

MIGRANT SITUATION IN ADEN | FLASH REPORT



A DETAINED MIGRANT IS SCREENED BY IOM'S HEALTH TEAM TO ENSURE HE IS FIT TO TRAVEL TO ETHIOPIA UNDER IOM'S VOLUNTARY HUMANITARIAN RETURN PROGRAMME. PHOTO: MOORE/IOM 2019

SITUATION OVERVIEW

Over a month into the migrant detention situation in Yemen, irregular migrants continue to be detained in unsustainable conditions. At the peak of the detentions (27 April-03 May 2019), IOM estimates that approximately 5,000 people were detained across three sites. Currently, 2,457 migrants are detained in the 22nd of May Stadium site in Aden, and hundreds of migrants are periodically detained and released at Al Khaleeji stadium in Abyan.

The number of migrants arriving at the 22nd May Stadium increases daily. In collaboration with the authorities in Aden and Ethiopia, IOM has commenced the process of arranging Voluntary Humanitarian Returns (VHR) for migrants detained at 22nd of May Stadium. This process has been stalled by rescinded flight permissions.



VOLUNTARY HUMANITARIAN RETURN (VHR)

In collaboration with the authorities in Aden and Ethiopia, IOM has commenced the process of arranging Voluntary Humanitarian Returns (VHR) for migrants detained at 22nd of May Stadium. However, the VHR process - conducted through flights to Ethiopia - has been stalled by rescinded flight permissions. IOM obtained approval from the relevant authorities to commence return movements for the Ethiopian migrants, with the original plans providing safe passage on flights over an eight-day period from 25 May 2019. The first flight with approval from the Coalition, including the Governments of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, along with the Government of Yemen, has been delayed until Wednesday 29 May – 5 days after the initial flight was scheduled. This delay may lead to further life-threatening complications for the detained migrants.

IOM registered some 2,315 migrants, who wish to return to Ethiopia, through the VHR programme; registrations have now closed. IOM's health team are conducting medical 'Fit To Travel' screenings, with 480 registered migrants screened between 22-25 May.

Between 23 and 24 May, IOM witnessed a 15 per cent rise in the number of migrants at the Stadium, from 2,135 on 23 May to 2,457 on 26 May, further exacerbating an already untenable situation. It is presumed migrants are sharing news of the VHR process (being undertaken at the stadium) with the wider migrant community in Aden, leading to additional migrants arriving at the site with the hope of being included in the returns. The VHR movements being conducted are a unique response to the critical, life-threatening situation of detained migrants in the stadium. Thus, IOM is referring non-registered migrants to the Migrant Response Point in Aden for further assistance and possible return support in the future.

IOM'S RESPONSE



Coordination: Through the Mixed Migration Working Group (MMWG), IOM is coordinating multi-sectoral humanitarian activities in response to the migration detention situation. Under this coordination mechanism, IOM has ensured information sharing, the coordination of partner activities to fill critical gaps, and collective advocacy and engagement with national counterparts.

All VHR movements are coordinated with the Government of Yemen, the Government of Ethiopia and relevant stakeholders. Furthermore, IOM has been working with IPNA, as a department of the Government of Yemen, to strengthen its capacity in site management techniques to increase provision of dignified conditions for detained migrants until returns occur.

Protection: Child protection actors screened 476 children (409 boys and 67 girls) and from 26 May, ICRC has been present on site facilitating family tracing calls. Fifteen IOM Child Friendly Space staff are present at the site organizing activities with the children and monitoring their safety. Armed security personnel remain on site, creating access restraints for humanitarian partners and protection concerns for the population on site.

Health: Migrants have constant access to health care through IOM's 24-hour temporary clinic and an IOM ambulance. Between 26 April and 25 May, IOM doctors conducted 4,167 medical consultations. Migrants have attended awareness raising sessions on the prevention of skin diseases, malaria prevention and personal hygiene.

WASH: IOM is maintaining 30 latrines; constructing 10 additional latrines; carrying out daily cleaning campaigns and waste disposal; and providing clean water, in line with SPHERE standards. IOM provides over 22,000 litres of drinking water and 55,000 litres of water for use on a daily basis. IOM has also distributed hygiene kits, sanitary pads and washing soap to migrants. Hygiene kits, which contain sanitary supplies and clothing, are being distributed by medical staff to those migrants with Acute Watery Diarrhoea (AWD). WASH partners are constructing an additional 54 latrines and ensuring chlorination of water sources.

Food: IOM, together with IPNA, are distributing two meals and high-energy biscuits to migrants every day. Given the greater than expected numbers of migrants attending the site, the quantity of food required is increasing on a daily basis.

KEY CONCERNS

IOM advocates for migrants' rights to freedom of movement to be respected and detention to be used only as a last resort, especially for children, women and other vulnerable groups. Should migrants be detained, international standards must be met to ensure human dignity is maintained.

- VHR flights should be reinstated urgently to reduce the risk-to-life currently experienced by migrants. Further delays to flights will extend this untenable situation by several weeks, compounding serious protection concerns, especially for women and children at the site;
- The detention of migrants in Yemen shows little sign of abating. The number of migrants continues to rise at the 22nd of May stadium site, and the number of migrants detained at Al Khaleeji stadium in Abyan fluctuates daily;
- Humanitarian access remains a continuous challenge due to the presence of security forces at the Aden and Abyan detention sites;
- Migrants, especially women and children, continue to be exposed to grave protection risks at the detention sites; no migrant should face harm while detained;
- Any movement of the migrants back to their countries of origin should be voluntary, safe and dignified.



MIGRANTS AT 22ND MAY STADIUM WAIT TO BE MEDICALLY SCREENED & DEEMED "FIT TO TRAVEL". PHOTO: MOORE/IOM 2019



MIGRANTS QUEUE FOR WATER. PHOTO: MOORE/IOM 2019

IOM'S RESPONSE IN YEMEN IS SUPPORTED BY

