

## HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

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[www.hrw.org](http://www.hrw.org)

March 27, 2018

Minister of Interior Ahmed bin Ahmed al-Maysari  
Ministry of Interior  
Republic of Yemen  
Aden, Yemen

## Re: Alleged Abusive Detention and Forced Return of Migrants, Asylum Seekers, and Refugees

Your Excellency,

We thank your government for its continued dialogue with Human Rights Watch on protecting human rights in Yemen.

We write to inquire regarding alleged arbitrary and abusive detention of migrants, asylum seekers, and refugees in and from areas of Yemen under government control.

Human Rights Watch has documented abuse and arbitrary detention of migrants, asylum seekers, and refugees—including Eritreans, Ethiopians, and Somalis—in the Buraika detention center in Aden. Human Rights Watch documented beatings and other forms of mistreatment, including of children, and of sexual assault, at the center.

Col. Khalid Al-Alwani, former police chief of Buraika, served as Director of the Department of Refugees Affairs and Migration under the Ministry of Interior until mid-March, according to interviews and media reports, but, despite being relieved of his position, remains in command of the center.

People detained in the center travelled to Yemen by sea, landing at various points along Yemen's coast; soldiers at checkpoints then arrested and coordinated with plainclothes men to transport them

to the center. Migrants reported that others detained in the center were forcibly deported under dangerous conditions and without being given an opportunity to seek protection or otherwise challenge their removal.

We seek further information on the above concerns, and kindly request a response by April 4, 2018 so that we may reflect the government's position in our upcoming reporting on these issues:

1. Can you please clarify the position of Colonel Alwani? Is he or was he the Director of the Department of Refugees Affairs and Migration under the Ministry of Interior? Or, does he hold another official position with the Yemeni government and, if so, what is that position, when was he appointed, and to whom does he report?
2. According to [media reports](#), the Minister of Interior recently ordered Alwani to shut down the center and resign from his position, but the center remains open. Could you comment on the accuracy of this report?
3. Does or did the Ministry of Interior provide any support—financial, logistical, or other—to the Buraika center, or to Alwani or the men under his command? If the government does provide support to the center or Alwani, please provide details on the type of support and when it began. Which other individuals or governments, if any, provide support to Alwani or the center?
4. Do detained migrants who may be facing deportation have the opportunity to make asylum claims or otherwise challenge their forced removal? Please describe deportation procedures in effect for people being forcibly removed from the Buraika center, including their opportunities to seek protection.
5. Have any investigations been undertaken into allegations of abuse, including cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment, torture, or sexual assault of migrants, asylum seekers, or refugees by the government? If so, please provide us the findings of these investigations and any government action taken in response.

As we have done in the past, we will endeavor to include your official full response in English and Arabic on our website.

Please do not hesitate to contact me at [REDACTED] should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Michael Page  
Deputy Director  
Middle East and North Africa  
Human Rights Watch

CC: Mohammed Asker  
Minister of Human Rights  
Ministry of Human Rights  
Aden, Yemen