

Red Sea Lecture Series

„International, Local Norms and Ethiopian Migration to the Gulf Countries: Some Critical Reflections“

Wednesday, 17 November 2021, 5.30 pm

Lecture by Dr. Asnake Kefale (Addis Ababa University)

The main purpose of this paper is to critically examine Ethiopia's migration to the oil-rich Arab Gulf countries in light of international and norms. The rate of international migration from Ethiopia is still comparatively lower than the sub-Saharan Africa average. There has been, however, a recent increment in the outward migration of Ethiopians. The country has been also a host of a large number of refugees from neighbouring countries. In the last few years due to internal instability, a large number of people have become internally displaced.

The oil-rich Arab Gulf countries are major destinations for Ethiopian migrants. The majority of migrants to the gulf countries are irregular and their purpose of migration is to work in these countries and support themselves and their families. I contend in this paper that Ethiopian irregular migration to the gulf countries challenges in many ways global and local norms. At the global (international) levels, the irregular migration of Ethiopians to the gulf countries challenges global norms of migration which emphasizes safe and orderly migration. At the local level, the migration of predominantly young girls and women to distant countries to raise money and support their families challenges local norms which are historically dominated by patriarchy. Even if migration management bodies in Ethiopia and abroad promote what they call regular (legal) migration and invest resources through bilateral and multilateral arrangements, migration to the Gulf countries predominantly remains irregular.

Dr. Asnake Kefale is Associate Professor of Political Science and International Relations, Addis Ababa University. Formerly he was Director of Research and Publications at the Forum for Social Studies (FSS), a policy think tank in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Asnake's research interests include the politics of development, governance, federalism and migration. He is the co-editor of *Youth on Move: Views From Below on Ethiopian International Migration* (London: Hurst and Company, 2021)

The event will be held online, please register in advance:

<https://tinyurl.com/5xswd368>

