

Yemeni Foreign Workers Returned from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia through Al-Tuwal Border Crossing, Hajjah - 10 January 2014 Update

Background

As a result of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's (KSA) domestic labour market restructuring efforts, changes to the Nitaqat system were enforced as of March 2013. This has led to massive returns of foreign migrant workers from KSA throughout 2013. Most returns to Yemen have been effected by land through Al-Tuwal border, 10km from Haradh, Hajjah Governorate. Since June 2013, 249,253 Yemeni returnees have been counted as they are offloaded at Al-Tuwal.

At the request of the Government of Yemen (GoY), IOM has been providing emergency assistance at Al-Tuwal, an isolated and desert area, since September 2013. As of October 2013, IOM has been able to monitor the daily flow of returnees directly through its own enumerators. Statistics pre-dating 10 October 2013 are derived from government sources. Between 10 October 2013 and 10 January 2014, IOM has been interviewing approximately 7.2% of the daily flow.

Aside from providing drinking water to all returnees due to their dehydrated condition and harsh environment at Al-Tuwal, IOM has prioritised emergency food (63,319), healthcare (12,640) and material assistance (4,287) to those requiring such urgent support. As of January 2014, the Ministry of Expatriate Affairs has arranged transport assistance for returnees from Al-Tuwal to Haradh.

Recent Trends

While the majority of returnees in October and November had resided in KSA for long periods of time, (3-5 years) and had sent remittances home, by the end of December 2013, 68% of interviewed returnees had been in KSA for less than one month and 58% had not secured employment.

Rate of Return

The average daily rate of return in January 2014 is 1,364, compared with a total return of 44,579 for the whole month of November 2013 and 37,122 in December 2013. In contrast, according to GoY figures, only 16,970 returnees arrived in September 2013.

Return to KSA / Final Destinations

56% of returnees interviewed since October 2013 planned to find work, study or remain in Yemen while 34% intended to return to KSA in the future. The remaining 10% could not indicate. The majority of returnees were headed back to Hudaydah Governorate, with Hajjah and Taizz Governorates as the next most popular destinations.

Rate of Return for Women, Boys and Girls

Just 4.6% of all returnees counted were women, boys or girls. Over the past four months the rate of girls and young women returning fluctuated (409 in November, 146 in December), while boys returned in relatively steady numbers. The rate of return of women has decreased over time.

[DISCLAIMER: The information expressed herein is based on returnee testimonies collected by IOM at Al-Tuwal Border Crossing Point. As such, IOM cannot attest to their accuracy.]