

I grew up in **Hararghe**, a town east of the capital Addis Ababa, in a big family with seven siblings. We have very little income, so I wanted to earn some money to support my family by finding work abroad. That's why I contacted a well-known broker from my village, about a year and four months ago, together with three friends who wanted to join. We paid 600 Birr (approximately 11 USD) each to travel in a Khat-transporting vehicle to **Jijiga**, our first stop. In the city, the driver bought us food and transferred us to another trafficker.^[1] We saw many other migrants who had come from other parts of Ethiopia. We spent one night there, then continued on our journey.

Six days later, we arrived in **Bosaso**, Somalia, where we stayed in plastic tents with more than 16 female and 10 male migrants. The trafficker asked us to call our families to send 20,000 Birr (approximately 364 USD) in order to continue onwards to Yemen. Thankfully my family immediately agreed to transfer the money, but others were not so lucky. If families refused to send money, or if they could not pay, the trafficker punished the migrants physically. I was scared and sad, witnessing the trafficker beating and battering them and making women live with him as temporary wives, forcing them to work and serve food. He would sexually exploit them, and after they became pregnant or ill, he replaced them with other newly arrived female migrants. Women told me that they had to serve as wives for one year before they would be freed by the trafficker and be allowed to travel to Saudi Arabia.

After the money was transferred, the trafficker grouped me with about 250 other migrants, and we were loaded into a truck that was so crowded that some people fainted on the journey. When we stopped, a Somali trafficker took over, and we travelled by foot for one day to arrive at the seashore. There were about 600 of us being transported over the sea by two boats. We were picked up on the Yemeni seashore and transported to **Haraz** by car, where we waited under a bridge for three days without food. Traffickers checked via phone whether the route to Saudi Arabia was safe, and then sent us to the mountainous area. While walking towards the border, I accidentally fell, injuring my hand severely. I couldn't continue with the other migrants anymore, so the trafficker left me there and continued with the others. Some drug dealers helped me to return to a trafficker in Yemen, and my family sent money for me to get treatment. He was nice to me and took care of me for two months.

Once I recovered, I attempted to travel to Saudi Arabia for a second time, together with the trafficker and other migrants. When we reached the "mountain place" at the **border** with security cameras, the traffickers told us to go as fast as possible to escape the Saudi police. It was very dangerous. The area was highly degraded due to frequent rocket-like weapons that police used to attack, explode, and destroy migrants within seconds. They fired at us at night, and I noticed a red light coming from the bullets. Bodies were scattered into pieces and the place became full of blood. Of the 30 migrants who were travelling with me, 26 died, and I lost my fingers. Only four of us survived, with serious injuries.

I could not use my hands and fingers, so with the help of my toes, I took the phone of the trafficker and gave it to another woman to call for help. Shisha traders found us, and they took us to the Saudi hospital, but the hospital refused to treat us. They said that they didn't have the capacity to treat these kinds of wounds. They sent us back to **Yemen** where we found a hospital that admitted us, and we spent many days undergoing surgery. I heard about other Ethiopian migrants also coming to the hospital to obtain treatment, who had survived an attack by Saudi security forces in the same place where I and others had been attacked. About 80 migrants were killed there.

After my hospital stay, I travelled with other migrants to **Sana'a**, where there were people who took us to a non-governmental organisation that rescues migrant survivors like us. I stayed there for six months and got medical treatment with their assistance. They then asked us if we wanted to return to Ethiopia. Some said no, but I was willing to return, so the organisation provided free transport by plane to **Addis Ababa**, where I am now. Was my trip successful? No. I lost many things. I lost parts of my body. I lost my fingers, and there were physical injuries on the upper part of my hand. Besides, my family paid a lot of money for the traffickers and the treatment. At least I have phone contact and communication with my family.

[1] The term trafficker is used based on the translation of what respondents told us, to stay as close as possible to their own personal stories and perceptions. It is not possible to verify in every reference whether the term smuggler or trafficker might be more applicable.