



University of
Nottingham
Rights Lab

Mounting Crisis: How Perpetrators are Exploiting the Current Situation in Ethiopia and Sudan for profit

Audrey Lumley-Sapanski PhD

RTA Seed Grant Recipient

June 29th 2022

Based on experiences of Eritrean migrants, this research:

- (1) evaluates and analyses how the pandemic combined with concurrent conflicts have influenced migratory ambition, route, and demographics;
- (2) identifies how explanatory factors and intersecting vulnerabilities (based on the IOM vulnerabilities framework) contribute to the likelihood of experiencing human trafficking for these migrants.

The definition of human trafficking

In international law, human trafficking is defined in the 2000 Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime, on the basis of three cumulative elements:

1. **An act:** "...the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons..."
2. **A means:** "...by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person..."
3. **The purpose of exploitation:** "Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs."



Evidence Review

Three tranches of interviews: 22 stakeholders (April-May 2021), 12 stakeholders (September 2021), 13 Eritrean survivors and migrants (April 2022)

Review and incorporation of 4Mi/Mixed Migration Centre data for period of data collection (2021-2022)

Facilitated interviews with Research Assistance from Eyob Ghilazghy



- Reduction in mobility and incomes in Eritrea
- Conflict and increased conscription (Tigray)
- Blind 'suicide' migration
- De-securitization of Sudan
 - Police corruption
- Lack of refugee rights, temporality and liminality of refugee registration process
- Lack of pathway to regularization
- Lack of governance in Libya within detention (state and militia operated)



Intersectional and Multiscalar vulnerabilities



Individual

- 18-50 (Eligible for Forced Conscription)
- Unilateral migration decision
- Diasporic connections
- Migration status
- Use of (unpaid) smuggler to exit Eritrea
- Cost of smuggler/Choice of smuggler
- Lack of livelihood
- Registration requirements (location)

Community

- Xenophobia
- Mobility restrictions
- 'Unscrupulous Officials'
- Lack of humanitarian protection
- Lack of permanent settlement options
- Disinformation
- Lack of access to technology
- Cross border security forces

Household/Family

- Family member in national service
- Responsibility for household
- Socioeconomics
- Female headed households

Structural

- Lack of legal migration routes
- Forced reliance on smugglers/traffickers
- Lack of safe routes
- Trafficking chokepoints
- Lack of governance in Sudan and Libya
- Conflict in Ethiopia
- Corruption in INGOs and government
- Encampment policies
- Slowed third country resettlement
- Lack of durable solutions to refugee situation
- Khartoum Process/JVAP/EUTF strengthened abusive regimes/legitimized abusive regimes
- Border patrols/forces



Policy suggestions

- A) Process refugee applications (for status) in a timely manner in order to reduce liminality, processing times and increase access to goods or services within Sudan;
- B) Increase access to basic security, services, and safety within the camps within Eastern Sudan;
- C) Increase access to security, services, and safety for urban refugees in Khartoum;
- D) Improve international organization presence in border areas in Eastern Sudan;
- E) Fight corruption in gatekeeper roles in the UNHCR and other INGOs in Sudan and Libya;
- F) Open refugee registration sites across Sudan.

Thank you!

Special thanks to project Research Assistant: Eyob Ghilazghy, and the funding through the RTA seed grant, as well as Rights Labs, GPG, Waging Peace and RUSI colleagues who assisted in data collection and analysis

A special thank you to research participants.

Questions! Feedback! Audrey.Lumley-Sapanski1@nottingham.ac.uk



University of
Nottingham

UK | CHINA | MALAYSIA

