

# URGENT APPEAL FOR GOVERNMENT OF INDIA TO ACT NOW

**W**e have learnt from media reports and inmates that thousands of Asian and African migrant workers arrested in Saudi Arabia are sheltered in deportation centers in Riyadh and Jeddah in squalid conditions.

**B**y talking to the inmates, we have assessed that there are more than 10,000 Indian, African, Nepali, and Sri Lankan migrant workers, all together, left to rot in the two deportation centers.

**A**ccording to an Indian embassy note released on its official Twitter account on October 6 in Saudi Arabia, there are still 559 Indian inmates in the two deportation centers waiting to be repatriated. Their note reveals that some 1,500 were repatriated during the last few weeks. We have talked to the inmates currently in deportation centers and have understood that they have been denied sufficient food, drinking water, timely health access, legal access and speedy repatriation.

**W**e have learnt that there are even diabetic and cancer patients sheltered without any proper medication. The inmates in the Riyadh Iskan 2 deportation center in Al Kharj area have alleged that, even during the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak, violating all social distancing norms set by World Health Organisation, in a room which can accommodate only 80, some 250 have been housed.

**T**he videos shot inside the deportation center in Iskan 2 confirm that the inmates are even forced to sleep in front of latrines on the floor with unhygienic blankets.

The Indian inmates have alleged that many have spent more than six months already in the deportation centers with uncertainty on their return haunting them.

The Indian inmates who have returned to India during the last few weeks, have alleged that they were abused mentally and physically. They allege that the security officials have beaten them with iron rods without any reasons.

**A**n Indian inmate who had returned on September 23 to India had revealed to us that he was picked by the police despite being an engineer in the Kingdom for 24 years working with a multi-national company and despite having valid documents to stay and work in the Kingdom. He was denied access to justice and had to spend some four months in the deportation center.

**I**n November 2017, Saudi Arabia launched a campaign to detain foreigners found in

violation of existing labor, residency, or border security laws, including those without valid residency or work permits, or those found working for an employer other than their legal sponsor.

On September 21, 2019, authorities announced that the campaign had netted over 3.8 million arrests, including for over 3 million residency law violations and over 595,000 labor law violations.

The campaign had referred over 962,000 individuals for deportation. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) estimates as many as 500,000 Ethiopians were in Saudi Arabia when the deportation campaign began. About 260,000 Ethiopians, an average of 10,000 per month, were deported from Saudi Arabia to Ethiopia between May 2017 and March 2019, according to the IOM, and deportations have continued.

We strongly call upon the government of India to:

1. Immediately to take up the issue of Indians in detention and deportation centers in Saudi Arabia and for them to be treated in a humane in dignified manner.
2. Ensure that all in detention and deportation centers are given the opportunity to state why and what lead to their detention.
3. Ensure that no Indian worker is deported from Saudi Arabia who has grievance or dues owed.
4. Ensure that any deportation from Saudi Arabia follows the World Health Organization guidelines for repatriation.
5. Ensure that deported migrant workers upon arrival must be given the opportunity to inform relevant Indian authorities, including NHRC of India, of any grievances or injustices experienced in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

**We kindly request you to sign this petition and support in making an appeal to the Government of India for its immediate intervention to save the migrant workers in Saudi Arabia's detention camps and protect their rights.**

 **Click here to sign the petition.**

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfVs\\_V2BKpi4lpTRdVm16pDtdxF8GDtRQykyR5NzyF6sxyGdw/viewform?embedded=true](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfVs_V2BKpi4lpTRdVm16pDtdxF8GDtRQykyR5NzyF6sxyGdw/viewform?embedded=true)



Centre for Indian Migrants Studies, Sub Jail Road,  
Kochi- 683101 , [www.cimskerala.org](http://www.cimskerala.org)