



Beyond Borders: VCIS Mapping the Shadows of Human Smuggling Routes to Saudi Arabia

In the intricate web of global migration, the phenomenon of human smuggling has emerged as a critical issue, marked by its complex routes and multifaceted challenges. This case study delves into the dynamics of human smuggling between Southeast Asia and East Africa, with a particular focus on its destination - Saudi Arabia. As an epicenter for economic opportunities, Saudi Arabia has historically attracted individuals seeking employment, making it a target for clandestine migration facilitated by illicit networks.

While no country has developed a perfect solution to human smuggling, came a new investigative approach implemented by VCIS to be added to Saudi Arabia's anti-smuggling efforts. The following case study will address some possible practices.



Introduction

The United Nations Protocol defines human smuggling as the illicit transportation of individuals, often involving coercion, deception, or abuse of power. In the context of Southeast Asia and East Africa, migrants undertake perilous journeys across multiple borders, navigating through an intricate network of smugglers to reach the Gulf region.

Saudi Arabia is historically a known destination for men and women from SouthEast Asia and East Africa trafficked for the purpose of labor exploitation, and for children from Yemen, Afghanistan, and Africa.

Irregular migrants travel from the Horn of Africa through Yemen; monitoring this flow is difficult due to the ongoing instability in the region, resulting in constantly changing routes. Recent years have seen an increase in the influx of migrants through this route, despite intensified border controls imposed by Saudi Arabia. The majority of these smuggling routes pass through Saudi Arabia's mountainous roads, with a high number of children smuggled along the eastern corridor route. Kidnapping and

torture-for-ransom have become prevalent along major smuggling routes in this area, while threats of deportation by Yemeni and Saudi authorities add to the migrants' plight.

Sensationalist accounts of human smuggling from Africa towards Saudi Arabia allege that operations are controlled by criminal networks who converge in a variety of illegal markets posing a threat to national security. Such convergence narratives construct human smuggling as an organized criminal business that extracts profits from and inflicts violence on vulnerable people seeking a clandestine passage to work in the Gulf States. Smuggling has emerged in a particular context of surveillance and enforcement and the motives of smugglers are complex, making simple characterisations difficult.



Smuggling routes

Somalia

1. **Mogadishu**, Bosaso Port, Kismayo Port
2. **Bosaso Port**: Located in Puntland
3. **Berbera Port**: In the breakaway region of Somaliland
4. **Kismayo Port**: Located in southern Somalia
5. **Eyl**: small port in Puntland
6. **Hoby**: Situated in central Somalia, Hobyo has been identified as a potential location for human trafficking and irregular migration.
7. **Bender Qassim**: Another coastal area in Puntland, Bender Qassim
8. **Xaafuun**: A port town in the Puntland region
9. **Garacad**: in Puntland.
10. **Luuq** a town in southwestern Somalia near the border with Ethiopia

Sudan

1. **Port Sudan**: Located on the Red Sea, Port Sudan is a significant point of departure for migrants and potential victims of trafficking, especially those heading to Saudi Arabia or other Gulf countries.
2. **Khartoum**: As the capital and largest city of Sudan, Khartoum serves as a transit point for many migrants and potential trafficking victims.

Ethiopia

1. **Addis Ababa**: Ethiopia's capital city, Addis Ababa, is a major transit point for migrants and potential trafficking victims who are often lured by the promise of better opportunities in the Gulf countries.
2. **Border Crossings**: Ethiopia shares land borders with Somalia, Sudan, and other countries in the region. These border areas may serve as vulnerable points for traffickers to move victims across borders.

Yemen

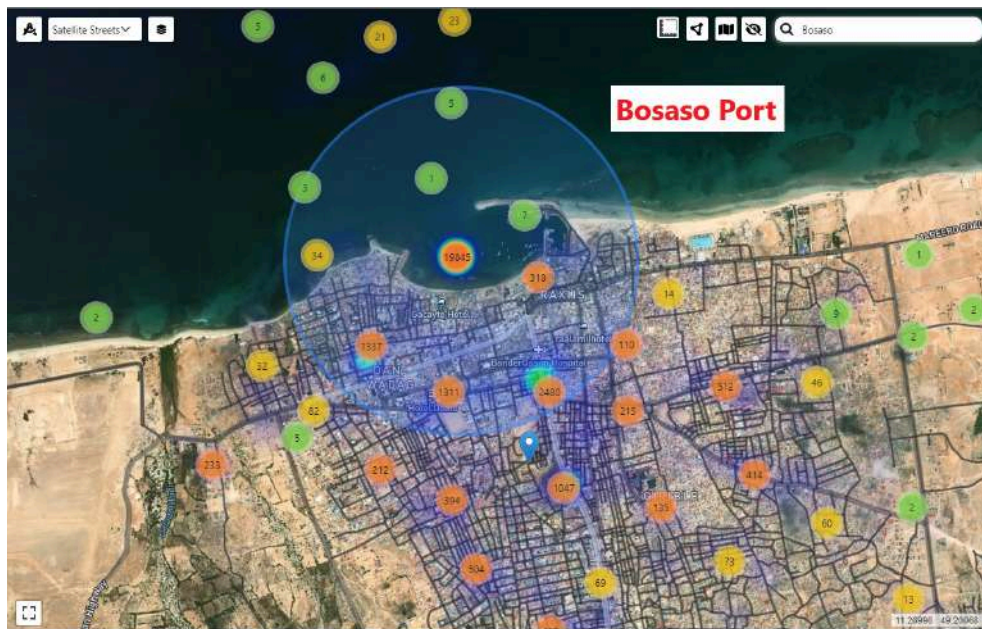
1. **Aden**: Aden, located in southern Yemen, is a major port city and a known entry point for migrants and trafficking victims. The city has been significantly impacted by the ongoing conflict, making it even more challenging to address human trafficking.
2. **Socotra**: The island in the Arabian Sea.
3. **Al Mukalla** is also known to be used as a transit point by traffickers, who may exploit its remoteness to transport victims.

Saudi Arabia

1. **Jeddah and Riyadh:** These major cities in Saudi Arabia serve as destinations for many trafficking victims who are forced into labor, especially in construction, agriculture, and domestic work.
2. **Border Areas:** Traffickers may also exploit the long land border that Saudi Arabia shares with Yemen to smuggle victims into the country.

Scenario

In order to track and analyze the activities of potential smugglers operating in the region, we conducted a Device History Pattern query specifically focused on the Bosaso Port. This port is identified as a key area where smuggling activities are known to take place, particularly serving as a departure point for illicit shipments headed towards Yemen and Saudi Arabia via the sea. (*DHP Bosaso Port*)



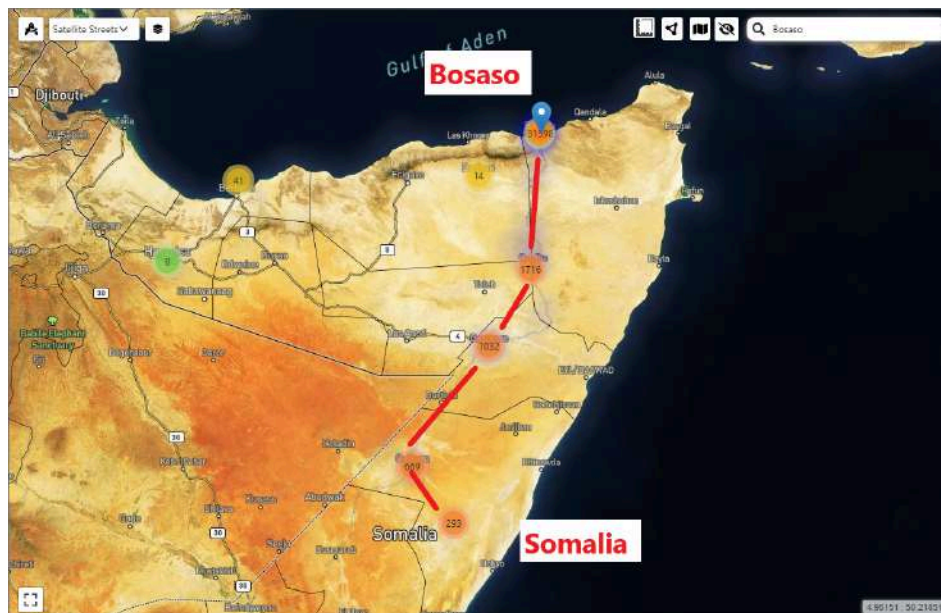
The Device History Pattern query has identified another significant finding, revealing a series of movements between Somalia and Bosaso Port involving multiple devices. This observation implies a coordinated and potentially organized activity, with several key considerations:

Cross-Border Movement: The detection of devices taking routes between Somalia and Bosaso Port indicates cross-border movements. This geographical span raises questions about the nature of these journeys, considering the historical context and security implications associated with movements in this region.

Multiple Devices Involved: The involvement of a number of devices suggests a collective or coordinated effort rather than an isolated incident. Understanding the relationships between these devices and their synchronized movements is essential for a comprehensive analysis.

Strategic Routes to Bosaso Port: The routes chosen by these devices to arrive at Bosaso Port are of strategic importance. Analyzing these paths can provide insights into the planning and decision-making processes behind the movements, shedding light on potential motivations and operational tactics.

Potential Smuggling or Illicit Activity: Given the known challenges of smuggling activities in the region, the movement of multiple devices towards Bosaso Port raises concerns about potential involvement in illicit operations. Investigating the cargo, if any, and the individuals associated with these devices becomes crucial.



The Device History Pattern query has uncovered a notable discovery, revealing a device engaged in a daily commuting pattern between Bosaso Port and Al Mukalla Port. This consistent movement pattern raises several important considerations.

Routine Activity: The daily movement of the device signifies a recurring and deliberate pattern. This regularity suggests a systematic engagement or purpose behind the device's transportation between Bosaso Port and Al Mukalla Port.

Potential Smuggling Activity: Given Bosaso Port's known association with smuggling activities, the daily movement of the device to and from Al Mukalla Port raises suspicions of potential involvement in illicit or clandestine operations. Further investigation is warranted to determine the nature of transported goods or activities.



The observed behavior of the identified device ID, specifically its consistent proximity to the mosque in Al Mukalla without registering hits in other locations within the city, suggests a distinctive pattern indicative of a potential stay at a Madafa house. Several key considerations arise from this observation:

Static Location Around Mosque: The device's continuous presence around the mosque in Al Mukalla, with no recorded hits in other parts of the city, implies a consistent and restricted geographical area of activity. This pattern may indicate that the device remains relatively stationary during its time in Al Mukalla.

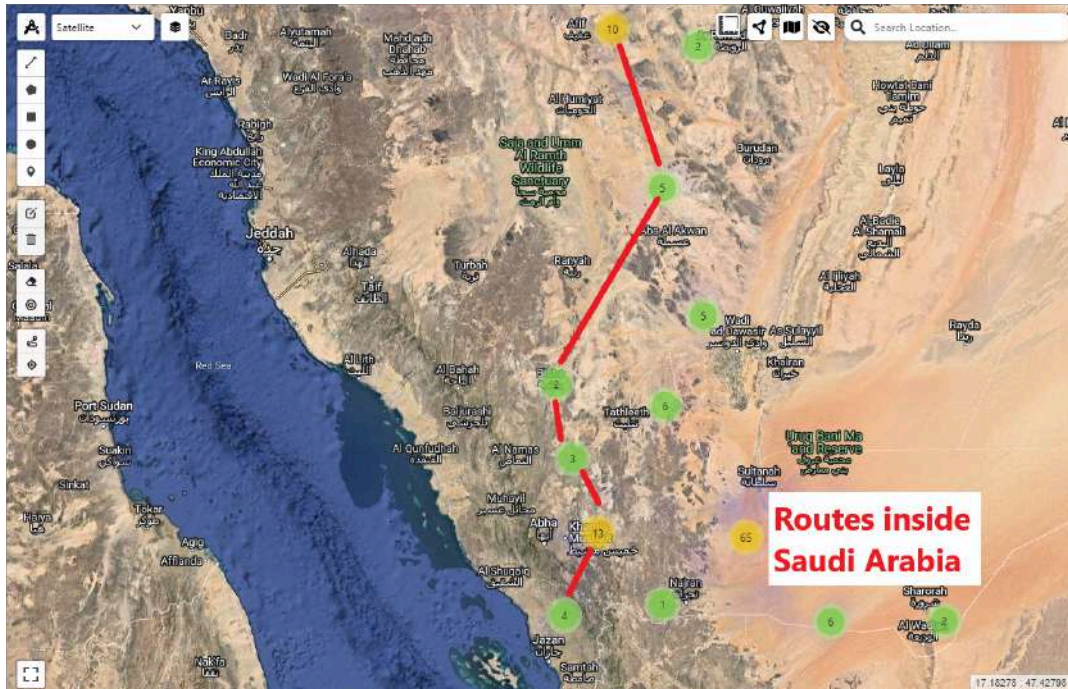
Madafa House Possibility: The hypothesis that the device is staying at a Madafa house gains credibility. Madafa houses are known for providing temporary accommodations, often associated with security concerns or the need for discretion. This aligns with the observed behavior of the device staying in close proximity to the mosque.

Security and Smuggling Implications: The connection between the device's static location and potential stays at a Madafa house suggests security-related considerations. Individuals involved in activities such as smuggling may choose Madafa houses for added security and anonymity, utilizing these spaces for planning or regrouping.



The discovery of another device that has been traced from Bosaso Port, navigating the sea route towards Yemen and eventually reaching Jazan in Saudi Arabia, holds significant implications indicative of specific geographic and possibly logistical intentions. Given the historical context of smuggling activities in the region, the device's movement along this specific sea route raises suspicions of potential involvement in smuggling or illicit operations. Examining the cargo, if any, and the individuals associated with the device becomes crucial.





In this case, we were able to demonstrate some of the trafficking routes between Somalia, Yemen and Saudi Arabia. With VCIS we were keen to identify the routes, the ports and the most important was to identify smugglers and their inter-countries activity by focusing on Bossaso port in Somalia and the activity toward Al Mukalla port in Yemen and from Yemen to Saudi Arabia.

Conclusion

The case study on human smuggling routes from Southeast Asia and East Africa to Saudi Arabia, utilizing the VCIS investigative approach, has shed light on the complex dynamics and challenges associated with this illicit trade. By focusing on key transit points such as Bosaso Port in Somalia, Al Mukalla Port in Yemen, and the eventual destination of Jazan in Saudi Arabia, the analysis has

uncovered patterns and behaviors indicative of organized smuggling activities.

The Device History Pattern queries have revealed coordinated cross-border movements involving multiple devices, suggesting a systematic and potentially organized smuggling operation. The daily commuting pattern between Bosaso

Port and Al Mukalla Port, along with the static location of a device in proximity to a mosque in Al Mukalla, raises suspicions of involvement in illicit activities and the possible use of Madafa houses for added security and discretion.

Furthermore, the tracing of a device from Bosaso Port, navigating the sea route towards Yemen, and ultimately reaching Jazan in Saudi Arabia, underscores the strategic planning and logistical intentions behind these movements. The historical context of smuggling activities in the region adds weight to the suspicions of the device's involvement in illicit operations. This case study demonstrates the effectiveness of the VCIS investigative approach in identifying and analyzing human smuggling routes, key transit points, and the activities of potential smugglers. By focusing on specific

geographic areas and utilizing device tracking, authorities can gain valuable insights into the patterns and behaviors associated with smuggling operations. However, it is crucial to recognize that addressing the complex issue of human smuggling requires a multi-faceted approach, including international cooperation, addressing root causes, and ensuring the protection of vulnerable individuals caught in these networks.

The findings of this case study underscore the need for continued efforts to combat human smuggling, disrupt illicit networks, and provide support to those affected by this heinous trade. By leveraging innovative investigative techniques like VCIS and fostering collaboration among stakeholders, progress can be made in the fight against human smuggling and its devastating impact on individuals and societies.

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