UNHCR figures, the share of Somali exiles in industrialized countries has increased from almost nil in the beginning of the 1990s to approximately 36% in 2004, corresponding to roughly 140,000 persons.

However, data show that since the beginning of the 1980s, 260,000 asylum applications have been filed by Somalis in industrialized countries, a large majority of it in the 1990s. The difference between these figures (260,000 applications and 140,000 current refugees) can be attributed to a combination of naturalization, return, disappearance (irregular status and/or secondary movement) and rejection of asylum applications.

Many factors explain this gradual shift. First of all, approximately 460,000 Somali refugees repatriated to northern Somalia, mainly from neighbouring countries (returns from industrialized countries being more rare). Then there are the trends in regular secondary movements: Some 66,000 Somali refugees have been resettled in industrialized countries, with an unknown number benefiting from family reunification<sup>59</sup>. In total, these trends have worked successfully to reduce the overall numbers of refugees inhabiting

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<sup>58</sup> Unfortunately, the statistics available are limited. In developing countries, the main statistical resource is UNHCR, which, although useful, needs to be utilized comparatively with other sources like official government statistics. Moreover, undocumented Somalis are not included in these statistics and it is often difficult to estimate their numbers. The figures in this chapter are from *Profile of Somali Asylum-Seekers and Refugees: Levels, Trends and Characteristics* (UNHCR 2005b).

<sup>59</sup> The majority of Somalis resettled abroad went to the USA. The figures of resettlement for the USA, unlike those for the other countries, also include persons reunited with family members.

Somalia's neighbouring countries, though many more continue to live in harsh, challenging environments.

### 5.1.1 Regular Versus Irregular Movements

Taking into account that there are very few ways to enter most industrialized countries regularly and that regular entries (i.e. resettlement and family reunion) are not included in the number of asylum applications, it can be argued that the large majority of all Somali asylum-seekers (i.e. 260,000 in the last 20 years) travelled irregularly. The number of applications is the only one on which we can found our estimates since the refugee population does not include naturalized refugees and asylum-seekers (figures which may vary significantly between countries depending on their practice). Despite the comparatively high resettlement rates for both the United States and Canada (91%), their global proportion of asylum applications is only 18% of the total number in all industrialized countries. From these figures we can deduce that irregular movers find it easier to enter Europe than North America. Although restrictions and barriers have also increased considerably, access to Europe is comparatively easier because of the relatively cheaper costs and geographic proximity.

A clear majority of sample interviewees in Europe (94%) arrived illegally because they had no legal alternative, a fact acknowledged both by policymakers and existing literature. According to Pérouse de Montclos, about 90% of Somali arrivals since the 1990s came to Europe illegally and generally with the assistance of smuggling networks (2003: 47).

### 5.1.2 Direct Versus Secondary Movements

An important question to consider at this stage is whether these irregular movers are also secondary movers. Although statistical data do not provide the answer, the research findings can be extrapolated, albeit cautiously, if one considers both ends of the trajectories, i.e. the future plans of potential secondary movers, and retrospectively, the trajectories of Somali refugees currently living in non-neighbouring countries.

The research shows that 45% of all interviewees are secondary movers (Table 13 in chapter 4.2); in fact, current trends indicate a general decline in secondary movement which is facilitated by increased opportunities for more direct trajectories from Somalia to Europe and beyond. The difference between the percentage of secondary movers in the Netherlands (88%) and Switzerland (55%) can, for instance, be explained by this trend which is depicted in the survey. While interviewees in the Netherlands had mostly arrived during the 1990s, many of those in Switzerland arrived in 2000 and later. The Swiss sample shows clearly that those who arrived later had

benefited from more direct journeys from Somalia (although still with transits).

The decline in the absolute number of Somali refugees still living in neighbouring countries, combined with higher numbers of Somalis both in Somalia and in industrialized countries, are therefore also part of the explanation. Indeed, many Somali refugees have returned to Somalia to organize their journey to other countries, preferably in industrialized countries, because of the ongoing hardships in the immediate neighbouring countries. These transitions and journeys are further facilitated by relatives and friends already living abroad, who provide the necessary information and finances to organise such a trip.

Regarding the prospective view, the willingness of interviewees to move onward is captured in two crucial questions in the survey. The first question asks where refugees imagine living in the future with the options of current host country, in the homeland or elsewhere (with the possibility of answering “I don’t know”). The second question concerns their future migration plans, whether legal or not.

*Table 20: Interviewees’ choice of future destination (in %)*

Choice of future destination	%
Host country	16
Country of origin	16
Of which 14% with concrete plans to leave	
Elsewhere	42
Of which 22% with concrete plans to leave	
Does not know	26
Total	100
	N 814

Question: "Where do you imagine living in the next years?"

The most intriguing finding concerns the difference between the desire to move and concrete possibilities of doing so. Table 20 illustrates that roughly 16% of interviewees envisage remaining in the host country in coming years, while another 16% plan to return to their country of origin. At the same time, a significant proportion of interviewees (42%) wish to live elsewhere, in places such as North America (46%), Europe (34%), Gulf States or Egypt (3%), Australia (3%), other African countries (1%), or in a yet unknown or

unclear place (13%)<sup>60</sup>. A quarter of all interviewees opted for the residual (“I do not know”) answer.

It is clear from this survey that the low preference for the host country is an indication of refugees’ dissatisfaction with the protection and assistance schemes in place. The fact that an equal number prefer to return to the homeland underscores that social conditions in the camps are presumably the same as those in the homeland, where anarchy and chaos are the norm in many parts of the country.

Interviewees’ future plans, in terms of destination, appear clearer if one adopts a comparative cross-country analysis. Table 21 displays the responses to the question concerning future travel plans by current host country. Those willing to move onward or return to the homeland are mainly based in Africa, whereas refugees based in the two European countries examined wish to remain there, namely 58% (the Netherlands) and 45% (Switzerland). Ethiopia and South Africa are the only African countries where a sizable portion of the interviewees are willing to remain in the country, 22% and 28%, respectively. This matches the evidence provided by the interviews in Addis Ababa as in Pretoria or Cape Town, where Somali refugees have found opportunities for integration in the urban context, although often through informal employment and undocumented residence.

*Table 21: Comparative analysis of refugees’ future travel plans (in %)*

Future plans	KE	ET	YE	DJ	EG	SA	CH	NL
<b>Host country</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>45</b>
Country of origin	2	34	21	29	4	9	7	16
Elsewhere	38	21	49	37	76	46	7	23
Does not know	58	23	30	28	19	17	28	16
N	60	120	120	120	165	120	60	49

Question: "Where do you imagine living in the next years?"

Despite the hopeful intentions of interviewees, it is important to examine the distribution of the sample which actually possesses the means to move onwards. The study represents a significant gap between respondents with a desire to move vis-à-vis those who have concrete plans to travel. As Table 20 illustrated, only 14% of interviewees wishing to return to their homeland and

<sup>60</sup> This preference for North America rather than Europe also appears in Horst’s research, where she finds that her interviewees perceive the former as allowing much more freedom than the countries of the latter (Horst 2003).

22% of those hoping to move farther have the actual resources and strategy to undertake their journey. It is quite clear from these figures that a majority of all those wishing to move further will not be able to achieve their desire to do so simply because they lack the financial and material plans necessary to organize such a journey.

Statistics also serve as a useful tool in comparing the differences between refugee movements in various host countries. Indeed, as discussed in the trajectory chapter (chapter 1), not all countries play an equal role in the dynamics of movements. Table 22 illustrates the ratios of interviewees who have concrete plans for departure, depending on current host country. There are specific factors which enable these movements, for instance traditional labour migration paths to Gulf States via Yemen or opportunities for resettlement or family reunification in Egypt and Ethiopia, thus making these countries an excellent platform for organizing onward movements. Not coincidentally, Egypt and Ethiopia host the largest Somali exiles with concrete plans to move (21% and 20%, respectively). It is interesting to note that while these countries are on the one hand enabling opportunities for onward movement (via resettlement or family reunification), they are on the other hand notorious in their inability to offer refugees an alternative durable solution such as integration. The convergence of these two possibilities produces a high likelihood of secondary movement, not all of which is legal. A similar situation is evident in the Netherlands, where roughly 10% of the interviewees (which is a high percentage in the European context) expressed interest and willingness to leave through legal avenues.

Table 22: Interviewees with concrete plans to leave host country (in %)

	KE	ET	YE	DJ	EG	SA	CH	NL
Concrete plans	13	20	8	9	21	3	2	10
N	60	120	120	120	165	120	60	49

The research presents a comparative analysis of the socio-economic conditions of interviewees and suggests that place of residence is also a strong indicator of onward movement. Statistics demonstrate that the vast majority (84%) of interviewees with concrete plans to move live in urban areas and in private housing (flats), which implies access to financial resources with which to plan such ventures. Conversely, encamped refugees are generally unable to explore similar options due to their bleak economic situation which prevents both autonomy and mobility. This analysis therefore suggests that despite the harsh living conditions of encamped refugees which produce powerful motivation for change, environment alone is insufficient in enabling movement. Such actions can only be initiated when there are not

only compelling stimulants (such as inhospitable living conditions), but the availability of resources – including information – which work in tandem to generate movement.

Table 23: Interviewees with concrete plan to move by place of residence (in %)

	%
Private flat/town	84
Refugee centre/camps	13
Other (no specific place to stay)	3
Total	100
	N 96

### 5.1.3 Regular and Irregular Secondary Movements

An important consideration at this point is to examine the particular movers and the types of movements they wish to undertake; that is, whether they are legal in nature (resettlement and family reunification) or illegal (essentially via smuggling networks).

Table 24: Types of plans (legal/illegal) of interviewees with plans to move

Current host country	Illegal avenues	Legal avenues	Not clear	N
Kenya	-	100	-	8
Ethiopia	29	59	(12)	17
Yemen	(20)	(80)	-	5
Djibouti	(67)	(33)	-	6
South Africa	(33)	(67)	-	3
Egypt	18	82	-	33
Switzerland	-	(100)	-	1
The Netherlands	-	(75)	(25)	4
Total	22	74	4	77

Table 24 reveals that a majority of respondents (74%) have concrete plans to move via legal channels, whereas only 22% intend to resort to illegal solutions. There is also a small segment of respondents (4%) whose plans for movement were unclear in terms of their legality. It is fair to assume, however, that the proportion of respondents considering illegal movement is slightly higher because of interviewee reluctance to disclose the full extent of their plans. In some cases, all interviewees awaiting family reunification are unlikely to receive such offers, thus forcing them to resort to other means of travelling, generally via illegal channels. Furthermore, one can also consider

interviewees in “unclear” situations as being prone to consider illegal avenues, although their chances of success are not always guaranteed.

Table 24 also illustrates the differences in the movement plans of refugees living in different countries. Such plans are intricately linked to the long-term plans and policies of the host state and UNHCR towards Somali refugees, as well as to the existence of other kinds of opportunities which enable the migration of refugees, i.e. presence of foreign embassies for visas, etc.

#### 5.1.4 Return to Somalia

It has already been stated that in many trajectories, there is a distinctive stage which involves the return to the country of origin with a subsequent new move out of the country. More generally, the return to the country of origin appears to have been a very sensitive issue for most respondents. While most interviewees hoped to return and live peacefully in Somalia, a significant portion did not concretely imagine returning, mainly for security reasons. As Table 20 confirms, only 16% of all interviewees envisaged a return to their country of origin, but only 14% of those had concrete plans to do so (i.e. 2% of the total sample). The vast majority are likely to return only when and if the country stabilizes and peace is guaranteed.

While a minority would prefer to go back to their homeland rather than to stay in the difficult situation they live in, they do not appear to have the means to concretize such plans. For instance, an important segment of the Somali camp refugees in Ethiopia expressed a sense of being trapped in an impasse: 66% imagined going home (compared to 16% in the whole sample), while only 3 people (6% of camp refugees interviewed in Ethiopia) have concrete plans to leave the host country to return home.

Yes, I want to move from Kebribeyah. But how, I don't know. I cannot even manage my basic needs. But I want to go back to my homeland (Ethiopia, male).

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Two major conclusions can be drawn from these considerations. First, a majority of all interviewees (84%), regardless of their current host country, are not satisfied with the host country's security and living conditions and therefore wish to leave. The majority of interviewees in Africa wish to leave the continent altogether, while those already in the Netherlands and Switzerland wish to move to another industrialized country: however, most do not have concrete plans or the means to do so in the immediate future. Simultaneously, a significant proportion of interviewees are simply not able to envisage their future plans, while others entertain hopes of returning to Somalia. It is quite evident that as long as there are obstacles to effective

integration and repatriation schemes in the current host countries, secondary movement will continue to be an option for refugees and asylum-seekers.

Secondly, more movements towards more distant countries are a reality, fostered by better communication, transportation opportunities and by routes (both legal and illegal) opened by previous migrants. However, research findings suggest that over time, these movements do not become more of an irregular type nor of a more secondary type (see hypothetical tendencies in Table 25).

Table 25: Types of movements by Somali refugees to industrialized countries

	Regular movements	Irregular movements
<b>Direct movements</b>	Almost inexistent since institutions (UNHCR, NGOs or embassies) enabling these types of movements are not available in Somalia anymore. Moreover, other types of migration paths (i.e. education or labour) have been reduced.	Easier over time (open paths), balanced by more restrictive policies
	Hypothetical trend: ↘	Hypothetical trend: →
<b>Secondary movements</b>	Mainly resettlement and family reunification (with intermittent interruptions of resettlement programmes). Slightly increasing.	Constant over time
	Hypothetical trend: ↗	Hypothetical trend: →

In other words, while irregular secondary movements, which are of greatest concern to the international community and host countries, constitute just a minority share of all the movements of Somali refugee, they are nevertheless necessitated by the lack of alternative options available for legal migration. This being so, these irregular movements (both secondary and direct) are likely to continue in the future as the main form of entry into Europe and beyond.

## 5.2 Socio-demographic Profile of Somali Secondary Movers

Before turning to an analysis of the motivations for secondary movements, it is useful to consider the socio-demographic profile of the Somalis who have undertaken a secondary movement. Indeed, it is interesting to analyse the



distinguishing features which differentiate refugees who have experienced movement vis-à-vis those in the first host country. Table 26 presents a comparative socio-demographic profile of the two groups, with numbers in bold indicating the most relevant differences between the categories. Such differences are then clearly indicated in the last column on the right hand side. First, the lack of gender differentiation is clearly evident between movers and non-movers, as both women and men are equally present in both groups. Differences only materialize when familial and social statuses are factored in. Statistics reveal that individuals with children are less likely to travel than married couples/individuals without children (40% vs. 30%). Furthermore, there appears to be more movement amongst single refugees compared to married refugees (33% vs. 23%).

The differences between the two groups become even more evident if one considers the educational level and profession attained in Somalia. Respondents who had no formal education account for nearly one-half of all non-movers, whereas the proportion for illiterate movers is approximately one-third. Similarly, the data reveal that respondents who moved frequently had held decent jobs in Somalia which afforded them relatively stable income (small business owners, civil servants, etc.), a factor which contributes to their desire to relocate in order to regain self-sufficiency and financial security. Approximately 82% of the movers appear to have held some form of employment, with 18% of them declaring that had been without a job in Somalia. This proportion is 72% / 28% for the non-movers.

Table 26 also provides useful information concerning the correlation between the year of departure from Somalia and the type/frequency of movement. It distinguishes movers by the time period when they left the homeland and suggests that there were *more* secondary movers in 1992-1996 than in 2001-2005. This hypothesis is more convincing when one examines the cause of flight in the earlier years, which was primarily safety; in later years, movement was better organized and financed with a particular target destination. As illustrated in chapter 4.2, recent movements (2001-2005) and trajectories of respondents have become more direct, in which case refugees do not settle in in-between countries for long periods of time.

From this socio-demographic overview, one can draw preliminary observations concerning refugees who experienced secondary movements. Access to resources is imperative if refugees are to move between different countries. Such resources entail access to finances to organize and commence the journey as well as educational and vocational skills to utilize in the new region of settlement. Experts noted that educated and skilled persons were more prone to undertaking secondary movements as a result of the frustration caused by their inability to utilize their knowledge and skills in the specific host country. Additional movement was organized with the intention of

achieving an environment more in keeping with their qualifications and competencies in an effort to improve their personal living conditions and those of their families.

Table 26: Demographic profile of 'secondary movers' vis-à-vis 'non-movers'

Categories		Movers %	Non Movers %	Difference %
Sex	Men	51	49	2
	Women	49	51	-2
Marital Status	Single	<b>33</b>	23	<b>10</b>
	Widow	8	13	-5
	Divorced	7	7	--
	Married	52	57	-5
With children?	Yes	<b>60</b>	70	<b>-10</b>
	No	<b>40</b>	30	<b>10</b>
Education	None	<b>34</b>	51	<b>-17</b>
	Primary Ed	<b>34</b>	27	7
	Secondary Ed	<b>23</b>	17	6
	Higher Ed.	<b>9</b>	5	4
Year of departure from S.	Before 1991	30	27	3
	From 1992 to 1996	<b>33</b>	21	<b>12</b>
	From 1997 to 2001	<b>30</b>	26	4
	From 2002 to 2005	7	26	<b>-19</b>
Profession in Somalia	Small business-manual jobs	<b>24</b>	17	7
	Unemployed	<b>18</b>	28	<b>-10</b>
	Children (less than 16 years old)	<b>15</b>	7	<b>8</b>
	Students	13	10	3
	Managers/officers	<b>12</b>	8	4
	No answer	7	16	-9
	Domestic workers	4	6	-2
	House keepers	3	3	--
	Farmers	3	3	--
	Other activities	1	2	-1

As previously mentioned, however, in most cases having children/dependents is an impediment to the capacity to move on. Indeed, the more dependants refugees/asylum-seekers have, the more difficult it becomes to engage in secondary movements, both in economic and logistical terms, particularly when they are unable to take all family members along. Several interviewees attested to the existence of this dilemma:

Since my husband is travelling I am stuck with the children (Yemen, female).

Many female refugees are subjected to a lonely or single-parent status in the first host country, where they must protect and care for children and elderly dependents without the support of their husbands, either because he has embarked on a secondary movement (testament above) or because of death. Widows with children are reported as being among the most vulnerable refugees, generally lacking the resources to plan additional movement. In situations where the husband lives in another country, families can sometimes lead a relatively better livelihood, as a result of remittances sent, but they also face the risk of being “forgotten” by their husband after some time and thus finding themselves in situations similar to that of widows.

Lastly, it is clear from this survey that the more educated and wealthier the individuals, the more enterprising they are. Their economic status often translates to better global and cultural knowledge, information networks which greatly improve their ability to move onwards.

### 5.3 Motivations for Secondary Movements

Although current literature on refugee studies has recently focused on understanding the motivations for the refugee community’s choice in settling in a particular European country (Efionayi-Mäder et al. 2001; Efionayi-Mäder et al. 2005; Havinga and Böcker 1999; Robinson and Segrott 2002), there is a dearth of critical analysis<sup>61</sup> concerning the causes of secondary movement (factors inducing refugees to leave a first country of settlement for another). It is fair to say, however, that some of the above-mentioned literature is useful in assessing general guidelines for secondary movement. In fact, there is a general consensus among scholars that refugees reach one country as a consequence of a complex interaction among several factors:

- Time of departure from homeland: in general, refugees leaving their homeland in the immediate aftermath of a civil war do not have many choices and often simply enter the closest country (Johansson 1990; Middleton 2005), whereas those moving later have more decision-making power over their destination (see chapter 4.1);
- Personal (and material) resources like family networks and friendship ties or, in the case of longer journeys, remittances or access to smugglers are crucial in determining the choice of destination (Efionayi-Mäder et al. 2001 show that family networks are by far more important than friends) (see chapter 5.3 on these aspects) ;

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<sup>61</sup> With the exception of Legomsky (2003).

- Historical relations between a refugee-generating country and the destination state, which in part explains movements towards the UK or Italy; Havinga and Böcker (1999: 47-8) assert that the presence of colonial ties between the country of origin and the country of destination emerged from their multiple regression analysis as the most important reason for the country of destination, though its importance tends to decline over time;
- Structural or contextual features, like the country’s asylum policy or economic infrastructure, but also the quality of welfare-related services that are delivered to refugees.

There are, of course, other imponderable predictors which play a role in refugees’ movements; for instance, factors such as chance or rumour. It is evident that in many instances, refugees’ destinations are accidental because destinations are decided by smuggling agents and brokers who arrange the details of the undocumented mover, as described in chapter 4.3.4 (see also Havinga and Böcker 1999; Legomsky 2003). A case in point is described in this testimony:

I had no intention to come to Switzerland. I wanted to go to England because I know some Somali people there. The smuggler told me that he would bring me to England. I don't know why he didn't. Once I realized that I was in Switzerland the smuggler had already left me (Switzerland, male).

In other cases, rumours and the opinions of other refugees/asylum-seekers play an important role in the process of deciding on a destination.

I heard people talking about Cairo and I heard that it was a very peaceful country and you could study and improve your future (Egypt, male).

It is valid to claim that “asylum-seekers are dependent on certain fortuitous circumstances and these circumstances are structured by more general circumstances or opportunities which are not at all random” (Havinga and Böcker 1999: 57) and that “neither of these motivations singularly accounts for the destination countries of refugees, whilst it is likely that they are all part of the explanation” (Middleton 2005: 47). What remains unclear, however, is the hierarchical ordering of these circumstances; in other words, which motivations are more significant in guiding the decision-making process of refugee movement. Answering this query calls for a deeper examination of the data for clues on predominant motivations in the decision of the interviewees to choose a specific country, as well as to move from one country to another, by analysing their key concerns.

This investigation was approached by using monivariate, bivariate and multivariate (multiple regressions) analyses. The results begin with bivariate analyses on the motivations that pushed Somali refugees to leave their first country of settlement and then on the motivations that pushed them to enter a



given country. Table 27 presents percentages of the importance of different reasons in fostering secondary movements. Based on previous studies, a detailed list of motivations was provided, whereby interviewees were asked to include or exclude such factors in their own reasons for leaving their home and choosing their host country.

Interviewees were first asked to state whether a particular reason or motivation was relevant in their choice to leave their first country of settlement. For practical reasons, an aggregated version of motivators is presented in Table 27. Below is a brief synopsis of the push factors which compelled refugees to instigate a movement (based on the answers to the following question: Why did you decide to leave this country/place of settlement?).

1. *Poor life conditions* comprises responses such as lack of adequate standard of living.
2. *Lack of physical safety* comprises responses such as fear of forced return; fear of persecution; endangerment of physical safety; harassment by the police.
3. *Lack of access to fair asylum procedures and lack of secure legal status and documentation.*
4. *Lack of so-called durable solutions* comprises responses pertaining to lack of access to family reunification; lack of access to legal opportunities to migrate (which do not depend only on first settlement countries but also on the third states and international humanitarian actors); lack of access to “durable solutions” as defined by UNHCR, i.e. resettlement to an industrialized country, return to the home country or integration in the current host country.
5. *Lack of opportunities for education and work.*

Table 27 also indicates that the most important motivator pushing refugees to move out of the primary host country (mainly countries in Africa and the Middle East) relates explicitly to negligence on the part of the host country (gaps in asylum procedures and documentation, lack of physical safety, lack of integration opportunities) as well third-party responsibility, such as the limited availability or lack of durable solutions such as resettlement or voluntary repatriation schemes. Each of these issues was mentioned by almost two thirds of the respondents. Many interviews underscore the particular importance of safety as a major stimulant for the secondary movement of women and girls. While gender-based violence is often a motivation for leaving Somalia, it is also a very important factor in the decision to leave a country of asylum. As previously stated, refugee camps –

in all countries studied – are often regarded as especially dangerous for women; as “places where women were likely to get raped and refugees would catch diseases”, as testified by a male refugee interviewed in Egypt when asked about the reasons for leaving (or avoiding) those camps (see also Abdi 2005). Despite its prevalence in the camps, insecurity is often a problem for women living in urban settings. Interviewees noted sexual harassment or abuse by employers, police, general population (in the case of Yemen) and even by other refugees (in the case of poor Somali neighbourhoods in Cairo), which has been a key gender specific factor in moving onward.

*Table 27: Motivations for secondary movements (in %)*

Motivations	%
Lack of access to durable solutions	65
Lack of access to fair asylum procedures and lack of secure legal status and documentation	63
Lack of physical safety	62
Poor living conditions	54
Lack of opportunities for education and work	43
	N 278

Percentages add up to more than 100% as more than one answer was allowed (for technical reasons South Africa and Yemen are excluded from this figure).

These motivations partially explain some of the secondary movements undertaken in the region (between Somalia’s neighbouring countries). Indeed, many secondary movers explained that their journey from Kenya to Ethiopia was based on the need to avoid the dangers associated with Kenyan camps, in addition to obtaining some form of employment. The same holds true for those who left Ethiopia to go to Djibouti, where many expected to find a safe “Somali environment”, in addition to accessing (illegal) employment opportunities, thus attaining a sense of personal security, despite their undocumented status.

Both poor living conditions and lack of opportunities for education and employment are critical push factors indicated by half the sample population as a reason for leaving the first country. And while these constraints are a major source of concern, their impact for the overall refugee population is

weaker than those of other motivators mentioned. This relative impact holds true for both genders and is not influenced by parenthood (cf. Table 28)<sup>62</sup>.

*Table 28: Motivations for secondary movements by gender, marital status and dependents (in %)*

Motivations	Sex		Marital status		With Children	
	Male	Female	Single	Married	Yes	No
Lack of access to durable solutions	63	66	71	65	60	73
Lack of access to fair asylum procedures and lack of secure legal status and documentation	62	64	67	66	60	68
Lack of physical safety	62	62	62	67	60	65
Poor living conditions	58	52	55	56	52	59
Lack of opportunities for education and work	41	45	49	40	37	51
N	133	145	86	149	171	107

Percentages sum up to more than 100% as more than one answer allowed (for technical reasons South Africa and Yemen are excluded from this figure).

Conversely, the study finds that the three overarching concerns for the refugee population were: (i) gaining legal status; (ii) accessing the asylum system of the host countries; and, (iii) opportunities for durable solutions. These factors were far more significant than the poor living conditions given that many refugees had become accustomed to harsh situations during the flight and displacement process. And although employment and education are crucial issues in the discourse of many, particularly those with children, the majority of respondents believe that the above-mentioned concerns will eventually contribute to an overall picture of social development, including work and schooling.

In fact, the majority of parents are concerned about the lack of educational facilities not for personal reasons, but for the sake of their children. For instance, many interviewees in Ethiopia moved from the refugee camps to Addis Ababa because educational opportunities in the camps were either not available or inadequate. In Djibouti, some families sent their sons to study in Ethiopia (or even Somalia) because they did not have access to secondary

<sup>62</sup> Refugees without children mention labour and education opportunities more often as motivating factors than parents, which is probably related to the fact that this particular question did not specify whether it relates to the education of interviewees or of their children.

education in the refugee camps<sup>63</sup>. In Europe, education is a particularly important issue and parents who believe that educational opportunities are not satisfactory often organise another journey. In Switzerland, Somali refugees strongly resent the limitations on post-compulsory education related to subsidiary protection. Similarly, in the Netherlands, a justification for the motivation to move to the UK is because of the segregation of Somali children into special classes for children with learning disabilities, a notion that is rejected by parents as racist. A seventeen-year-old interviewee comments on the importance of education:

I would like to remain in Switzerland, but only if I get the opportunity to be educated, otherwise I cannot stay here. Imagine, what sense would it have to stay here without education? Once I have to go back to Somalia, I will be like those who have just arrived from the bush. I will not be able to do anything without education (Switzerland, male).

Since context is crucial, it is worth adding a comparative view enabling an analysis of the different features of each country. This is illustrated in Table 29 where the same indicators are presented according to the first country of settlement. This table shows that although gaps at juridical protection level are important motivations everywhere, they become crucial predictors of movements of refugees settled in Arab countries (Saudi Arabia, UAE) which are not party to international conventions concerning asylum. Another motivation which occurs as very important throughout all countries is the lack of durable solutions available to the refugee population. As discussed in previous chapters, the possibility of accessing legal opportunities to emigrate or integrate in local contexts is rare, not to say non-existent, in all countries surveyed. The non-availability of these solutions emerges as an extremely important push factor, particularly in light of the fact that Somalis have been migrating from their homeland for more than fifteen years.

On closely examining the role of “poor life conditions” as fostering movement, this appears most prevalent in Yemen, where 73% of respondents in the country cited it as the primary factor. A plausible explanation for the high level of dissatisfaction can be drawn from the underlying reasons for the initial migration to Yemen which was most likely related to employment (Yemen as a transit point to other Gulf States), as well as insufficient personal security in the urban and camp areas. These outcomes suggest that motivations not only concern the objective conditions in a given place, but

<sup>63</sup> This is in no way an easy choice for refugee families. In order to educate their children, refugee families need resources, which are often diverted from other priorities, such as selling some parts of the food rations, and/or having some of the family members working illegally to raise the funds.

also take into account preconceived expectations, the socio-economic reality in the host country as well as the social profile of refugees. Previous labour migration patterns to Arab countries contributed to optimistic hopes for better living conditions, which were not fulfilled in the Yemen case.

Table 29: Motivations for secondary movements by first country of settlement (in %)

	KE	ET	DJ	YE	SAU	UAE
Poor living conditions	48	55	46	73	57	67
Lack of physical safety	63	49	38	54	95	50
Lack of access to fair asylum procedures and lack of secure legal status and documentation	59	58	38	50	91	83
Lack of durable solutions	57	66	62	62	84	83
Lack of opportunities for education and work	46	39	23	46	55	50
N	99	67	13	26	44	6

Percentages sum up to more than 100% as more than one answer allowed.

Having concluded an assessment of the motivations for *leaving* a country, it is equally imperative to examine the motivations for *entering* another. In so doing, the survey established a series of indicators and asked respondents to affirm whether or not a particular variable inspired or affected their choice in the current host country. The motivations established are presented in an aggregated form, and they cover the following aspects:

1. *Proximity and “easy” access*, which comprises responses such as chances of entering the country easily; proximity and journey costs not too high.
2. *Legal aspects*, which comprises responses such as strong chances of obtaining refugee or equal status; rule of law and democracy.
3. *Social networks*, which comprises responses such as high number of compatriots in country; relatives and friends in host country<sup>64</sup>.
4. *Good life standard*, which comprises responses such as high level of welfare provisions; high life standard.
5. *Good opportunities for education (for themselves or for their children)*.
6. *Good working opportunities*.

<sup>64</sup> Social networks as they are described here do not include smuggling networks.

Table 30 shows that for the large majority of Somali refugees interviewed in this survey, the proximity of the country and the fact that entering was not considered too difficult was an extremely important motivation in their movement towards the host country. The importance of proximity and easy access (e.g. the possibility of crossing the borders without being intercepted by the police; the existence of traditional ‘cross-border’ paths; help from populations living near the border) obviously concerns Somalia’s neighbouring states, which represented the first accessible ‘safe haven’ for refugees. Proximity aside, ease of access is also a crucial factor in entering non-neighbouring countries like Egypt where a high number of interviewees entered the country because of its loose admission policies. Beside proximity, another important reason is represented by the possibility to enter a safe and not-devastated country (rule of law and democracy), which has emerged in other studies as an important pull factor (Efiionayi-Mäder et al. 2001), as well as the possibility of obtaining refugee status: this could perhaps provide empirical evidence for theories assessing the importance of state policies in making a country “attractive”. While other factors such as employment, education and adequate standard of living are important, the third most critical pull factor is the role of families and acquaintances in the destination country. These ties are essential in facilitating financial and human resources which enable the newcomers to enter, settle and adjust to the new environment.

Table 30: Underlying motivations for entering current host country

Motivations	%
Proximity and accessibility	73
Motivations linked to legal aspects	64
Networks	58
Good working opportunities	29
Good opportunity for education	24
Good life standard	23
N 567	

Percentages sum up to more than 100% as more than one answer allowed (for technical reasons South Africa and Yemen are excluded from this figure).

However, although the survey was similar for all country studies, the responses varied significantly. For example, in the case of the European countries, 38% of respondents in the Netherlands and 25% in Switzerland noted that they had not chosen their host countries as their intended destinations. It appears that such a decision was either the responsibility of the smuggling agent or that the refugees were simply deceived by being

dumped at the first available transfer point in Europe due to immigration restrictions. Irrespective of the decision-maker and their intended destination, most refugees who entered European countries under these circumstances have since applied for asylum and continue to remain in their host countries.

The underlying motivations for settling in one country (for those able to decide) vary according to gender, marital and parental status. These aspects are presented in Table 31 suggesting that proximity and the possibility of entering a country without too much risk are slightly more effective for men. In choosing to migrate to a particular country, women often pay more attention (than men) to the legal aspects (perception of fair asylum procedures, documentation) and to social networks (whether husbands or other relatives are already in the country of destination).

Women are particularly attracted to countries where they have good social networks or support systems. Generally, they join their husband or other family members, although in many cases husbands also join wives, who play a crucial role in assisting the settlement of the family. In a situation where there are no husbands or close kin, socially isolated women tend to move to areas where they can find community support in lieu of family help. This situation is evident from European interviews where many single mothers envisage a move from both Switzerland and the Netherlands to the United Kingdom, where they believe they can lead a life “within their community”. This is not possible in the current host country because of the numerous restrictions limiting freedom of movement and/or housing. It seems natural that more economically vulnerable persons seek environments where they can rely on community solidarity, in contrast to the young and single generation who are far more adept at integrating in the independent lifestyle.

*Table 31: Motivating factors for entering current host country by gender, marital status and dependents (in %)*

Motivations	Men	Women	Married	Single	Parents	Not
Proximity and easiness	79	68	75	73	74	74
Motivations linked to legal aspects	62	67	64	66	64	66
Networks	56	60	61	54	59	56
Good working opportunities	29	29	33	22	32	24
Good opportunity for education	25	23	22	31	22	29
Good life standard	22	24	20	28	21	28
N	273	301	321	151	380	194

Percentages sum up to more than 100% as more than one answer allowed (for technical reasons South Africa and Yemen are excluded from this figure).

Whereas the primary pull factor for married refugees is the need for social networks (to facilitate settlement and enable resource accumulation for undertaking family reunification plans), single refugees are more preoccupied with gaining access to education and employment opportunities in the host country. The social development of young refugees was interrupted by the civil war; hence, their urgent need to regain the knowledge and skills lost in the intervening years. Finally, refugees with offspring are more interested by good working opportunities (they need to support their family) than those without children. Conversely, the latter are more attracted than the former by opportunities for education (mainly because they are young) and by the life standard of the potential host country.

Motivations for entering one country are quite different from another. Table 32 presents the list of motivations which interviewees gave for entering their current host country.

*Table 32: Motivating factors for entering host country/region (in %)*

	Europe	Egypt	Neighbours
Proximity and/or easy access	46	91	73
Motivations linked to legal aspects	43	93	51
Good life standard	50	33	8
Networks	49	67	51
Good opportunity for education	29	44	13
Good working opportunities	30	18	44

N 686

Percentages sum up to more than 100% as more than one answer allowed (for technical reasons, South Africa and Yemen are excluded from this figure).

This table clearly shows that European destinations were chosen mainly for the quality of their living standards and the existence of networks and social ties which enabled the movement. In contrast, neighbouring countries were chosen due to their proximity and ease of access; in some cases, the presence of family members or acquaintances already in the country facilitated the decision. In all cases including Egypt, the presence of family or social ties was a decisive factor in the choice of a destination – irrespective of distance.

The analysis presented above provides empirical evidence on a number of motivating factors which prompt the movement of refugees. The analysis does not, however, allow for a clear establishment of key factor(s) which can best predict this type of movement. Hence, the use of multivariate analysis is useful in establishing a comparison of important predictors (i.e. motivating factors) to estimate the relation, positive or negative, between the predictors and the decision to move onward.

### ***Multivariate analysis of motivating factors for secondary movements***

We tested a model of multivariate analysis focused on the past experiences of movements. We built a logistic regression model for this analysis because the variable at our disposal (whether the respondent settled or not in more than one country) was dichotomous (yes/no). Logistic regression is used to predict the *probability* of an event occurring (in this case, a secondary movement), given known values of certain predictors. For the logistic regression, we opted for a backward method, which is the preferable method when very little research exists upon which to base the testing of hypotheses; in addition, this schema provides a more exploratory view.

This type of model begins with all predictors and in sequence the computer tests if any of the predictors can be isolated from the model without producing a substantial effect on how well the model fits the observed data. The best interpretative key to the coefficients presented in Table 41 in the annex is provided by the significance indicators: i.e. the more asterisks, the stronger the relations. The analysis produced 14 models, but for practical reasons Table 41 in the annex presents only the first and last ones. In the first model, we can see that the system has examined all the predictors, including socio-demographic and contextual ones. But the one which counts is the last model produced by the computer (model 14), which substantiates that there is only one factor which counted more than all others in motivating past movements, and this factor is the lack of a proper legal status formally conferring protection.

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Both simple statistical analysis and complex models (logistic regression) clearly illustrate that lack of a legal status conferring protection is the most important factor motivating secondary movements. As stated previously, legal status is an important starting point for gaining access to other rights. In almost all countries, access to education depends on the possession of a recognized document, while employment opportunities are strongly affected by the type of legal status a person enjoys. Lack of a proper legal status translates into lack of (or limited) mobility rights and freedom of legal movement and, more generally, it means loss of opportunities to resettle or even integrate locally.

But the importance of a recognized and appropriate legal status revealed by this survey reflects other important aspects of forced exile. Adequate documentation and an appropriate status are necessary elements in restoring dignity to exiles following the trauma of displacement. Numerous interviewees noted that their insecure status in African countries as well as in

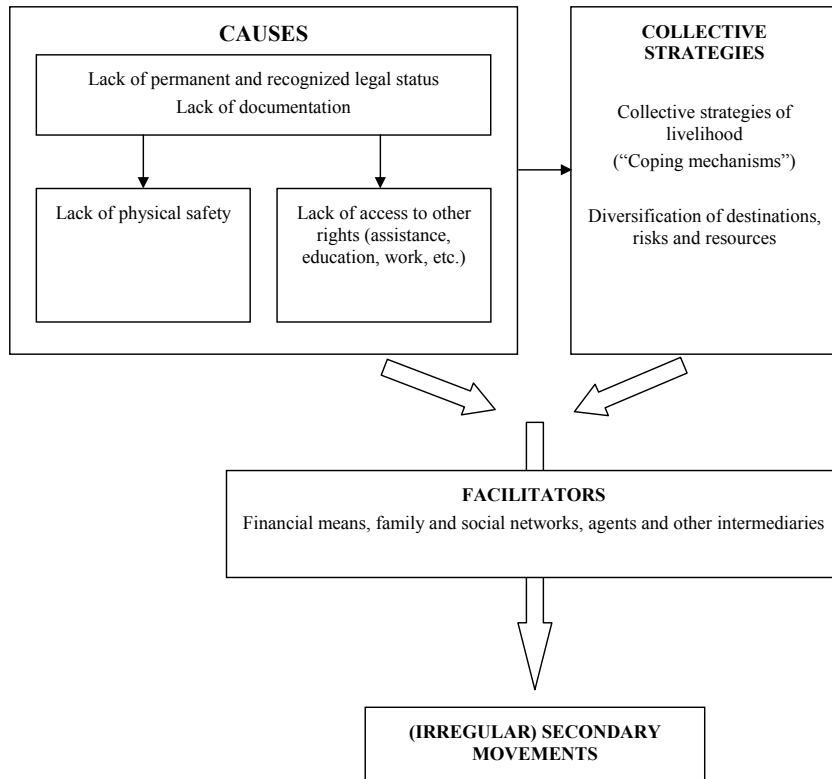
Switzerland was and continues to be a difficult experience. Their displacement only compounds their feelings of personal and emotional insecurity given their social isolation from the host community. Kleist (2004) argues that a primary justification of Somali refugees' refusal to define themselves (and be defined) as nomads is the need to reverse the situation of exclusion that asylum represents. The history of refugees is a history of exclusion, displacement, and suffering and as such, one of their most pressing needs is to find opportunities for social inclusion in the host country. The acknowledgement of a recognized legal status, with the rights, privileges and duties endowed, is an important step in enabling exiles to overcome their experience of exclusion and to restart a new chapter in their lives. This need, however, has yet to be addressed in all countries surveyed in Africa, Europe and Middle East.

Legomsky's (2003: 568) observation concludes the chapter quite effectively: "the shortest distance between a persecutor and a permanent safe haven is seldom a straight line. Perhaps it was never unusual for refugees to travel circuitous routes through several countries before reaching their intended final stop. It is certainly not unusual today". Indeed, it is not unusual for refugees to move across countries in search of refuge; however, this study of Somali refugees has provided valuable evidence that 'to travel circuitous routes' is rarely a deliberate choice on the part of refugees but rather of circumstance. The extensive interviews reveal that numerous causes contribute to secondary movements of Somali refugees, ranging from inadequate living conditions in or outside Somalia to refugee policies and attitudes in host countries. Undoubtedly, the long-term nature of the Somali conflict has added a significant dimension to the dynamics of refugee movements, which were unpredictable at the time when the Somali State collapsed and were thus underestimated by all stakeholders, including the refugees themselves, as well as host countries, UN agencies and the international community.

## **5.4 Networks, "Facilitating Agents" and Collective Coping Strategies**

The motivations causing secondary movements have been described in detail in the previous chapter. However, these motivations alone are not sufficient to explain the movements of Somali refugees, who also act on specific strategies, mostly on a collective or family level.

Figure 2: Explanatory model of (irregular) secondary movements



Furthermore, as has been stated above, interviews revealed that a significant share of interviewees wish to live somewhere other than the current host country because of deep dissatisfaction with social conditions and protection schemes in place. However, only a minority of the population is likely to experience legal movement by way of resettlement or family reunification programmes. The rest have to resort to their own devices, i.e. financial means, familial support, social networks or smugglers, if they want to leave their current host country. These elements should not be considered as causes, but as facilitating agents of irregular secondary movements (and of migration movements in general). These diverse mechanisms are not the causes of secondary movement (although the social network may be part of the motivations in some instances), but rather agents that make movements possible.

Although these issues are not the principal focus of the study, (irregular) secondary movements cannot be explained without explicit reference to at least two elements: facilitating agents and collective strategies. Together with the causes and basic motivations, they form a comprehensive explanatory model of the secondary movements of Somali refugees (Figure 2). This sub-chapter is therefore dedicated to a brief explanation of the two elements in the diagram that have not yet been described.

#### 5.4.1 The role of networks and other facilitating agents

As in most (if not all) migrations, facilitators and intermediaries are an essential component at every stage of secondary movements. In the case of regular migrations, these facilitating agents are mostly of an institutional kind, i.e. travel agencies, UN agencies or international organisations, foreign embassies, etc. In situations of irregular movements, facilitating agents become more informal and the role of personal social networks and resources becomes crucial: the more distant the country of destination, the more urgent the need for facilitating elements. Different networks play specific roles at every stage of the migration trajectory: in the decision-making, in the choice of the person(s) who will leave, in the organization of the travel, in the choice of the destination country, in the settlement in the new host country, etc. Dahinden (2005b), in her work on Albanian migrants and asylum-seekers networks, found three major types of networks taking an active role in the migration process: the household, the transnational community acting as bridging networks, and the “realisation network” made up of acquaintances, persons met by chance and smugglers.

The importance and interactions of facilitating agents are evident in this research. One of their role is to provide (even partially) the finances which are essential for all movement, irrespective of destination. Some of these resources can be obtained by the traveller, either by working and saving the earnings, or by selling personal belongings, which, already, should be considered on a collective level. Most of the time, however, family members abroad, in the host country, or in Somalia participate in financing the trip. This help is not only an act of pure solidarity, but also a burden-sharing mechanism used by transnational families to help family members living in Somalia or in other poorer countries. A case in point is the situation of an interviewee in Switzerland who was sent there by her parents, in consultation with an uncle living in the USA. The uncle, who organized and financed the trip, had been solely responsible for financially supporting the family through regular remittances. Although not explicitly expressed in the interview, there is a strong likelihood that the young woman is being sent in order to take over financial responsibility for her family.



The transnational social network also participates in the organization of the trip through information sharing on various destination countries and means and mode of travelling. Information is generally obtained in person, but difficult or complex situations require the use of professional agents or smugglers. The tighter immigration restriction imposed by industrialized countries has created an important and lucrative niche for smuggling businesses that deal in the transfer of illegal immigrants. (See chapter 4.3.4 on the issue of smugglers). Social networks and smugglers contribute significantly to the choice of destinations (see for instance Efonayi-Mäder et al. 2001; Efonayi-Mäder et al. 2005), and this is validated in this study where 58% of the respondents mentioned the presence of family members, friends or at least an important Somali community as a reason for choosing a host country (cf. chapter 5.3). But for those who do not have a specific destination or who cannot find a smuggler to take them to the country of their choice, agents may play the central role in the decision-making process. The following example shows the interaction of different types of networks at different stages of the migration process, specifically in secondary movements.

The situation in Nairobi was desperate: no work, no money, and no school for the children. Our relatives in the US and in Italy were sending us some money, which enabled us to survive. After eight months, when I had given birth to my fourth child, my husband and I decided that I would be sent with the children to Italy. We had relatives there and we thought that I could stay with them. We decided to send me because it was easier to get a visa for a woman with children than for a man. Someone organised the whole trip for us. He gave me a passport, which said that I was his wife. He brought me to Rome. There, I couldn't stay with my relatives: I could not find a job, I had no money, no legal status, no room or apartment. My friends, relatives and other Somalis told me to go to Switzerland. They said that the country was very close, that the border was easy to cross and that I could get asylum there. Moreover, I had two sisters and my mother who were staying in Switzerland. After 20 days, I left Italy for Switzerland. Eight of my brothers and sisters are still living in Somalia, near the border of Ethiopia, I think, but I don't know exactly. It is not possible to get in contact with them. Six brothers and sisters are living in Kenya, all of them near Nairobi. Five brothers and sisters live in the US and in Canada. Three of them stayed in Switzerland before they left for the US. One of my sisters won a green card. She then went to the US with my mother who was staying in Switzerland by that time. The two other sisters had contacts with Somalis in the US. They wanted to get married to them. Both of them got a visa from those men and got married to them (Switzerland, female).

It can therefore be stated that social networks are very important in sustaining migration, as they are “the vehicle for the transmission of migratory cultural capital” (Van Hear 1998: 60). These networks provide the resources – financial, communication, support, etc. – required by refugees throughout the organisational and migration stages. Networks are constantly changing and shifting, constituting a web of opportunities and resources to which they can

resort. The larger and the older the transnational network, the better it can act as a facilitating agent for new potential migrants and reduce the costs and risks of the movement (Brettell 2000; Massey et al. 1996), even more so when this is irregular.

Networks also have an important role in the settlement and integration of newcomers. Family members, friends and even unknown Somalis are the ones who welcome new people and introduce them to their new environment by providing important information about the asylum system and other social services available. Friends and relatives also play an important role in terms of building solidarity, particularly when acculturating to new host cultures where social customs are unusual and challenging. Custody of children amongst the refugees is a common coping mechanism, particularly in dangerous or insecure environments, as depicted in the case of the undocumented widow living in Nairobi:

I don't live with my children, because I don't have a house. Four of us live in a small room. I live with some friends and my children are living with some relatives in different parts of the country. When I want to go and see them, I have to have a little money to pay the police at the police checks (Kenya, female).

In most countries studied, refugee Somalis living in urban settings are concentrated in Somali inhabited areas (Addis Ababa, Aden, Cairo, Cape Town, Johannesburg, Nairobi, Pretoria). In contrast, asylum-seekers are not allowed to choose their place of residence at least during the first period after arrival in Switzerland and in the Netherlands. As a result, many interviewees suffered greatly from the cultural and social isolation imposed by the restrictions. However, even in those countries, newcomers still rely most on the Somali community, relatives and friends upon arrival.

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In summary, it appears clearly that transnational social networks played a crucial role in the majority of trajectories of the Somali refugees interviewed, either in financing, organizing and informing, or in welcoming their friends or relatives. It is important to point out that these networks do not operate solely on the basis of humanitarian and altruistic motives. It is clear in the case of smuggling networks that although smugglers may behave compassionately, their operations are financial and driven by profit<sup>65</sup>. Interviewees remain relatively ambivalent about the ethics of smuggling, with most individuals referring to their smugglers as “the person I travelled with” or “the man who organized my trip”. Some remain divided over the

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<sup>65</sup> This does not include human trafficking networks which, unlike smuggling, are characterised by the use of force and human exploitation (United Nations 2000).

role of smugglers – with many considering them as heroes or saviours who rescue individuals in difficult circumstances while others see them as profiteers taking advantage of human misery (on this topic, see also Farah 2003; Van Liempt and Doomernik forthcoming).

Social networks are equally complex social arrangements with a myriad of underlying motives. It can be argued that the majority of Somali refugees' migratory movements, and specifically secondary movements, are part of broader strategies that include the extended family and, in some cases, even larger groups (sub-clan or other). As such, movement is not organized for the benefit of one or two individuals, but rather, it is a series of arrangements designed to promote the collective interest of the entire group. Arranged (or forced) marriages are one of the strategies highlighted in the interviews, where marriage becomes a viable option for escaping the deprivation of refugee life. The role of the networks in the collective livelihood strategies is the object of the following sub-chapter.

#### 5.4.2 Collective Livelihood Strategies

As has been meticulously demonstrated, secondary movements are generally a mechanism to escape the disadvantages of refugee existence in order to find legal and social security. These systems are also part of collective coping strategies aimed at diversifying the risks related to refugee situations and the resources of the extended family. In this sense, relatives sometimes deliberately choose to live in different countries as an effective means of minimizing legal insecurity and economic and social vulnerability under conditions which are largely unpredictable and beyond their control. These rational coping mechanisms involve collective decisions about family members who are scattered in different places according to their specific needs and skills (on this topic, see notably Al-Sharmani 2004a, 2004b; Fink-Nielsen et al. 2004; Horst 2002a, 2003).

In this study, such strategies are apparent both at the national level, with the scattering of family members between camps and cities, and at the transnational level where they are dispersed in several countries or even continents. They explain, to some extent, why in Djibouti for instance, women and children often stay in camps while men and daughters work illegally in the city, mainly to supplement the resources of the family, which in turn enables families to send older sons to Ethiopia or Somalia for secondary education. It is evident in the situation of refugee women in Egypt separated from their husbands who support them financially through illegal employment in Saudi Arabia, while they take refuge in secure environments which might yield possibilities of resettlement in a third country. Another example of these strategies entails sending girls or young women to Europe to avoid precarious security situations in camps (rapes) or urban areas in

Africa. Their security is certainly at the heart of the decision, but different experts and community leaders also declare that sending young women (as opposed to males) to industrialized countries is an act of investment because females are more loyal and caring and will contribute to family income through regular remittances.

The rules of solidarity and of reciprocity are complex and require further analysis, but it is important to remember that these rules are not fixed and that they are, at every stage of the migration process, constantly negotiated, reinforced or dissolved (Dahinden 2005a). Remittances, for example, are not guaranteed and can cease at any time because of changes in the situation of the sender (loss of a job, change in legal status, etc.). Other changes in the remittance scheme can be arbitrary, where husbands terminate their family's income support by remarrying and assuming new responsibilities.

Though generally beneficial, solidarity links can also create dependency and breed negativity as a result of unfulfilled expectations. When a family "sends" one of its members to an industrialized country, there is an unspoken rule that the individual will reciprocate by supporting the family, a duty which can sometimes remain unfulfilled (as a result of unemployment, limited income, etc.). Collective strategies and solidarity networks can also fall prey to the challenges of globalization when new immigrants do not have access to well-paying jobs that can adequately support both the individual and the family unit in Africa. These challenges have been cited by interviewees as well as other literature as contributing to increased tension amongst families and even separation and divorce amongst married couples.

In summary, one must remember that decisions are very rarely individual, and that they generally concern the whole group (usually the family), as the next quotation shows.

I do not work because it is not allowed. I asked my sister who lives in London to support us until UNHCR grants me a resettlement to another country in order to work and help my family and she agreed (Egypt, male).

These coping mechanisms, illustrated here with just a few examples, show how different criteria (mostly based on specific needs, skills and opportunities) interplay in the collective decisions of which family member moves where, and how these criteria may sometimes be conflicting. What is important is that, in these collective livelihood strategies, places are repositories of rights and possibilities (Kibreab 1999). Furthermore, it appears that the interests underlying certain decisions are not always clear to the refugees involved themselves. In Switzerland and the Netherlands, there were several examples of exiles being encouraged by their relatives to move further to other countries.



In Paris, relatives came to pick me up at the airport. I stayed some days with them, but they didn't want me to live among them. They told me that I had to go to Switzerland because I wouldn't be able to survive in France. They organised a car for me. Before I left, they took my documents and all the money I had. They told me that I had to travel to Switzerland like that, without anything. As I was afraid and did not know what to do, and as I was dependant on those relatives, I did everything they wanted (Switzerland, female).

Although this individual was still unaware of the underlying rationale for her sudden departure to Switzerland, it is evident from the advice of her relatives that they were looking out for her best interest as a result of their familiarity with the asylum policies in Europe (Switzerland, in their view, offering better conditions to a single mother with two children than France). It is also plausible to assume that their decision may have been influenced by other factors such as the need to diversify the family's settlement patterns in order to minimize risks and maximize opportunities for the collective entity.

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Some researchers (Bang Nielsen 2004; Horst 2003; Kleist 2004) argue that these strategies are linked to socio-cultural characteristics of Somalis, and therefore specific to these refugees. Although it is true that the historical nomadism of some Somalis, as well as the large diaspora that has been created over the years, may influence and facilitate movement strategies, it would be too simplistic to restrict such coping mechanisms to one group. Similar survival strategies are continuously being adopted and modified by non-Somali migrants and refugees who lack legal avenues for migration. Analysis of such strategies, in comparison with other groups of refugees, would highlight specificities as well as generalities of such causes and thus contribute to a better understanding of the causes and channels of secondary movements of refugees worldwide.

In conclusion, the assessment of different aspects of the situation confirms that secondary movements will always exist, primarily as a result of family ties but also because of an innate desire to attain better legal, economic, and social conditions. However, it seems that regional solutions targeted at improving the protection schemes – expanding or reinforcing refugee rights, enabling local integration, etc. – would have an effect on the scope and pace of these movements. These measures are particularly useful to a segment of the population which is not interested in moving to industrialized countries and is in fact adamant about remaining in the host country until they can return to their country of origin, either because of particularly strong ties with it (family ties, property, etc.) or because of negative views and fears linked to life in industrialized countries.

## 6 Conclusions

The findings in this study depict the myriad causes which contribute to secondary movements of Somali refugees. These causes and motivations range from inadequate living conditions in or outside Somalia to refugee policies and attitudes in host countries as well as the coping strategies of the Somali community or individuals. The interplay of these factors shapes refugee movements which have developed their own dynamics in the absence of a credible peace settlement in Somalia. While other concerns and conflicts have dominated the airwaves in recent decades, the international community has only recently become aware of the impasse refugees face in camps and urban settings – the inability either to return or to settle effectively in the host country. In the meantime, a generation of young people who have spent most of their lives in camps has grown up.

Under these circumstances, secondary movements are in many cases attempts at restoring vitality by people who have in many instances lost hope in their ability to make a difference. It is especially crucial for children and young people who need to grow up in an environment conducive to social change. This study maintains that in the absence of alternative solutions, secondary movements often constitute the only way for refugees to regain some control over the course of their lives. Hence a considerable potential for secondary movements will probably exist as long as return and local integration remain impossible. More movements towards countries further afield are already a reality, fostered by better communication and transport opportunities, and by routes (both legal and illegal) opened by the prior migration of Somali refugees. However, our findings suggest that these trajectories do not tend, over time, to become more of an irregular type, nor of a more secondary type, but represent a minority share of all movements. However it is true that irregular – secondary, but also direct – movements constitute the main form of entry of Somalis in Europe.

This is not to say that irregular movements are unproblematic for the host and transit countries, especially if refugees and asylum-seekers follow illegal paths and elude state control; however, the fight against irregular secondary movements is only credible if it simultaneously pays attention to the pre-conditions and offers alternative opportunities. This includes re-examining the policies and attitudes of implicated actors in the region, where secondary movements usually start, even if there is not always a consensus about the national and international responsibilities in legal and even more so in practical or pragmatic terms.

## 6.1 Responses of Host States and Societies

Since the outbreak of the Somali civil war, neighbouring countries – Ethiopia, Kenya, Yemen and Djibouti – have hosted a disproportionate share of Somali refugees and displayed extraordinary levels of generosity: from almost 100% during the initial years after the mass outflows, their share of the global Somali refugee population still constitutes close to two-thirds (64%) in 2004 (UNHCR 2005b). A decade later, however, these countries are less inclined and capable of maintaining the same level of hospitality.

### *Convergent trend to declining acceptance of refugees*

The perceptions of host societies are influenced *inter alia* by the deteriorating economic and sometimes difficult political situation of the states concerned. Particularly in Kenya, but to some extent in Yemen, Djibouti, Egypt and South Africa as well, debates have in recent years emerged about refugee affairs, sometimes with striking similarities to “older” developments in the Netherlands and in Switzerland. Refugees are increasingly viewed by host populations and/or depicted by politicians as a threat to security, specifically due to arms or drugs trafficking; and they are perceived as taxing social services and straining the environment, particularly in regard to large camps in Kenya and Ethiopia. This “shift towards xenophobic restrictionism” (Kibreab 1999: 400) is found in many African countries and often linked to the democratization processes where politicians are at the mercy of the public opinion (Kibreab 1999; Rutinwa 2002).

In South Africa, for instance, public opinion reflects a new trend in immigration. Many respondents in this survey complained about xenophobia and perceived hostility toward foreigners, which are related to the widespread perception that there are “floods” of illegal immigrants coming into richer South Africa. The perception is that these illegal immigrants are poor and unskilled and will therefore compete with South Africans for scarce public resources, such as work and health care.

The same can be said for Egypt, where refugees are often depicted as a national threat in the media and where they must face discrimination (by landlords or shopkeepers who charge them more than Egyptians) or racism (refugee children being bullied at school by other children). Despite the increase in anti-immigration sentiments in both African and European countries surveyed, there are still tolerant and supportive masses which have facilitated the entry and settlement of refugees and asylum-seekers in their host countries.

In Ethiopia, things are slightly better for unregistered urban refugees of Somali origin who live and work relatively peacefully in Addis Ababa, without being harassed by police forces or by the local population. The

political links between the Ethiopian and Somali governments are at the heart of this situation, but these are subject to change at any time. Interestingly, it appears that not all refugees are treated in the same way and that refugees of different origins are differently perceived in host countries. While the Somalis benefit in Ethiopia from relative tolerance in the cities, Sudanese and Eritrean refugees do not experience similar benevolence and thus rarely leave the camps. In Egypt, on the contrary, Sudanese, who benefit from Christian based refugee programmes, and Palestinians, who enjoy more rights regarding access to employment, are better off than Somali refugees.

Affinities and shared identities in terms of clan affiliation, language or religion thus have an effect on the acceptance of particular groups of refugees (Loescher and Milner 2005), which may manifest itself in informal help by the host population (for instance in Kenya, Ethiopia, Djibouti and Yemen) or through political support by local or national authorities. However, the latter can change rapidly, as has been the case in Djibouti with the expulsion order of formerly tolerated undocumented residents, including many Somalis, in 2003. Moreover, historical and cultural antagonisms are a reality as well as affinities and, although European public opinion tends to have homogenised perceptions of the cultural and political diversity of the African continent, it is certainly erroneous to imagine that African refugees are by definition welcome in African states. Proximity to the place of origin may in some cases be an advantage, but should not guide decisions without examining opportunities and risks of local resettlement.

On the whole, the attitudes of states and populations toward refugees have become less welcoming in African countries, as in the rest of the world, and the labelling of refugees as scapegoats is common in politicians’ as well as in media discourse. Diminishing international support and so-called “donor fatigue” in relation to protracted refugee situations in general, and Somalis in particular, has further exacerbated the pressures on states in the region. The lack of resources in first asylum countries is liable to undermine liberal asylum regimes. Security concerns and the global war on terror have also pressured states, for instance Djibouti and Yemen, to tighten their borders and take harsher measures against refugees and undocumented immigrants. In this context and in spite of other differences among surveyed countries, these trends reveal emerging parallels in refugee policies, which are likely to induce further secondary movements on the part of refugees.

### *Limited opportunities for local integration*

Most governments in the countries surveyed are overtly or implicitly opposed to local integration because they fear, on the one hand, that generous asylum policies might strain resources and fuel negative public opinion and, on the other, that they act as pull factors for growing numbers of immigrants. This

context is unfavourable to active dissemination of information about refugees and their rights, which has proved to be indispensable in order to avoid frequently observed discrepancies between policy intentions and actual implementation. In this regard, the reluctance toward integration often crystallizes in the denial of the right to leave the camps, in limitations on rights linked to subsidiary protection (for instance in Switzerland) or even to the status of refugees (reservations to the 1951 Convention by Egypt and Ethiopia). An extreme form of denying integration is the refusal of registration and thus of legal status which has been reported in several African countries. Other forms include the restrictive access to labour market, services and eventually to citizenship, which is *de facto* virtually unattainable (or extremely rare) in most countries surveyed (except for the Netherlands and, to a lesser extent, Switzerland).

In most countries of the region (Africa and Yemen), and to some extent in Switzerland, Somali refugees are considered at best as temporary guests who will leave as soon as conditions allow repatriation to the country of origin. This underlying principle guiding most policies has consequences not only on the rights of refugees, but also on the way they perceive their own condition and their strategies to improve their situation.

Accordingly, the results of this study underscore the utmost importance of the lack of legal status in inducing secondary movements from a country of (potential) asylum. Proper refugee registration and documentation, insofar as it is recognised by host states, proves to be an important prerequisite for protection and opportunities for refugees to create a new existence, though evidently not a sufficient condition to guarantee both. In a sense, this is the starting point for economic self-reliance in the short term and eventual access to local integration in the long term. This finding also underlines the inextricable connection between legal status and the socio-economic subsistence of refugees and draws attention to the need for active involvement of host countries in defining and implementing refugee policy which is considered by many refugees as the sole competence of UNHCR and the international community.

## 6.2 The role of international actors

Although international agency personnel stress that receiving states, rather than international organisations, are legally responsible for refugees on their territory, in reality UNHCR is heavily involved in the daily operation of the asylum system, while most activities are entrusted to implementing partners “in the field”. The precise distribution of competencies between different actors involved in refugee affairs varies greatly between states and over time. In the European countries and to a lesser extent in South Africa, the central

government is responsible for managing affairs whereas UNHCR is only marginally involved. In Egypt and Somalia’s four neighbouring countries, UNHCR plays a more important role, although the tendency has recently been toward a slight shifting of the responsibilities from UNHCR to the host governments, which are in a process of (re)building legal and institutional capacities (Djibouti, Ethiopia, Yemen). The active involvement of states at every policy stage is absolutely crucial, particularly when it comes to effective protection in and outside camps, self-settlement in urban or rural areas and eventually local integration.

When the civil war broke out in Somalia, the governments of its neighbouring states were not in a position to handle the influx of refugees and called on the international community for help,<sup>66</sup> which led to the establishment of several new camps. The decrease in total refugee population and ongoing repatriation programmes in neighbouring countries has enabled international agencies to coerce host states to involve themselves in the asylum process, although international assistance for refugees will be necessary for the foreseeable future. Currently, refugee camps in Ethiopia and Djibouti, are managed by government bodies (ARRA and ONARS, respectively), but they are essentially financed by UNHCR.

### *Shared responsibilities*

These schemes of shared responsibilities (between international agencies and governments) are not without risks, as the collaboration between different, and sometimes changing or conflicting, actors entails a great deal of coordination, which is unfortunately lacking in several countries (for instance Yemen, Djibouti, Kenya, Egypt). The deficiency in information-sharing amongst various governmental agencies or contradictions between governmental and UNHCR discourse may cause confusion among refugees and undermine the efficiency of the asylum policy. Many interviewees reported difficulties in accessing the chain of intermediaries in order to register or communicate with UNHCR, which was responsible for actions taken by implementing partners.

Such difficulties appear to be particularly relevant in several re-registration initiatives (Djibouti, Ethiopia, Yemen), while the shortcomings are associated with either governmental organisations, implementing partners in charge of camps, UNHCR or refugees’ refusal to comply with registration requests. Similar problems are raised in connection with registration processes in

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<sup>66</sup> Kenya remains an exception since its government managed refugee affairs with implementing partners until 1992, when the state handed these responsibilities to UNHCR.

general and the issuing of recognised documentation. In addition to the lack of political will (or corruption), insufficient resources are frequently referred to as the main reason for these shortcomings. Though such difficulties might not always be entirely avoided, clarifications about responsibilities, better information and access for refugees to UNHCR (or governmental refugee desks as in South Africa) as well as revision of registration and documentation practices, need to be developed and implemented (cf. recommendations below).

### *Protracted refugee situations in camps*

At the same time, the fact that developed states have become less willing to accept new refugees and tend to advocate for solutions in the “region of origin”, may not be very conducive to strengthening North-South dialogue which seems to be a condition for increased commitment from African states in terms of protection and local integration of refugees. This point also raises questions about camp confinement policies, which may be signs of host governments’ unwillingness or inability to allow local integration of refugees.

The findings of this study, corroborated by a large body of international refugee research, underscore the negative outcomes of long-term camp confinement. Apart from impacts on receiving countries in terms of security (Lischer 2003), environment and socio-economic outcomes, evidence relates to the refugees concerned (Abdi 2004). A most important aspect in this context concerns the particular vulnerability of women in refugee camps who are degraded to “sub-citizen” levels, lack guaranteed security from family, community and government and face frequent rapes and violence (Abdi 2005). Such actions underscore the necessity for families to send youngsters, especially women to industrialised countries, both for personal safety and as a means of income security for the family.

Most international experts and policymakers do not defend prolonged encampment as a general principle; though they cite exceptional circumstances to justify particular applications. But in spite of declared objections and negative evidence, there seems to be a sort of objective alliance in favour of camps, which has impeded a resolute search for alternatives. It appears that powerful bureaucratic and political factors in host states as well as at the international level play a role in supporting camp policies. As Betts puts it: “This is because UNHCR and other Inter-Governmental Organisations (IGOs) and NGOs will take responsibility for protection, care and maintenance within camps but rarely outside of camps. This stacks most Governments’ cost-benefit analysis in favour of the status quo of ‘warehousing’. Providing a mechanism for international support for host country expenses incurred as a result of refugee protection outside of

camps would be one means to overcome such perverse incentives” (Betts 2005: 36).

Even if the responsibility for refugees belongs rightfully to receiving states, who sometimes fail to assume it, the international community ought to assume at least some responsibility for the consequences of humanitarian action, particularly in sustaining situations where Convention rights cannot be guaranteed.

### *New approaches to assistance*

A rethinking of camp confinement and conventional assistance strategies could contribute to a more durable developmental approach, rather than focusing solely on emergency relief. Such a reorientation would foster empowerment of refugees and of the local civil society, as an alternative to placing refugees in the position of total disempowerment as spectators of their own lives. There is plenty of evidence that Somali refugees – and refugees in general – need not be passive victims but rather become active participants in developing initiatives which current policies should take into account and build upon by opening a dialogue with the persons concerned. As different marginalized groups among citizens suffer from deprivation, the most effective protection and integration of refugees is more likely to take place through cross-mandate, bottom-up programmes in which the urban poor (nationals and non-nationals) take the initiative and are given institutional and financial support for their self-betterment.

Such a stance integrating the perspectives of refugees would help to overcome the strong distrust between the refugees and the agencies in charge of refugee affairs (UNHCR, implementing partners, governmental agencies). Institutional actors are frequently unaware of the problems encountered by the refugees they are in charge of. That being so, more involvement by the refugees, at least at implementing level, would have positive effects on the relations and allow a dialogue between the actors involved, as well as a better flow of information in both directions. If the responses adopted at national and international level are to be constructive, the causes, motivations and meaning of secondary movements must be considered in relation to policy implications.

## **6.3 Movement strategies of refugees and policy implications**

The lack of a proper legal status conferring the basic rights of refugees (according to the 1951 Geneva Convention) is a major reason underlying secondary movements. These rights encompass recognized documentation, physical safety, access to assistance, health services, education for children

and access to the labour market; more generally – at least in the longer-term – they include opportunities for self-reliance and durable solutions. As many refugees do not view voluntary repatriation as a viable option, and resettlement opportunities are very limited, local integration is an essential alternative which is often embraced by refugees. Improvements in policies in this sphere would enable those who stay to enjoy better social conditions and protection and consequently reduce the flow of secondary movers, but it would not stop all of them.

Realising that they will not be able to integrate and at best become temporarily self-sufficient in their host country, while a return to Somalia is not an option, many arrange their lives entirely with a view possible onward movement, mostly in the hope of being resettled in an industrialized country. In Egypt, where this aspiration is particularly strong (notably because of relatively good resettlement programmes), some refugees are reluctant to send their children to local schools because they are inadequate in preparing the children for their “life in the West”, despite the lack of guarantees of resettlement. Clearly, the consequences of such grandiose, albeit unfulfilled hopes, can only be described as devastating for affected refugees<sup>67</sup>.

Although not all Somali refugees can or want to move to industrialized countries, many others attempt risky and costly ventures to make the voyage to European ports or cities. The legal differentiation between refugees and economic migrants has been revised in the academic discourse and it is now recognized that few (migration) movements are neither only “voluntary” nor just “involuntary” (Van Hear 1998). Although the level of constraints and urgency differs, some part of human agency exists in all flight histories.

### *Secondary movements as coping strategies*

In considering the findings of this survey, there is strong evidence that secondary movements by Somali refugees belong to collective coping strategies designed to deal with transnational legal and social insecurity by diversifying both the risks related to refugee situations and available resources of members of the extended family. If recognized by policy makers, these livelihood strategies and solidarity links could in many cases be built upon rather than fought against.

Naturally, the first policy field in which this point is important concerns the opportunities for local integration. In spite of the limitations mentioned above

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<sup>67</sup> Somalis in some parts of the world (Kenya and Egypt at least) have named the physical and psychological pains associated with the yearning for resettlement as *Buufis*, a phenomenon examined in detail by Cindy Horst (2003).

there is strong evidence – though seldom documented in research – that in many places Somali refugees have been able to develop self-sufficiency in urban settings, but also in some instances in and around refugee camps<sup>68</sup>. The major inconvenience of *de facto* integration is precisely that refugees lack status confirming the lawfulness of their presence, which places them in a particularly vulnerable situation.

Community based support fulfils important functions, but it appears that in some cases refugees prefer to hide these initiatives from the authorities or international agencies because they risk being penalized. This showcases the sensitive nature of asylum-seekers and their inability to function as self-sufficient exiles and the urgency of a real dialogue between refugees and the institutions in charge of related affairs in order to overcome misconceptions on both sides. Self-help is in some cases discouraged by wrong incentives or simply because limited assistance is only granted to the most vulnerable individuals who have lost every other type of support (poverty trap).

In the Netherlands and Switzerland, the determinants related to extended families and collective coping strategies appear to challenge most current policy conceptions. The granting of rights, which often leads to better economic integration, has an effect not only on the situation of the individuals concerned, but even more on family members who stay in the region of origin. Remittances sent by refugees to help sustain relatives in other countries are now recognized as a parallel and alternative means of development of poorer countries and their inhabitants.

An aspect which needs further investigation by researchers in the future is the correlation between personal achievements in a given host country and the propensity to return to the country of origin when conditions start to stabilise. While it is sometimes argued that the better integrated and more self-reliant refugees become in their host country, the less likely they are to return home, there is evidence of the opposite as well (for example Lin 2001 cited in Crisp 2003). This view argues that the more resources and capital (in terms of education, skills, and finances) refugees could accumulate during exile, the better prepared they are to go home. This principle serves notably as the basis of Crisp’s argument for a new fourth durable solution which he calls “promotion of self-reliance pending voluntary return” (Crisp 2003b).

Other researchers highlighted the importance of gaining the citizenship of a developed country as an important resource to return to the country of origin

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<sup>68</sup> Integrated individuals do not appear as interviewees in this study, because they are no longer considered as refugees.

or to countries closer (geographically or culturally) to the country of origin. This should remind us of the fact that secondary movements are not always in the South-North direction, but that it can be strategically more interesting for Somali refugees to move from a developed country in which they have obtained citizenship to a country where their resources (including this citizenship) allow them better living standards, access to better education systems according to their values, etc (on this issue, see the extended research of Al-Sharmani 2004b in Egypt).

### ***Legal avenues to movements***

Lastly, although a specific focus should certainly aim at improving the legal and social security of the refugees in the first countries they reach, legal ways of migration constitute a valuable alternative to irregular (secondary) movements, namely programmes of resettlement and of family reunification. Indeed, as long as conditions of living remain extremely precarious, some Somali refugees will try to move further. Another strong motivation concerns the wish to join family members abroad. While it is clear that all secondary movements cannot be supported by the international community, it seems quite legitimate and practical that – after years of separation – family members should try to reunite, even by irregular means. Pragmatic family reunification programmes are an important means to regularize the movements of people who may attempt movement at any cost. An example is children whose parents are in Europe but who are not entitled to join them, as is the case for subsidiary admitted refugees in Switzerland (see quotation in the epigraph of the report). Moreover, family reunification is not only an advantage for the families concerned, but also for the host countries which can expect the reunited families to integrate better.

Differences in rights related to family reunification or to assistance, access to labour and education or freedom of movement may constitute an important motivation for secondary movements, not only between the region of origin and the North, but also between industrialized countries. While in European States, international and supranational legislations guarantee some coherence in rights conferred to Convention refugees, this is not the case when it comes to subsidiary protection. Such aspects may be of minor importance in the short term, but they naturally become paramount when the “ideal” option of repatriation is out of immediate reach and life in exile is prolonged. Therefore, establishing effective harmonized asylum systems in accordance with the European Union’s values, as recommended in the Hague Programme of December 2004, is in the interest of states as well as of refugees. Regional protection programmes under the Fifth Priority seek to fulfil the following goals: “third countries receiving this support shall adopt or amend their national asylum legislation, thus conforming to international standards and namely to the obligations entailed under the Geneva Convention; reception

and admission standards should therefore be enhanced. The Programmes will also provide general assistance for the improvement of the local infrastructure and assistance for return to countries of origin and resettlement” (Council of the European Union 2004).

Undoubtedly, the long-term nature of the Somali conflict was unpredictable at the time the Somali state collapsed and its consequences could not be anticipated by the stakeholders, including host countries, UN agencies, the international community and refugees themselves, though protracted refugee situations are far from being exceptional in the African context. In retrospect, some policy options now appear short-sighted inasmuch as successive orientations were adopted and later abandoned for reasons which were sometimes related to incoherent or conflicting approaches, poor implementation and finally a lack of sufficient resources. Once the emergency phase passed and after 14 years of political limbo and statelessness in Somalia, the focus of the media and the international community has moved on to more spectacular global crises. This trend is regrettable inasmuch as it affects the resources allocated to viable solutions, but it could also constitute a chance if actors involved, while being off the radar screen of international attention, tried to find more durable responses to secondary movements and precarious (protection) situations of Somali refugees in their respective environment. With regard to the results of this study, this can best be done in a cross-mandate, North-South cooperation, which builds on an evidence-based analysis of the past and current situation and considers the interests of various host or transit states, as well as those of the concerned refugees and the international community.

## 7 Recommendations

### *At the level of individual refugees:*

- Improve the access of refugees to registration in camps and urban areas (governmental registration desks or international organisations);
- Foresee effective information to refugees about possibilities of registration and particular conditions, about access to camps, etc.;
- Adapt procedures for registration and documentation to recommended standards (personnel documentation, regular revalidation, etc.);
- Avoid frequent practice changes and exceptions in practices (waiting periods for registration, suspended adjustment of ration cards to family size);
- Assure access to rights in camps and urban areas: safety, assistance, freedom of movement, health care;
- Foresee legal access to labour market and education (including higher education);
- Promote vocational programmes and self-generating activities for youth and unemployed refugees;
- Empower and strengthen the capacity of refugees to take control of activities that affect their lives;
- Create positive incentives for individual and collective self-help initiatives;
- Enhance conditions for self-help, self-reliance and finally local integration;
- Consult beneficiaries to avoid incapacitating and paternalistic tendencies.

### *Meso level of implementation, associations, institutions and networks:*

- Adopt grass-roots, bottom-up approaches (as opposed to top down);
- Promote capacity building as a critical bridge in the transition from relief to development;
- Build on local aid capacities on clear merit-based systems that address local needs;
- Learn from local skills and expertise and build on local institutions and customs;

- Support relations between local population and refugees, between civil society and refugee associations;
- Improve information and coordination between implementing actors, clarify responsibilities and make them transparent;
- Avoid compulsory camp confinement and foresee clear phases for interventions and assistance (encampment – self-reliance – durable solutions).

### *National and global refugee policies:*

- Inform population of receiving states about refugee issues;
- Global level: sensitise populations in the North about refugee situations in the South and vice-versa;
- Support research and evidence-based policy-making;
- Involve receiving states at every level of policy-making through an improvement in relations between host states, international actors, local and international NGOS, etc.;
- Foster legislative and institutional capacity building (expertise, resources, best practices...);
- Promote dialogue between states in the South and North;
- Enhance avenues for legal movements and migration: resettlement, sponsoring, family reunification
- Harmonise conditions of protection and assistance at regional, supranational (EU) and international level for Convention refugees and subsidiary protection;
- Increase resources for protection and development in the region as the Hague Regional protection programmes propose among the priorities of the next five years;
- Promote durable cross-mandate (cross-sectoral) dialogue and initiatives nationally and internationally;
- Prefer durable and developmental approaches to short-term relief strategies.

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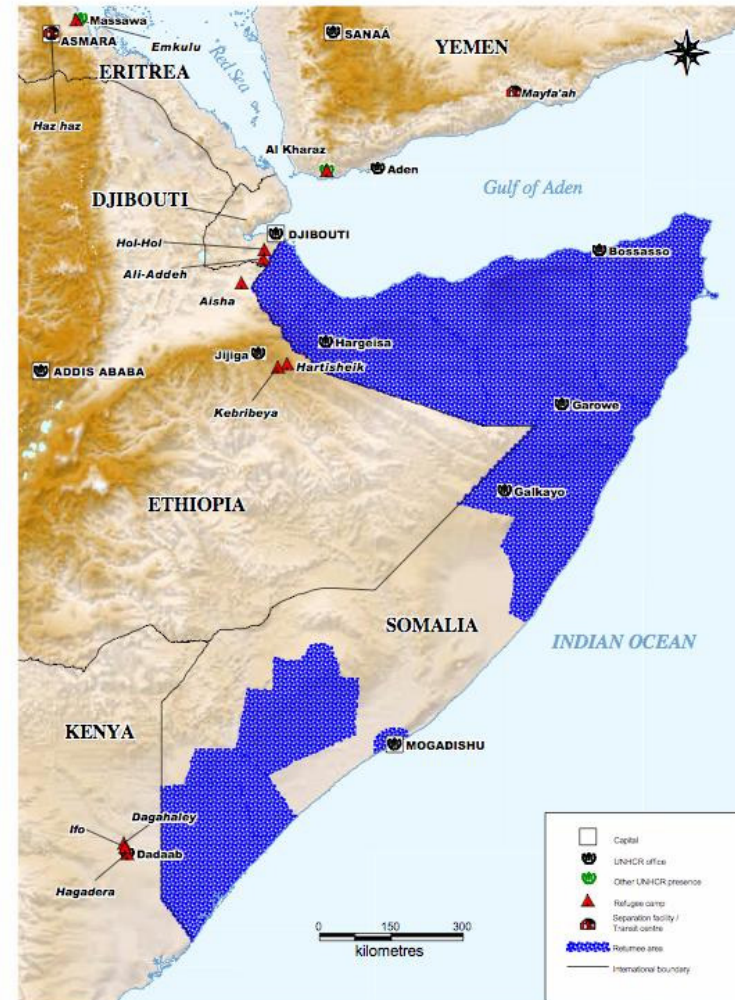


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## Annexes

### Map of Somalia and its neighbouring countries, with refugee camps



Source: UNHCR

## Sample profile

Table 33: Sample by current host country

	Total	KE	ET	YE	DJ	ZA	EG	CH	NL
N	814	60	120	120	120	120	165	60	49

Table 34: Sample by gender

Sex	Total	KE	ET	YE	DJ	ZA	EG	CH	NL
	N=814	N=60	N=120	N=120	N=120	N=120	N=165	N=60	N=49
Male	50	52	50	44	43	68	41	58	55
Female	50	48	50	56	57	32	59	42	45

Table 35: Sample by age category

Age class	Total	KE	ET	YE	DJ	ZA	EG	CH	NL
	N=806	N=60	N=115	N=120	N=119	N=119	N=165	N=60	N=48
> 20	5	8	3	2	3	6	2	18	8
20-30	31	28	20	32	18	34	39	40	38
30-40	33	18	35	36	38	34	34	18	35
40-50	21	25	25	17	23	19	19	20	17
50-60	7	15	10	3	14	7	4	--	2
60+	3	5	3	10	3	1	1	3	--

Table 36: Sample by level of education

Years of education	Total	KE	ET	YE	DJ	ZA	EG	CH	NL
	N=801	N=60	N=119	N=120	N=117	N=120	N=162	N=59	N=44
None	43	38	61	38	65	66	27	12	--
0-8	30	37	15	32	16	19	42	61	40
9-12	20	18	18	23	15	8	27	20	30
13-20	7	7	6	7	4	7	4	7	30

Table 37: Sample by marital status

Marital status	Total	KE	ET	YE	DJ	ZA	EG	CH	NL
	N=812	N=60	N=120	N=120	N=120	N=119	N=162	N=60	N=48
Single	27	20	18	18	16	43	36	48	21
Widow	11	25	15	7	10	11	8	3	10
Divorced	7	8	3	17	7	--	4	8	15
Married	55	47	63	58	67	46	52	40	54

Table 38: Sample by legal status

Legal status	Total	KE	ET	YE	DJ	ZA	EG	CH	NL
	N=814	N=60	N=120	N=120	N=120	N=120	N=120	N=60	N=49
Asylum seeker	9	--	--	--	--	40	8	7	14
Convention refugee	19	--	7	--	--	56	45	7	4
Prima facie	33	42	42	92	72	--	--	--	--
Subsidiary protection	7	--	--	--	--	--	--	71	29
Undocumented	17	51	51	4	18	4	5	--	6
Other*	14	7	--	4	10	--	42	15	47

\* The category "other" refers to refugees with mandate letters from UNHCR HQ in Nairobi who are allowed to live in the city for medical treatment in Kenya; to recognized refugees having lost their cards in Yemen; to rejected asylum seekers in Djibouti; to refugees recognized under the OAU 1969 Convention in Egypt; to (annual or permanent) residents or naturalized citizens in Switzerland, and to permanent residents and naturalized citizens in the Netherlands.

Table 39: Sample by type of place of residence

Place of living	Total	KE	ET	YE	DJ	ZA	EG	CH	NL
	N=813	N=60	N=120	N=120	N=120	N=119	N=120	N=60	N=49
Camp	22	--	42	22	84	--	--	--	--
Refugee centre (town)	3	15	--	--	--	--	--	23	--
Flat (town)	72	75	55	74	13	96	99	75	100
Other (town)	3	10	3	4	3	4	1	2	--

Table 40: Sample by current professional activity

Current activity	Total	KE	ET	YE	DJ	ZA	EG	CH	NL
	N=814	N=60	N=120	N=120	N=120	N=120	N=120	N=60	N=49
Domestic workers	11	3	2	24	7	2	23	3	6
Small business	8	3	9	7	5	23	4	--	2
Manual workers	10	8	5	12	6	16	7	15	18
Other activities	8	7	7	11	7	7	7	3	25
Housework	5	5	2	1	7	--	12	5	6
Students	3	--	6	1	2	--	2	1	12
No activity	55	74	69	44	66	52	45	59	31

## Multivariate analysis (table relating to chapter 5.3)

Table 41: Reasons for onward movement (linear regression model)

Predictors	Onward Movement		Onward Movement	
	Model 1		Model 14	
	Wald	Exp. (B)	Wald	Exp. (B)
Gender	2.330	.169	--	--
Age	.267	.763	--	--
Education	1.513	.430	--	--
Married	.258	.735	--	--
With Children	.887	.184	--	--
Year of departure from Somalia	.596	.601	--	--
Place where interviewee lives	.125	.590	--	--
Employment	.766	.312	--	--
Remittances	.025	1.210	--	--
Fear of forced return	.143	.558	--	--
Fear for physical safety	.052	1.369	--	--
Lack of legal status	4.476	.046	5.429	<b>.076**</b>
Poor living conditions	.182	1.702	--	--
Lack of opportunities for education and work	1.044	3.263	--	--
<hr/>				
Nagelkerke	.338		.162	
<hr/>				
Hosmer and Lemeshow test	.998		.014	

Note: The figures represent coefficients (expected Beta) using logistic regression models (Backward: LR model).

### Predictors :

*Gender*: male (1), female (2).

*Age*: six-point scale based on respondent's age, from over 60 (1) to under 20 years old (6).

*Education*: four-point scale based on respondent's highest level of education from no education at all (0) to tertiary education (4).

*Married*: yes (1), no (2).

*With children*: yes (1), no (2).

*Year of departure from Somalia*: four-point scale based on respondent's year of departure, from "before 1991" (1) to "from 2002 to 2005" (4).

*Place where interviewee lives*: refugee centre (1), private flat (2), other (3).

*Employment*: yes (1), no (2).

*Remittances*: yes (1), no (2).

*Fear of forced return*: yes (1), no (2).

*Fear of physical safety*: yes (1), no (2).

*Lack of legal status*: yes (1), no (2).

*Poor living conditions*: yes (1), no (2).

*Lack of opportunities for education and work*: yes (1), no (2).

*Onward movement (experienced in the past)*: yes (1), no (0).

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