



IOM • OIM

IOM Yemen – Emergency Assistance to Yemeni Returnees Coming back from KSA (Al-Tewal BCP)

Recent years’ efforts in the GCC countries to restructure their domestic labor markets have been stepped up in 2013. In KSA changes to the Nitaqat system have been put in practice as of March 2013. This has prompted regularization by some foreign workers, thanks to successive moratoria, and the massive return of others to their countries of origin. Yemen has been particularly affected by such large scale returns. Most Yemeni migrants are returned through the Border Crossing Point (BCP) at Al Tewel, approximately 10km north of Haradh, Hajjah Governorate. Around 190,721 Yemeni migrants were returned through Al-Tewel between June 2013 and November 2013. During the first week of November, the rate of returns had increased significantly reaching peaks of 7,000 per day.

IOM was allowed to provide assistance at Al-Tewel by the end of August 2013. This emergency assistance to returnees includes health care, water, food, and immediate necessities such as clothing and footwear; in providing such assistance, statistics are collected on returnees’ origin and wellbeing.

By 15 November, the total number of Yemeni returnees provided with emergency health care reached 4,500. Most were suffering from respiratory tract infections, skin diseases, urinary tract infections and trauma. About 11,615 returnees were provided food and water; over 2,953 were provided clothing and footwear. In fact, most returnees are brought to the border with no belongings, barefoot, and often dehydrated and exhausted due to overcrowding while detained and transported by the authorities.

Given the harsh desert conditions, drinking water is now provided to all returnees who then walk around 1 km to the nearest transportation hub. IOM also provides them with access to a telephone so they can immediately contact their families and request some funding for public transportation back home.

Total number of Yemeni Migrants assisted by IOM	
Yemeni Migrants Provided with Food	11,615
Yemeni Migrants Provided with Health Care	4,500
Yemeni Migrants Assisted with NFIs	2,953

As of October 2013, IOM monitors the daily flow of returning Yemenis and interviews as many as possible to assess their needs. By 15 November, about 2,017 returnees were interviewed at Al-Tewel BCP: about 4% of the daily returnee flow. Most of the migrants are returned from Jizan and Mecca followed by Asir, Al-Riydah, Al-Madina and the Northern Borders. The majority indicate either Hajjah or AL- Hodeida governorates as their final destination in Yemen.

Such massive returns of Yemeni migrants from KSA will impact substantially the welfare of hundreds of thousands of Yemeni families back home. Returnees were queried on the monthly remittance they were sending back to their families while in KSA. About 32% of respondents reported sending back 400 to 799 SAR; another 22% sent between 800 to 1,500 SAR. Most of those interviewed said that they had been working as construction workers (542) in KSA followed by farmers (266). Other occupations include vendors, shop keepers, carpenters, blacksmiths etc. About 164 interviewees said that they were made to leave KSA before being able to find a job. About 38% of those interviewed indicated no education, 28% had primary education and 17% had secondary education. Protection violations were reported by 35% of those interviewed (physical abuse, followed by confiscation of belongings and deprivation of food and water). 62% of interviewees said they are planning to stay in Yemen while 20% intend to go back to KSA when possible.

Of the total number 64,905 Yemeni migrants IOM was able to observe* arriving at Al-Tewel since the beginning of October, there were around 1,775 women, 1,208 boys and 671 girls.

*IOM has maintained its humanitarian presence to Al-Tewel border nearly every day in the past two months except for when clashes in the nearby area made it impossible to reach the border.

