

2025 UNHCR-NGO Regional Consultations EHAGL
3 September 2025, 10:00-12:00

Global Theme	The route-based approach to responses to mixed movements of migrants and refugees
Description of the session	<p>Background</p> <p>The East, Horn and Great Lakes (EHAGL) region lies at a critical location for multiple major routes including to Europe, the Gulf and Southern Africa, and is home to countries that serve as countries of origin, asylum and transit for people on the move. As of 30 April 2025, the region was host to 5.75 million refugees and asylum-seekers—of which 83% originate from within the region—with many moving onwards. Additionally, there were 21.7 million internally displaced in the region because of conflict and climate-related disasters. Of these populations, over 50% are youth. Meanwhile, some 445,000 refugees have been documented as having returned to their countries of origin in 2024.</p> <p>Refugees and asylum seekers move onward from their first country of asylum for various reasons. These include restricted access to asylum, such as barriers to registration in domestic asylum systems, long wait times for refugee status determination decisions, limited access to humanitarian assistance, education, livelihood or other means of survival, and obstacles to legal and administrative processes, including securing documentation. Family separation, lack of comprehensive solutions, and insecurity also contribute to onward movement. Additionally, the drastically reduced foreign aid support, and climate change-related negative impacts, such as droughts and floods, undermine development and reduce the availability of natural resources—further driving onward movements.</p> <p>In the context of increasingly complex and dynamic mixed movement flows, effective collaboration between UNHCR and civil society actors is essential to ensure the protection and respect of rights of migrants and refugees along key routes—in line with the Route Based Approach. Particular emphasis should be placed on promoting protection-sensitive entry and admission to ensure access to asylum for persons seeking and in need of international protection.</p> <p>Session Objectives and key themes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share analysis and ways of working on the mixed movements of refugees and migrants on the Mediterranean Eastern and Southern routes • Introduce UNHCR's route-based approach to responses to mixed movements on the different routes, incl. action plans • Identify areas for strengthening the collaboration between UNHCR, INGOs and local actors on the response to mixed movements including regarding communication with communities, multi-purpose hubs, respective engagement with regional economic forums (RECs) and processes like the Khartoum Process, access to asylum systems and returns). Map synergies, complementarities and ways to coordinate to avoid duplicative measures. • Share good practices of INGOs and local actors on responses to ensure the protection and respect of rights of migrants and refugees along key mixed movement routes. • Explore funding opportunities

Moderator	Ayla Bonfiglio, Head of the Mixed Migration Centre Eastern & Southern Africa
Speakers and Titles	<p>UNHCR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stella Ogunlade, Senior Protection Coordinator, Regional Bureau for East, Horn of Africa and Great Lakes • Emma Nordlund, Senior Partnerships Officer, UNHCR Ethiopia <p>NGOs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ayla Bonfiglio, Head of the Mixed Migration Centre Eastern & Southern Africa Egypt & Yemen • Harriet Holder, Regional Head of Programmes, East Africa and Great Lakes, Danish Refugee Council • Melinda van Zyl: Global Lead for Save the Children's Migration & Displacement Initiative (MDI). • Barbara Salcher, The Khartoum Process Dialogue Coordinator and Senior Project Manager (ICMPD). <p>Refugee/Diaspora Led Organizations (RLOs)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jawaahir Daahir, Co-founder and Chair of Global Somali Diaspora.
Speaker Bios and Social Media Info	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ayla Bonfiglio: Dr. Ayla Bonfiglio is the Head of the Mixed Migration Center Eastern and Southern Africa Egypt and Yemen. From 2019-2022, she was the Head of MMC's North Africa hub. For 15 years, she has worked on issues of forced migration and mobility. Her doctoral research (UNU-MERIT/Maastricht University) examined how refugees and migrants make strategic decisions about their movements in relation to higher education. In 2016, Ayla co-founded the Conflict and Education Learning Laboratory (CELL), a non-profit research foundation. Formerly, she was a Research Officer at the International Migration Institute, Oxford. She obtained an MSc in Forced Migration from the University of Oxford and a BA (Hons) in Political Science from Columbia University. She has worked and carried out research, and for a variety of organizations, including GIZ, ICMPD, IOM, UNESCO, UNODC, and UNHCR. • Harriet Holder: Harriet Holder has been DRC's Regional Head of Programmes for East Africa and Great Lakes since June 2022, previously Head of Programmes for DRC Kenya from May 2017 to May 2022. DRC implements Economic Recovery, Protection, Humanitarian Disarmament and Peacebuilding, Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience, Camp Coordination and Camp Management, Shelter and Settlements, WASH, Cash and Education projects in support of displacement affected communities across 10 countries. Harriet has worked in the East Africa and Great Lakes region since 2010 in DR Congo, South Sudan, Sudan, Ethiopia, Uganda and Kenya. • Melinda van Zyl: She is the Global Lead for Save the Children's Migration & Displacement Initiative (MDI). Since 2008, Melinda has fulfilled various positions for Save the Children, with a stint in-between at UNICEF and the World Bank, mainly focused on design and operational management of routes-based, cross-border child protection systems strengthening for children in mixed migration. Her experience includes leadership roles in East and Southern Africa, the Caucasus and Central Asia, MENAEE, Sweden and Asia Pacific. In addition to leading the MDI team at Save the Children, she currently co-leads IDAC's 4th Working Group on Innovative Data Solutions for Children on the Move. • Barbara Salcher: She is the Senior Project Manager at ICMPD, leading the Khartoum Process Secretariat in Vienna. She is an experienced migration policy and project management professional, with a strong background in coordinating international programs across Europe, Africa, and Southeast Asia. With over 15 years in migration policy, reintegration, and counter-trafficking, Barbara has held roles at ICMPD, IOM, and NGOs, combining her expertise in project development, stakeholder engagement, and team leadership to drive impactful, sustainable solutions in complex migration contexts.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jawaahir Daahir: She is the founder of Somali Global Diaspora where she is currently serving as the chair person. She was awarded the Order of the British Empire by Her Majesty, The Queen, Elizabeth II of United Kingdom. Jawaahir has an extensive experience spanning over 28 years in management and leadership, community development, education, media and research. She was also the winner of Woman in The Community Award, Leicestershire, 2008. She previously served as a chair -person at the Somali Development Service, Operations Manager at COMPASS FOSTERING CENTRAL LIMITED and also worked as a Social Worker at the De Opbouw, the Netherlands. Jawaahir holds a master's degree in Islamic studies from Markfield Institution Higher Education -Loughborough University and a Bachelor's Degree in Social Work and Refugee Consultancy from Eindhoven University in the Netherlands.
Format	This session will be organized as an inter-active moderated discussion. The first half will consist of panelists each responding to different questions, while they will have the opportunity to complement each other or comment on each other's responses. The second half will consist of feedback and questions from the audience and then a wrap-up with UNHCR on recommendations to take forward.
10 min	Start of session Davina Said , ICVA Head of Forced Migration Briefing on theme and objective to have 2-3 recommendations, housekeeping rules and technical features
10 min	Welcome and Opening Remarks Stella Ogunlade , Senior Protection Coordinator, Regional Bureau for East, Horn of Africa and Great Lakes
10 min	Setting the Scene – overview on movements and protection issues Ayla Bonfiglio , Head of the Mixed Migration Centre Eastern & Southern Africa Egypt & Yemen
5 min	Introduction of the panelists Ayla Bonfiglio , Head of the Mixed Migration Centre Eastern & Southern Africa Egypt & Yemen
50 min	Moderated plenary discussions with different questions for the panelists
25 min	Questions from the floor and Answers by the panelists
10 min	Closing and way forward – Stella Ogunlade Summary of key takeaways and recommendations to inform future collaboration between UNHCR and NGOs