

# SITUATION REPORT MARCH 2021



An Ethiopian woman waits to start her journey home with her young baby © M. Mohammed/IOM 2021

 **104,360**

Individuals provided with clean water and hygiene kits

 **36,087**

Primary health care consultations conducted

 **5,743**

Migrants received humanitarian assistance

## SITUATION OVERVIEW

While the humanitarian crisis persists, migrants continue to arrive in Yemen, although in smaller numbers than before the pandemic. IOM teams have noted an increase in the detention and forced movements of migrants. On 7 March, a horrific fire broke out at an immigration holding facility in Sana'a city and resulted in the death of dozens of migrants, once again shedding light on the dangers faced by the thousands of people travelling through Yemen.

The International Organization for Migration's (IOM) Director General [voiced his condolences](#) and expressed support for the migrants affected. IOM protection and health teams responded immediately to the incident by providing life-saving medical and other support. As of the end of March, some of the injured were still receiving treatment in three hospitals in Sana'a<sup>1</sup>. Statements by the authorities in Sana'a, along with statements made by migrant and refugee communities, confirmed that at least 45 people lost their lives and the total number of casualties could still be higher owing to the severity of injuries many migrants faced.

Also on 16 March, IOM's [first Voluntary Humanitarian Return \(VHR\) flight](#) to Ethiopia since the start of COVID-19 pandemic helped 140 Ethiopian migrants stranded in Yemen to safely return home. IOM estimates that over 32,000 migrants are stranded in Yemen and continues to provide humanitarian assistance to thousands across the country and advocates that migrant detention should be the measure of last resort, and that authorities take a human-rights-based approach to migration management.

The situation for internally displaced persons (IDPs) remains challenging. [IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix \(DTM\)](#) estimates that 9,450 people were displaced this month, bringing the total number of displaced so far in 2021 to 27,090 people (in the locations where IOM DTM has access). [In Ma'rib, the displacement crisis shows no sign of improving](#), with IDPs in Sirwah district being most affected in the past few months. IOM has continued to prioritize its response in Ma'rib, coordinating closely with partners through its various sub-cluster leadership roles; however, the most significant challenges to sustaining a largescale response remain to be insufficient capacity and resources. A priority for IOM has also been scaling up its response along the west coast region of the country, where there are large gaps as a result of growing displacement. Since the start of the conflict, thousands of IDPs have fled to areas in Ta'iz and southern Al Hodeidah – close to 50,000 people in 2020 alone<sup>2</sup>. Today, despite the ceasefire, Yemen's west coast region is one of the deadliest parts of the country, with the two governorates suffering from the highest number of civilian casualties in 2020. Most displaced people are living across 156 IDP hosting sites, facing constrained access to basic and health services amidst limited partner presence.

A second wave of COVID-19 is also taking a heavy toll on communities, contributing to a deterioration of living conditions, and impacting access to employment, remittances and basic services. Despite severe underreporting, a total of 2,428 cases were reported country wide in March which is the highest in a single month since the start of the pandemic. Although [the arrival of 360,000 vaccine doses](#) is critically important in containing the outbreak, partners need to urgently scale up their response.

<sup>1</sup>This number is based on the IOM's access and may not represent the total number of injuries.

<sup>2</sup> According to IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM)

## COVID-19 RESPONSE

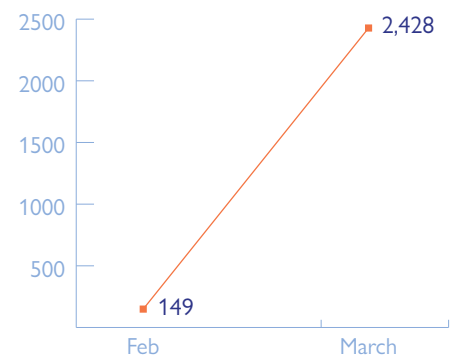
The pandemic has had a catastrophic impact on Yemen where public health systems are weakened, and communities have lived through six years of conflict. People are further losing access to livelihoods and income, while drops in remittances along with a depreciating currency have also reduced purchasing power and limited basic services. Because of the lack of access to testing and surveillance, the full extent of the spread of the virus in Yemen remains unknown.

Despite severe underreporting, a total of 2,428 cases were reported country wide in March which is the highest in a single month since the start of the pandemic, bringing the total number of cases to 4,251. It is now clear for health partners that the country is dealing with a second wave of COVID-19. Behavioural changes aimed at reducing community level transmission remain to be a key priority, while IOM works on increasing surveillance, boosting testing capacity and protecting essential health services.

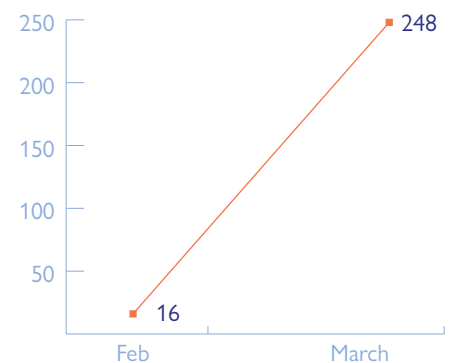
IOM imported six GeneXpert testing machines in January and liaised with the Health Cluster and relevant authorities to begin using the machines in areas located far from laboratories. In Ta'iz, IOM provided one GeneXpert machine to Al Makha COVID-19 treatment centre and trained 10 lab technicians on sample collection and processing. IOM is coordinating with the authorities to send two GeneXpert testing machines to Aden, one to Ma'rib and one to Lahj.

As part of IOM's response to the recent displacement in Ma'rib, the organization met with the Governorate Health Office to discuss health needs and gaps. Immediate needs identified included supporting COVID-19 isolation and quarantine centres as well as other health infrastructure in densely populated areas. IOM-supported caregivers conducted 10 awareness sessions about COVID-19 and hygiene practices for 104 women in five IDP hosting sites. Two additional sessions were conducted for 60 displaced women in Al Jufainah camp.

### 4,251 Total cases reported



### 883 Total deaths reported



An IOM team member carries out a COVID-19 sensitization campaign in a displacement site in Ta'iz © M.Mohammed/IOM 2021



## CAMP COORDINATION & CAMP MANAGEMENT (CCCM)

IOM continued to provide camp coordination and camp management (CCCM) support in 63 IDP hosting sites across the country, carrying out site improvements, coordinating service delivery, and conducting community mobilization and site committee empowerment activities, in addition to the installation of solar panels.

In Ma'rib, IOM handed over three major construction projects, which included a main access road to the Al Jufainah Camp in Ma'rib City, a flood protection wall for the same Camp and renovations to a Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation (MoPIC) office building, which will be used to coordinate the displacement response.

The projects were handed over at an inauguration ceremony in Ma'rib, attended by Deputy Governor of Ma'rib, MoPIC and local authority officials. Following a recent

escalation of conflict last month in Ma'rib which led to the displacement of over 2,000 HHs, the UN Humanitarian Coordinator, together with the IOM Chief of Mission in Yemen, visited a number of IDP hosting sites in Ma'rib and met with the local authorities to discuss increasing humanitarian needs and the coordination of the humanitarian response.

IOM's CCCM teams continued to verify displacement along with needs assessments, providing urgent assistance and referring people in need for further support. The CCCM team referred 1,015 households for health, protection and shelter & non-food items (S-NFI) assistance through community engagement in Ma'rib city and Ma'rib Al Wadi districts. Due to the risk of fire in overcrowded sites, the CCCM teams identified and trained 230 fire-wardens and provided 130 fire extinguishers in eight IDP hosting sites in Ma'rib city and Ma'rib Al Wadi districts. The teams also held five focus group discussions on safe cooking practices with 108 displaced women in 10 IDP hosting sites. Moreover, the teams identified and trained 321 displaced individuals on first aid and provided them with 190 first aid kits.

In Ibb, the CCCM teams identified and trained 79 fire-wardens in 20 IDP sites as part of fire mitigation measures. The team also supported the formation of three maintenance, carpentry and plumbing committees in each of the 20 IDP hosting sites supported by IOM in Ibb. The 133 members of the committees received tool kits and on-the-job training to perform minor repairs in the sites. In Ta'iz, IOM teams installed solar powered lamps in three IDP hosting sites, benefiting 300 households.



**106,290** Displaced  
people supported in 63  
sites



Displaced person receiving training on how to use fire extinguishers and effectively put out fires © E. Al Oqabi/IOM 2021

## IN FOCUS MAKING YEMEN'S LARGEST DISPLACEMENT SITE SAFER AND CHILD FRIENDLY



Ma'rib saw the highest levels of displacement in 2020, with trends continuing into this year as upticks in fighting took place in the governorate. Displacement sites are chronically overcrowded and often without enough services and support. Given the conditions of most displacement sites, improvements are needed to ensure the safety and quality of life for residents. Al Jufainah camp, Yemen's largest displacement site, was prone to flooding and subsequent landslides during rainy seasons, hindering displaced people's ability to access services outside the camp and threatening their shelters.

IOM constructed a flood-prevention wall and improved the access road to the camp, allowing for aid to more easily reach nearly 10,000 families in dire need of humanitarian relief items and services, as well as protecting their shelters from flooding during the rainy season.

"During the rainy season, houses and properties are damaged and destroyed by the rain and heavy flooding, and this project will put an end to this. This wall will protect property and lives, and will provide families with safety and stability, allowing them to improve their shelters without fear that they will be destroyed," said Zayed Alsamawy, an IDP living in Al Jufainah Camp.

Displaced children are the primary victims of the displacement crisis and more prone to psychological disturbances. Most camps have no playgrounds and there is no dedicated place for children to play or socialize with other children in a friendly environment. To address this, IOM established 12 playgrounds in large displacement sites, including Al Jufainah, across three districts in Ma'rib.

"It is amazing how slides and swings can make us see that the life still going," said Um Muneef, while expressing her gratitude for the newly constructed playground near her shelter at Al Jufainah camp.

"Watching the colorful games of the playground among the stones and dust of the camp is a source of joy. This place can wipe out all the stress of the day. Watching those children running, playing, laughing or even shouting makes me feel that there is still hope for me and my children," added the 25-year-old displaced mother of three.

The playground construction did not only address one of the most important needs of displaced children, but they can also be used for many other activities related to protection, health, psychosocial and resilience programmes for displaced children and their parents.



IOM health teams responded immediately to the fire incident in the Immigration Nationality and Passport Authority (IPNA) Immigration Holding Facility in Sana'a by providing life-saving emergency health care at the site, transporting victims to three hospitals and providing those hospitals with supplies. IOM provided more than 29,000 medical items including medicines and medical supplies. Delivery of a further 17,000 medical items and supplies has been coordinated by IOM and partners to three public hospitals providing treatment to the injured migrants.

In March, IOM carried out over 36,087 health consultations, including 2,256 with migrants, through 21 health facilities in Aden, Shabwah, Sana'a, Lahj, Ma'rib and Ta'iz governorates. In Shabwah, IOM provided training to 29 women community health volunteers from public facilities. The training focused on the provision of basic counselling and screening for children with acute malnutrition and pregnant and lactating women, antenatal and post-natal care, personal hygiene, prevention of communicable diseases and child growth monitoring.

The health team also carried out pre-departure medical screenings for 140 migrants who returned to their home country of Ethiopia through IOM's Voluntary Humanitarian Return (VHR) programme. Additional screenings were carried out for 160 migrants who are set to travel in April. This is done to ensure that returnees are fit to travel, while those with special needs are identified and supported.

IOM has scaled up its presence in the west coast region and in March, the organization provided medical supplies and personal protective equipment to four public hospitals in Ta'iz. This support has enabled Al Aroos hospital in Sabir Al Mawadim district to provide reproductive health services 24 hours a day.

IOM continued supporting the National Malaria Program (NMCP) and provided training to 282 medical staff and health workers on the microscopic diagnosis of Malaria in 10 health facilities in Sa'dah and Ibb. The NMCP launched a campaign to distribute 418,818 long-lasting insecticidal nets in 23 endemic districts in Sana'a, Hadramawt, Raymah and Al Jawf governorates, protecting more than 886,000 people from Malaria. IOM also sustained support to the National AIDS Program (NAP) and provided food baskets to 1,837 people living with HIV who receive antiretroviral therapy in five IOM-supported sites in Sana'a, Aden, Tai'z, Al Hodeidah and Al Mukalla cities. The teams also supported NAP in organizing a workshop in Sana'a about the role of scholars, Islamic preachers and religious leaders on HIV prevention and control: A total of 35 officials and academics attended the workshop.



**36,087** Health care consultations conducted



**277** Health facilities received medical supplies and equipment



# SHELTER & NON-FOOD ITEMS (S-NFI)

Through the Multisectoral Contingency Stock Pipeline, IOM and partners supported a total of 9,240 households with emergency shelter materials, non-food items and emergency latrines, as well as essential fuel supply for water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and health activities. In response to the ongoing displacement in Ma'rib, IOM provided emergency shelter kits and non-food items to 731 newly displaced households. An additional 333 households received kits to cover their basic needs through IOM's rapid response mechanism (RRM).

The S-NFI teams also provided more than 20,000 litres of fuel to WASH and health facilities to address fuel shortages across Ma'rib and Sana'a governorates to sustain humanitarian support. IOM is also prepositioning S-NFI stocks through the Contingency Pipeline: this month, IOM transported 6,000 plastic sheets and 5,000 blankets to Sana'a, 20,000 blankets and 12,000 plastic sheets to Ibb, Sa'dah, Al Hodeidah and Hajjah to serve as contingency stocks in case of emergency.

IOM continued shelter improvement activities through the cash-for-shelter modality. In March, 701 IDP households received financial support to carry out shelter rehabilitation activities and improve their living conditions in four displacement sites in Ma'rib. The teams also conducted assessments in 10 additional sites in Ma'rib Al Wadi and Ma'rib City and 1,145 households were identified to receive shelter rehabilitation assistance in Al Jufainah IDP site.



**2,090** Households provided with emergency shelter materials



**843** Households provided with NFI kits



A newly displaced person receiving essential household items in Marib © IOM 2021

## CASH

With the ongoing decline of the Yemeni Rial (YER) against the United States Dollar in Yemen, access to commodities remains a challenge for many displaced and host community members. IOM provides multi-purpose cash assistance (MPCA) as part of the Rapid Response Mechanism (RRM) to vulnerable newly displaced families with extremely limited economic resources to help them meet their basic needs and reduce their reliance on negative coping mechanisms especially amid the COVID-19 pandemic. MPCA is considered as a robust response mechanism for its recognized effective and harmonized coordination structure. IOM is co-lead of the Rapid Response Mechanism in Yemen. In March, IOM completed MPCA transfers to 3,947 displaced households (YER 117,000 per family) in Ma'rib, Ibb, Al Bayda, Ta'iz, Hajjah, Al Hodeidah, Ad Dali' and Abyan. The cash transfers were conducted by an established financial service provider identified and contracted by IOM.



**3,947** Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance transferred to IDP HHs

## WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE (WASH)

IOM's WASH activities focus on the most vulnerable populations in Yemen, including displaced people, migrants and host communities, people living in cholera or malaria-affected areas, and those most at risk of contracting COVID-19 or other infectious diseases. This month, IOM provided 20,693,000 litres of safe water to 100,264 displaced people through vouchers and water trucking in 25 displacement sites in Aden, Ta'iz, Ma'rib and Al Makha. The WASH team installed five water tanks with a capacity of 2,000 cubic metres, five water points and 11 hand washing points in Ta'iz, benefiting 529 displaced people.

In Ma'rib, the team installed six water points with a supply capacity of 3,000 litres a day, benefiting 2,910 newly displaced households, in addition to providing water tanks to 552 households in two IDP sites. IOM also rehabilitated eight water systems in six IDP sites in the same governorate, benefiting 9,576 displaced people.

IOM WASH teams carried out hygiene promotion activities and provided 2,472 sessions to 6,583 displaced people in nine IDP hosting sites in Ta'iz, who also participated in focus group discussions about environmental hygiene, water preservation and effective latrine cleaning methods. The teams also distributed 1,573 basic hygiene kits, 2,254 consumable hygiene kits, 987 long-lasting insecticidal nets, and 6,300 soap bars to 23,187 people from the IDP and host communities in Ma'rib and Ta'iz.

IOM continued to support waste collection and disposal activities. This month, a total of 430 cubic metres of water waste and 220 cubic metres of solid waste were collected and disposed in Lahj, Aden and Ta'iz, benefiting a total of 12,028 displaced people. In Ma'rib, the teams collected and disposed 3,072 cubic metres of solid waste, benefiting 77,184 displaced people. Additionally, the teams constructed 84 latrines to support 504 displaced households in three IDP sites in Ma'rib.



**100,264** People supported with access to safe water



**89,993** People benefited from improved waste management services



A newly displaced woman filling water can with drinking water in Ma'rib © E. Al Oqabi/IOM 2021

# PROTECTION

The IOM protection team responded to the fire incident in the Immigration Nationality and Passport Agency (IPNA) Immigration Holding Facility in Sana'a by providing more than 610 food packages and 204 non-food items kits including clothes, hygiene materials and other specialized items. Delivery of a further 500 blankets has been coordinated by IOM and partners. With COVID-19 resurgence in Sana'a and hospitals facing increased congestion, there are concerns that those migrants in non-critical conditions will be released.



**5,743** Migrants received protection assistance

Despite the horrific incident in Sana'a, IOM estimated a total of 1,276 migrants entered the country in March — many of whom are unable to access basic services are in dire need of food, shelter, health and protection assistance, putting further pressure on host communities and public services. IOM continues to advocate for migrants' rights in Yemen and provide emergency assistance to those transiting through and stranded in the country through its Migrant Response Points (MRPs) and mobile protection teams. This month, the protection team provided 31 migrant families with baby kits in Sana'a and Ma'rib.

In March, 499 migrants were registered for Voluntary Humanitarian Return (VHR) at the Aden Migrant Response Point, which brings the total number of people registered since October 2020 to over 6,200. IOM facilitated the voluntary return of 140 Ethiopian migrants to their country of origin through IOM's VHR. Thousands of migrants remain stranded in Yemen, including Ma'rib, where IOM hopes to extend its VHR programme to soon. IOM also supported 1,200 migrants and 70 IDPs through cash for work activities as part of a city cleaning campaign in Aden.

In Ma'rib, the protection community response team is responding with other IOM teams to recent and pre-existing displacements. Utilizing a mobile team methodology, the team responds to individual and group protection needs throughout Ma'rib. The team receives referrals of vulnerable individuals from other IOM units, local partners, local authorities, and trained enumerators. The team then verifies the circumstances of the vulnerable individuals and provides the appropriate response, which can include case management from trained IOM caseworkers, the provision of cash for protection, material aid such as shelter and non-food items or referral to other services such as legal assistance and food distributions. This month, the team registered 391 vulnerable IDPs for services, providing 36 with temporary shelter, 30 with non-food items and 124 with protection cash assistance.



A migrant receiving aid kit from IOM in a settlement where thousands of migrants are stranded in Ma'rib © E. Al Oqabi/IOM 2021



## IN FOCUS 1<sup>ST</sup> RETURN FLIGHT TO ETHIOPIA SINCE START OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC



Stranded Ethiopian migrants prepare for their journey home from Aden, Yemen, with IOM support © M.Mohammed/IOM 2021

[IOM's Return Task Force](#) estimated the COVID-19 related mobility restrictions stranded at least 3 million migrants around the world who wished to return home.

Despite a reduction in the number of migrants arriving in Yemen — from 138,000 in 2019 to just over 37,500 in 2020 — the dangers they face have drastically increased over the past year. Unable to continue across Yemen to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, many stranded migrants lack shelter, water and food. Migrants also have been at increasing risk of experiencing xenophobia, exploitation and detention over the last year.

IOM's VHR programme in Yemen provides stranded undocumented Ethiopian migrants with the option of returning home safely. IOM gives priority to the most vulnerable including unaccompanied and separated children, women, the elderly, medical cases, and persons who have experienced grave human rights violations.

On 16 March, IOM supported the voluntary return of 140 Ethiopian migrants from Aden, Yemen. In total, IOM has registered over 6,000 stranded migrants who wish to avail of the Organization's return support.

"I have a family to provide for in Ethiopia, so I left to find work. I came to Yemen to make it to Saudi Arabia, but I was not successful," said Mohammed Awal, 25 years old. "I can't describe my situation here, as it has been very difficult. I have been homeless and poor. I am happy to be going home but I have nothing to bring back to my family. I will never leave again." In December, the Government of Ethiopia sent a delegation to Aden to verify an initial group of 1,100 returnees. The flight was the first in the initial group, with the remaining expected to take place in the coming weeks and months. Additionally, thousands of other migrants remain stranded elsewhere in Yemen, including Ma'rib, where IOM hopes to extend its return efforts soon.

"I have been here for one year. I left my country because I couldn't find work and I had to do something," said Shafi Abudllah, 25 years old. "When I reached the Saudi border, I faced issues and could not cross, as the border was closed. Because of COVID-19, I need to return home. I'm so happy that I'm going back, and my family are glad too."

In coordination with the Ethiopian government, IOM supports the government-run COVID-19 quarantine facility set up to accommodate the returnees in Addis Ababa and provides cash assistance, essential items and onward transportation assistance to home communities. The Organization also supports family tracing and the reunification of unaccompanied migrant children. Across the Horn of Africa and Yemen, IOM provides life-saving support to migrants through health care, food, water and other assistance.

## TRANSITION AND RECOVERY

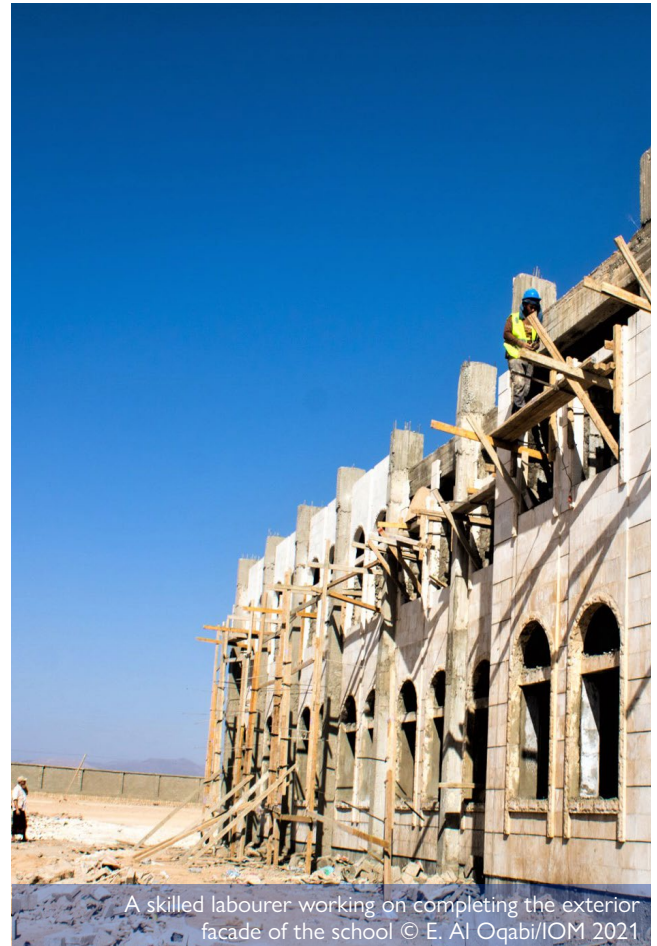
While the conflict continues in Yemen, there are pockets of stability where there are opportunities to maintain development gains. IOM supports the recovery of conflict-affected Yemenis through the rehabilitation and construction of schools and other core infrastructure, the establishment of livelihood opportunities to increase household incomes and building local capacities to resolve community-level conflicts. This month, the transition and recovery team continued activities in Ma'rib, Lahj, Aden and Hadramawt to improve services in displacement affected communities and support social cohesion among diverse community members. IOM advertised tenders for over 30 infrastructure rehabilitation projects in education, WASH and health sectors and the bids are currently under review. IOM also conducted consultations with target communities on planned complementary capacity building activities. The consultations aim to identify key stakeholders to engage in capacity building in order to sustain the supported services after the project ends.

In Hadramawt, IOM—in partnership with local water user associations and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)—conducted awareness-raising activities with local community members in Wadi Thabi district. The activities focused on promoting gender empowerment as well as peaceful conflict resolution, particularly in relation to water conflicts, and the importance of engaging women and youth in these processes. In total, 2,000 information, education, and communication materials were distributed to local community members.

IOM continues to scale up its programming in the west coast region of the country to respond to increasing humanitarian needs of IDPs, migrants and host communities. Two technical assessments were completed in Ta'iz and Al Hodeidah including key informant interviews, on-site consultation visits and meeting with local authorities.



Technical assessments for **5** community-based infrastructure projects completed



## DISPLACEMENT TRACKING MATRIX (DTM)

As the conflict continues to drive displacement in Yemen, IOM's DTM team works to better inform the humanitarian community about the location and needs of the displaced populations. DTM identifies both IDP and returnee locations and tracks displacement trends on daily basis. DTM also monitors key migrant arrivals mainly in locations across Yemen's southern coastal border and northern border with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA).

DTM's Rapid Displacement Tracking (RDT) activities cover 13 governorates where IOM has access. From 1 to 31 March, IOM tracked 9,450 displaced individuals (1,575 households) who have mainly moved within and to Ma'rib, Ad Dali', Ta'iz and Al Jawf governorates. Of those tracked, approximately 60 per cent reported that they lacked access to adequate shelter, with food (18%), financial support (13%) and water (9%) also reported to be of concern.

The arrival of 1,276 migrants was recorded through flow monitoring points during March, compared to 1,255 arrivals in February 2021. IOM recorded migrant arrivals through flow monitoring points in Lahj and Shabwah governorates, with the majority originating from Ethiopia (87%) and Somalia (13%). In total, 47 per cent of recorded migrant arrivals traveled through Somalia, and the remainder from Djibouti (53%). IOM teams do not have access to Manfath Alwadeeah on the KSA-Yemen land border point, and therefore cannot report information on Yemeni returnees.

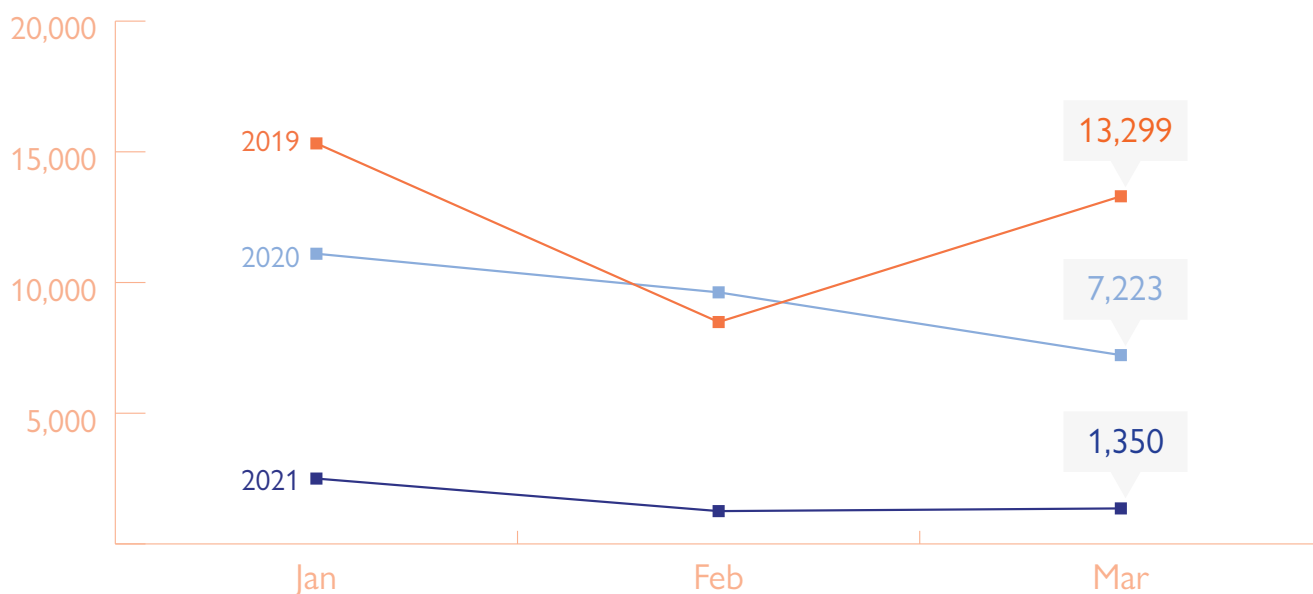


**1,358** Migrant arrivals in March 2021



**9,450** Displaced individuals tracked in March

### MIGRANT ARRIVAL IN YEMEN



Find all DTM reports on displacement and migration [here](#).

IOM YEMEN'S ACTIVITIES IN MARCH 2021 WERE SUPPORTED BY

