

Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada

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Responses to Information Requests

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25 April 2014

ETH104857.E

Ethiopia: Treatment by authorities of individuals of Ethiopian parentage, returning to Ethiopia, but who have never lived in the country; availability of employment, housing, and other social services in Addis Ababa for newly-arrived individuals (2013-April 2014)

Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

Information on the treatment by authorities of individuals of Ethiopian parentage returning to Ethiopia, but who have never lived in the country, could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

Information on the availability of employment, housing, and other social services in Addis Ababa for newly-arrived Ethiopians was scarce among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

Sources report that Saudi Arabia begun a "crackdown" on irregular migrants in November 2013 (Al Jazeera 25 Dec. 2013; IOM 10 Jan. 2014). Sources report that as a result, the Ethiopian government expected 30,000 returnees from Saudi Arabia (The Sudan Tribune 3 Dec. 2013; UN 9 Jan. 2014). Al Jazeera also reports that the "initial expectation of 23,000 returnees jumped to 120,000 in one month" (Al Jazeera 25 Dec. 2013). By January 2014, Saudi Arabia had sent over 150,000 Ethiopians back to their country (ibid.; *The New York Times* 7 Jan. 2014; MSF 10 Jan. 2014).

The Sudan Tribune, a news website based in Paris, quotes the UNHCR representative in Ethiopia as saying that the Ethiopian government is experiencing an "emergency" as a result of the repatriations (The Sudan Tribune 3 Dec. 2013). The Ethiopian government also stated that "the safe return of its citizens is its current top priority" (ibid. 23 Nov. 2013). Al Jazeera reported in December 2013 that the "planning and logistical capacity" of the Ethiopian government has been "overwhelmed by the rising numbers of returnees" (25 Dec. 2013).

All Africa, a news web portal on African affairs, reports that some international aid agencies said they did not have the budget to assist the returnees in Ethiopia (23 Nov. 2013). The Sudan Tribune reports that the US government has criticized international aid organizations for doing "little" to assist Ethiopian returnees from Saudi Arabia (3 Dec. 2013). The Sudan Tribune reports that the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) contributed US\$100,000 to support the Ethiopian government in assisting the arrival of repatriated citizens, with the help of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) (3 Dec. 2013). Sources indicate that originally, the Ethiopian government allocated about US\$2.6 million for programs to assist in the reintegration of 30,000 returnees it had initially expected to return from Saudi Arabia (The Sudan Tribune 3 Dec. 2010; UN 9 Jan. 2014). The IOM indicated in January 2014, however, that the post-arrival assistance operation to support the over 150,000 returnees was still facing "a funding shortfall of US\$12.35 million" (10 Jan. 2014).

The business and financial news service Bloomberg quotes another IOM representative as saying that "[t]he returning migrants [from Saudi Arabia] are arriving in desperate condition ... they are traumatized, tired, anxious and some seriously sick" (Bloomberg 13 Dec. 2013). The IOM indicates in a report on Ethiopians returning from Saudi Arabia that the Ethiopian government has set up four processing points in Addis Ababa to assist returnees (IOM 26 Nov. 2013). The IOM also provided returnees with overnight accommodation, food, water, shoes, and money to travel to their places of origin (ibid.). An IOM news release further indicates that it has been providing "post-arrival assistance," including

psychological care and "referrals" both at the airport and in the transit centre (ibid. 10 Jan. 2014). The US Association for International Migration (USAIM), the US partner of the IOM (IOM n.d.a), indicates on its website that the IOM had provided "direct assistance" to 93 percent of Ethiopian returnees as of 7 February 2014 (ibid. n.d.b). A press release by Doctors Without Borders (Médecins sans frontières, MSF) indicates that it is also providing maternal, child health, and psychological assistance to returnees from Saudi Arabia at reception centres (10 Jan. 2014). Bloomberg reports that some returnees with psychological problems are given shelter by the Good Samaritan Association, an Addis Ababa charity (13 Dec. 2013). In an interview with Migrant-Rights.org, an organization that advocates for the rights of migrant workers in the Middle East (Migrant-Rights.org n.d.), Aida Awel, Chief Technical Adviser on migrant workers at the International Labour Organization (ILO) in Addis Ababa, indicated that the Addis Ababa city administration has provided psychological assistance and "vocational" training to 2,000 returnees (ibid. 10 Apr. 2014). She also indicated that upon completion of the training, they will be given "seed capital" to start their own businesses (ibid.).

The UN Integrated Regional Information Network (IRIN) quotes a representative of the IOM as saying that "[t]he assistance they are receiving now is short-term, but once they get back to their homes, they will need long-term assistance, like finding jobs and reintegrating into the community, and the government must work towards these goals" (UN 9 Jan. 2014). In the interview with Migrant-Rights.org, the ILO representative pointed out that one of the main obstacles that returnees have in reintegrating in some rural areas is the "negative attitude" that local communities have towards them (Migrant-Rights.org 10 Apr. 2014). According to the representative,

[t]his is due to Ethiopia being a very traditional society; returnees coming back from [Saudi Arabia] with a change in attitude or culture will not be welcomed ... Some women have returned back with babies or kids out of wedlock, and Ethiopia being the conservative society that it is, this is a taboo. It is just simply unacceptable and most women will be viewed as commercial sex workers. (ibid.)

Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

In a paper on Ethiopian migrant women in the Middle East, Katie Kuschminder, a researcher at Maastricht Graduate School of Governance and the United Nations University, indicated that there is one shelter for women in Addis Ababa that provides support and "comprehensive mental health and reintegration assistance"; however, the service is provided "only" to those in "dire" need since it has been struggling to find consistent funding (Kuschminder 2014, 4). The author further explains that "[t]here is a need for increased support services to returnees ... including psychosocial support, shelters, training opportunities, and assistance in finding employment" (ibid., 5). Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

The UN Development Programme (UNDP) indicates that 80 percent of employment in Ethiopia is accounted for in the agriculture sector (UN n.d.). Al Jazeera reports that "[d]windling land access in Ethiopia is a critical issue for 80 percent of the population who make a living as small farmers" (25 Dec. 2013). Sources indicate that the urban unemployment rate is 17.5 percent (*The New York Times* 7 Jan. 2014; UN n.d.). According to the ILO representative interviewed by Migrant-Rights.org, a "major challenge" for the government and stakeholders is providing "productive employment sectors" for returnees (Migrant-Rights.org 10 Apr. 2014). Kuschminder also indicated that women returnees remain in situation of "vulnerability"; according to her study, over 60 percent of them were unemployed upon return, while "nearly half" of those who had a job were underemployed (2014, 3).

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

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Additional Sources Consulted

Oral sources: Attempts to contact representatives of the following organizations were unsuccessful within the time constraints of this Response: Ethiopian Human Rights Council; Ethiopian Ministry of Women's, Children and Youth Affairs; Ethiopian Red Cross Society; International Organization for Migration; Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat.

Representatives from the International Rescue Committee and Vedika Ethiopia Telugu Association could not provide information within the time constraints of this Response.

A research fellow at the Maastricht Graduate School of Governance could not provide information.

Internet sites, including: ABC; *Addis Fortune*; *Addis Standard*; Amnesty International; [ecoi.net](http://www.ecoi.net); *Ethiopian Review*; Factiva; Fédération internationale des ligues des droits de l'homme; Freedom House; Front Line Defenders; *The Guardian*; Human Rights Watch; Institute for War and Peace Reporting; International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies; Ireland – Refugee Documentation Centre; *Jeune Afrique*; Reporters sans frontières; StarAfrica.com; United Nations – High Commissioner for Refugees, International Labour Organization, UN Women; United States – Central Intelligence Agency, Department of State; University of Oxford – Centre on Migration, Policy and Society.

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