

# Breakfast Break Requests

Regulated by design

Role	Domain	Scope	Status
Lead Product Designer	Ops Product · Workforce Management	Egypt · Delivery Associates & Pickers across multiple Fulfillment Points	In development · Progressive rollout

## Overview

At Breakfast, Delivery Associates and Pickers are the engine of every fulfillment point. But for a long time, breaks were completely unregulated. When a DA or Picker needed a break, they would go offline without any formal process — invisible to their coordinator until they came back. Coordinators had no visibility into who was on break, for how long, or why. The knock-on effect was significant. Auto-dispatching systems assumed everyone was available, SLAs were missed, and fulfillment points were chronically understaffed during untracked break periods. To compensate, Breakfast was hiring more DAs and Pickers than the workload actually required — paying for headcount to cover gaps that a structured system could have prevented. The business target was clear: increase DA and Picker utilization from 60% to 85%. This project was about building the system that would get them there.

## Research & Discovery

I led the research independently, conducting 1:1 information-gathering interviews with 3 coordinators and 3 inventory specialists — the two roles responsible for managing DAs and Pickers on the ground. What surprised me most was how little visibility these managers actually had. They knew breaks were happening, but they had no way of knowing who was on break, when it started, or when they would be back. The communication was entirely verbal — a DA would tell their coordinator they were stepping away, and that was it. No record, no tracking, no way to plan around it. This lack of visibility was the root cause of the underutilization problem. It wasn't that DAs and Pickers were taking excessive breaks. It was that the breaks were invisible to the system and to the people running the floor.

## Design Challenge

This was a systems design problem that had to work across multiple surfaces simultaneously — the coordinator dashboard, the Control Room order management system, the DA's Fleet app, and the Picker app — and every surface had its own constraints.

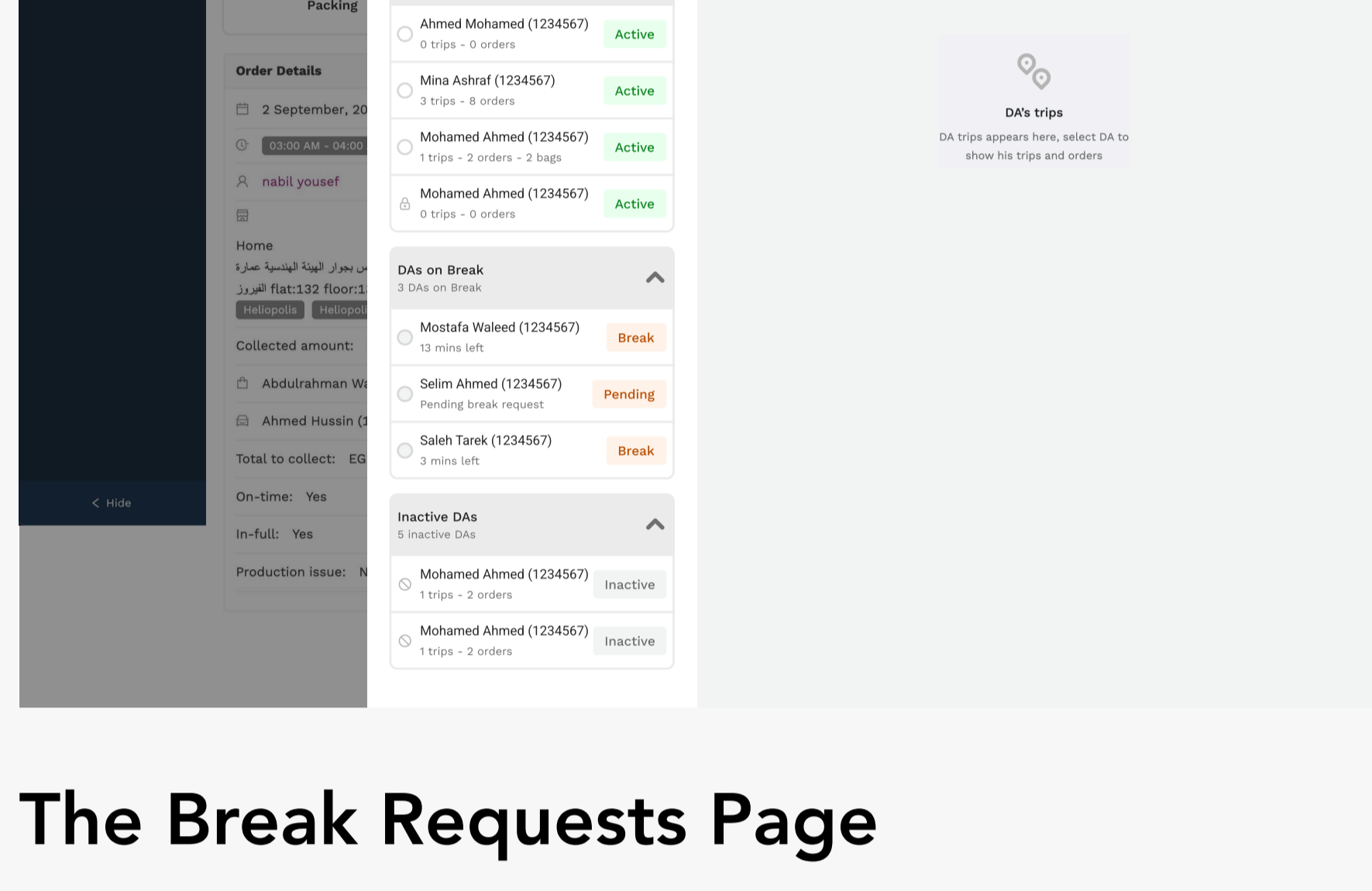
The biggest design challenge was the notification system. Coordinators needed to know the moment a break request came in, regardless of which tab or page they were on in the dashboard. The notification had to be persistent, visible, and actionable — without disrupting the existing workflow.

The other challenge was edge cases. What happens if a coordinator doesn't respond in time? What if a DA keeps requesting breaks after being rejected? What if a Picker's quota is exhausted? Every scenario needed a designed state, and none of them could be left to chance in a live operational environment.

## Solution

### Control Room

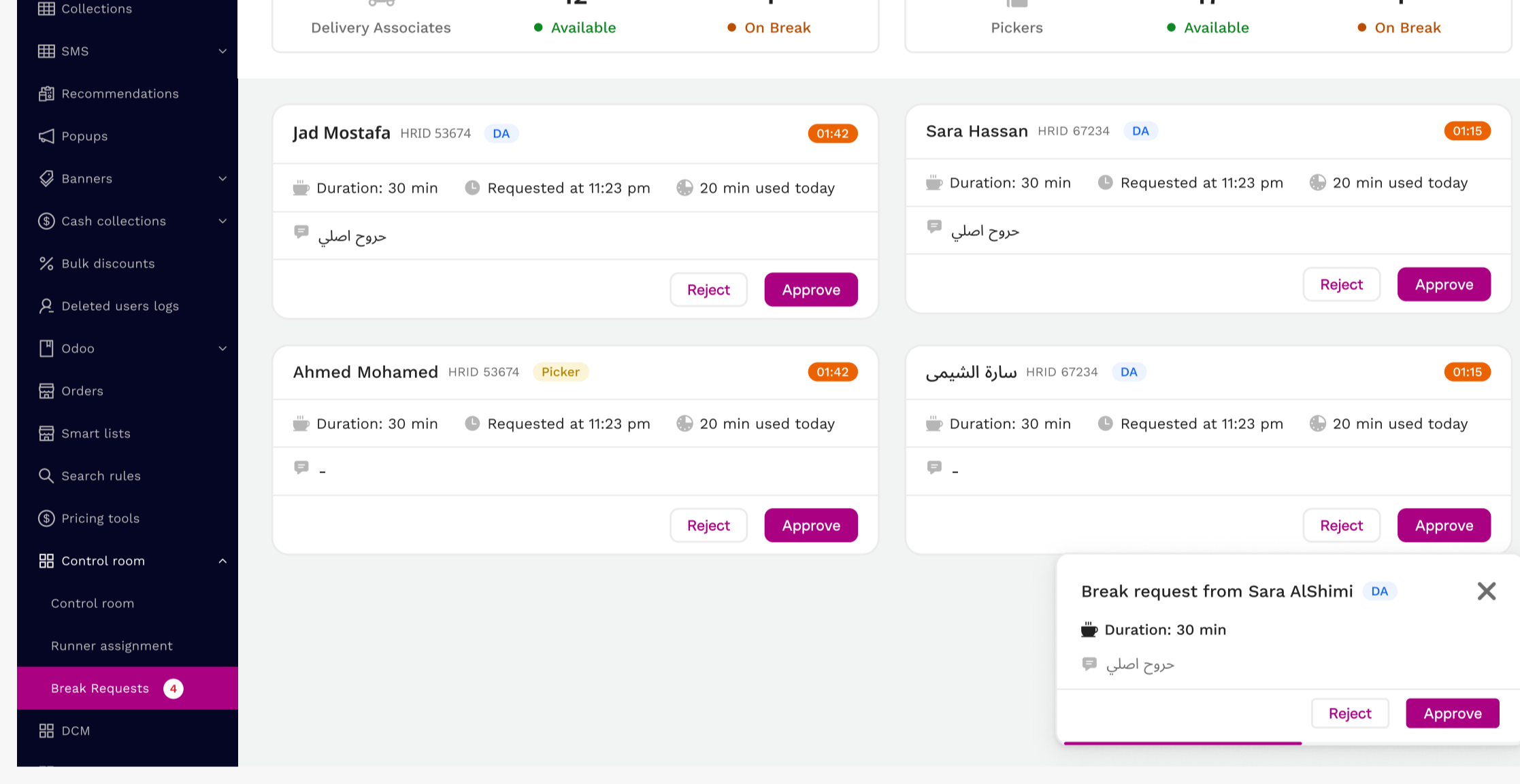
The Control Room is the central system where all orders are managed and DAs and Pickers are assigned to deliveries. It was critical that break status was reflected here too. I designed break state indicators within the Control Room so that coordinators can see at a glance which DAs and Pickers are currently on break, when their break ends, and that they are unavailable for order assignment during that time. This prevents the auto-dispatching system from assigning orders to someone who is mid-break — one of the core operational failures the project set out to fix.



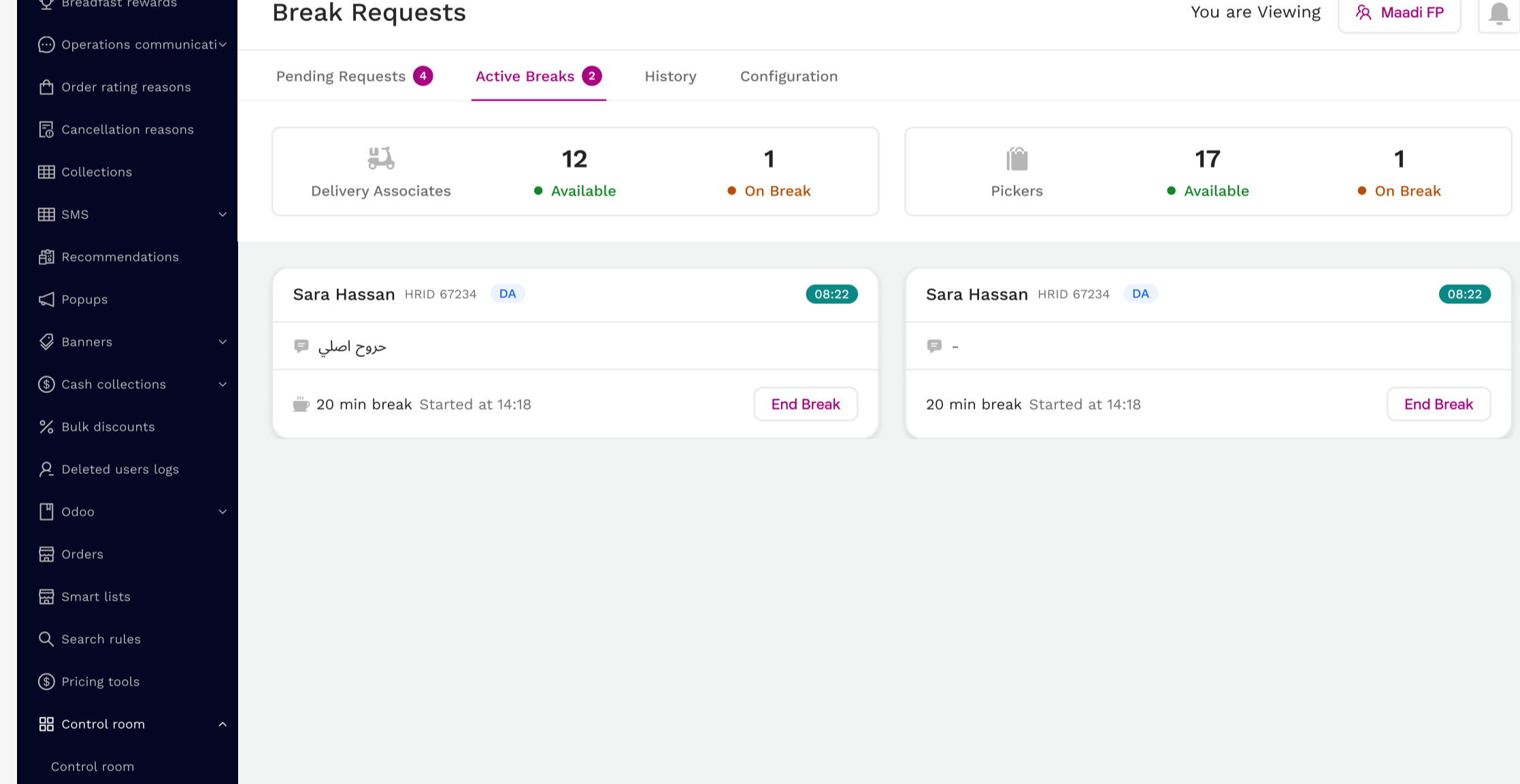
### The Break Requests Page

I designed a dedicated Break Requests page within the existing dashboard, accessible from the sidebar. The page gives coordinators complete visibility into everything break-related in one place, across four tabs:

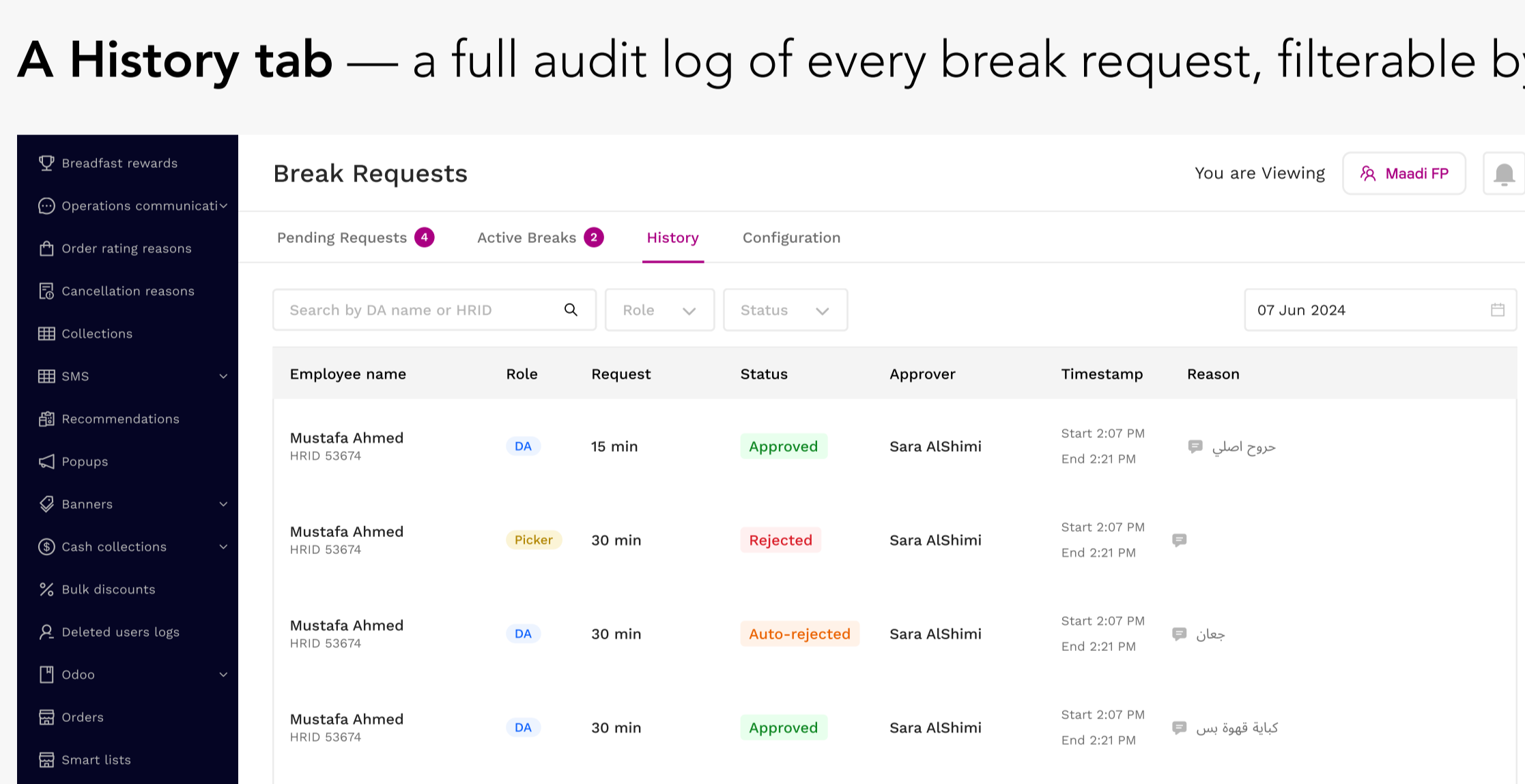
**A Pending Requests** tab showing all active requests as cards, each displaying the employee's name, role, requested duration, time of request, break quota used today, and an optional reason. Each card has a live countdown timer showing how long remains before the request auto-rejects. At the top of the page, two summary cards give coordinators an immediate read on floor availability — one for Delivery Associates and one for Pickers — showing total headcount, how many are available, and how many are currently on break.



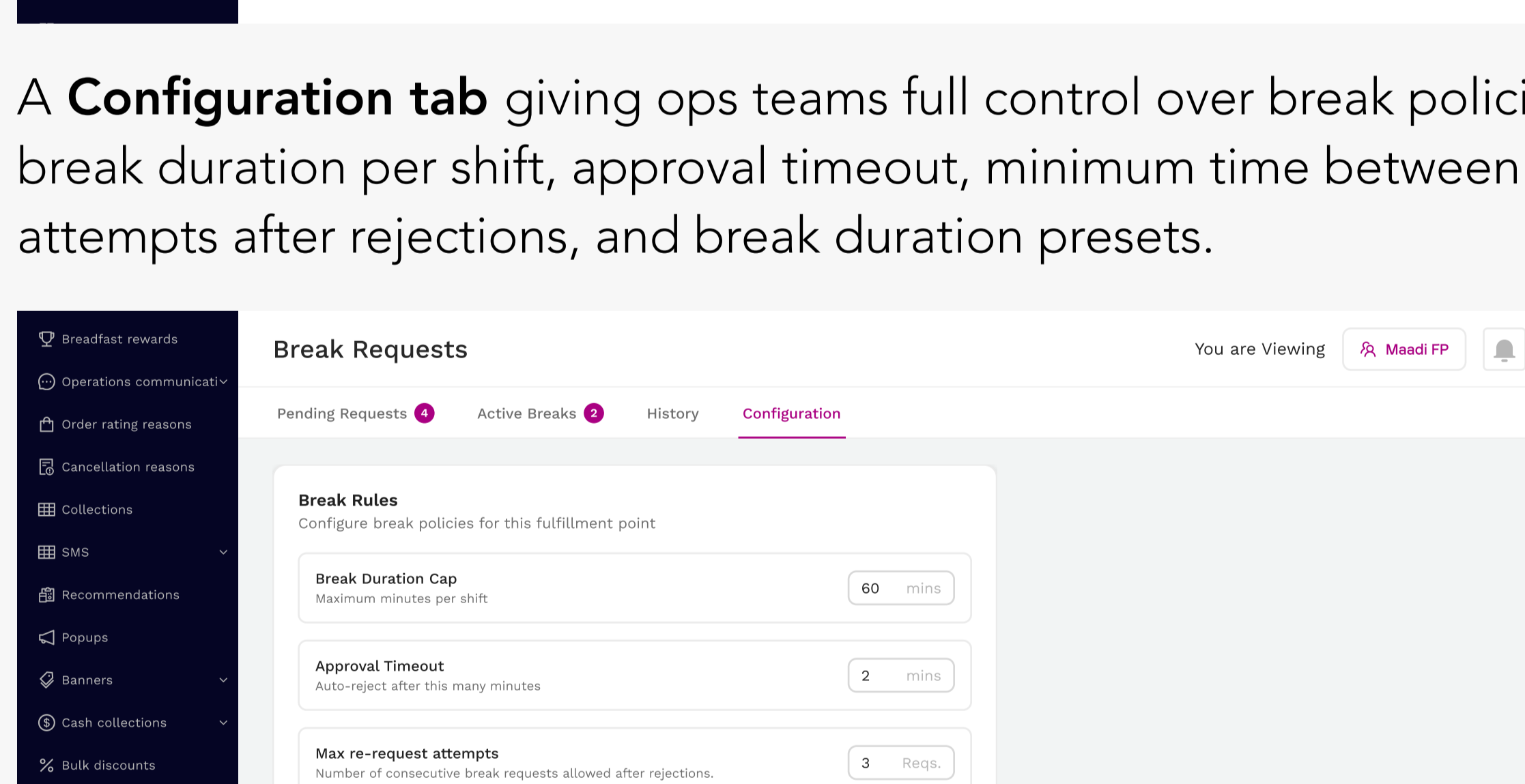
An **Active Breaks** tab showing everyone currently on break with a live countdown.



A **History** tab — a full audit log of every break request, filterable by role, status, and date.



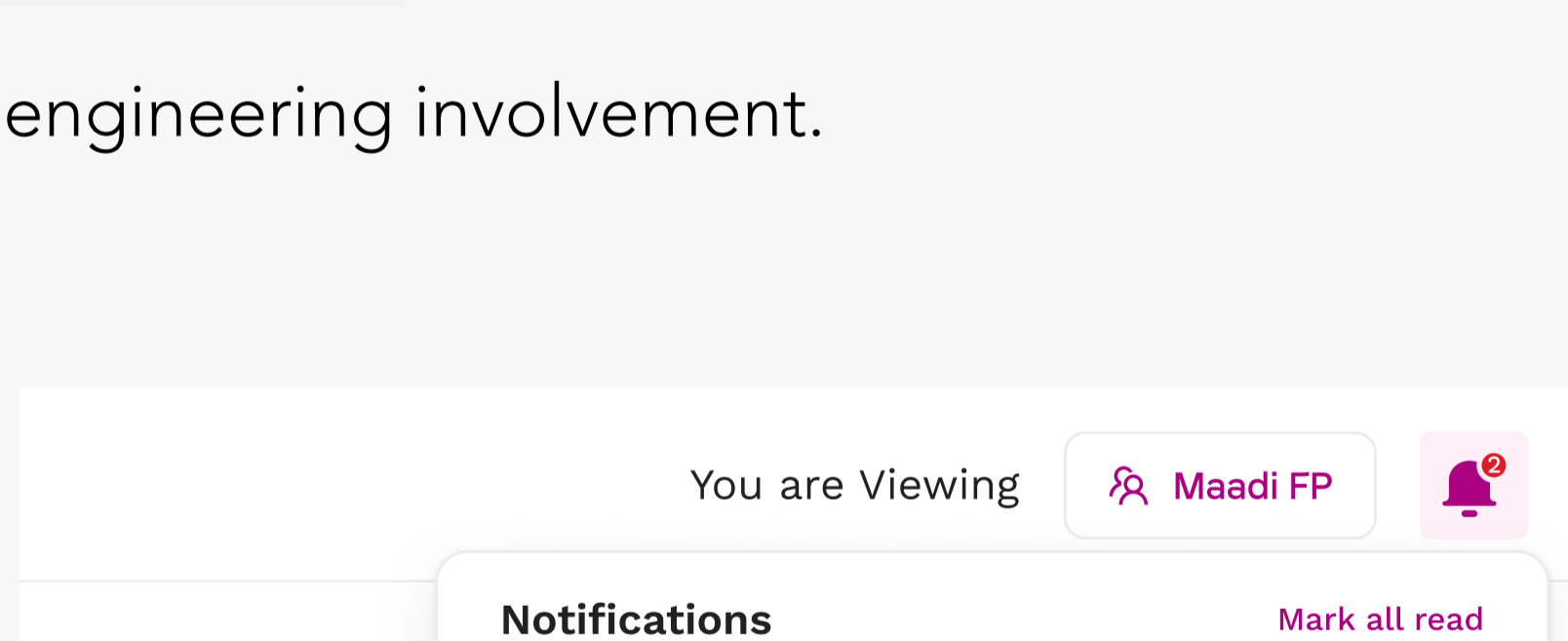
A **Configuration** tab giving ops teams full control over break policies per fulfillment point: maximum break duration per shift, approval timeout, minimum time between requests, maximum re-request attempts after rejections, and break time presets.



This makes the system adaptable without requiring any engineering involvement.

## The Notification System

Rather than placing notifications on a single page, I designed a persistent notification center in the top navigation bar — present across every page of the dashboard. This was a deliberate architectural decision: coordinators move between multiple dashboard tabs constantly, and a page-level notification would be invisible the moment they navigated away. The top bar placement ensures no request goes unnoticed regardless of where the coordinator is.

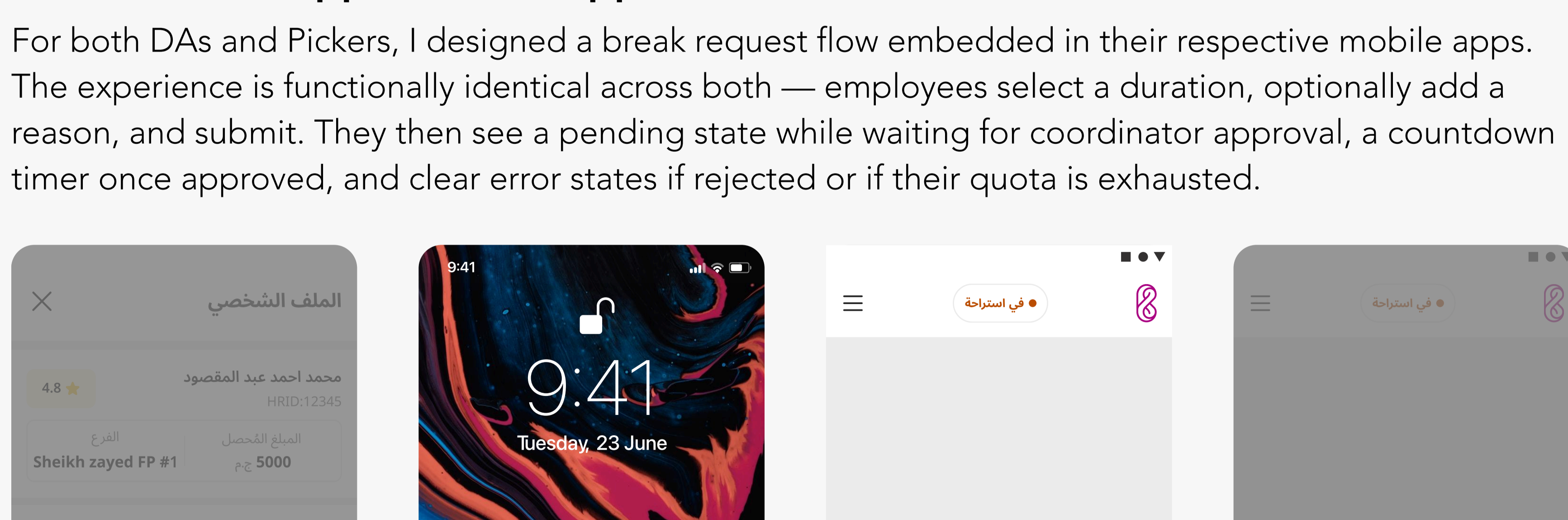


It also future-proofs the dashboard. By establishing a notification center in the global nav, any future feature that requires real-time alerts has a home already built for it.

The notification system includes a bell icon with a live badge count, a dropdown panel listing all pending requests with inline accept/reject actions, and a toast notification that fires when a new request comes in — complete with a countdown before auto-dismissal.

## The DA Fleet App & Picker App

For both DAs and Pickers, I designed a break request flow embedded in their respective mobile apps. The experience is functionally identical across both — employees select a duration, optionally add a reason, and submit. They then see a pending state while waiting for coordinator approval, a countdown timer once approved, and clear error states if rejected or if their quota is exhausted.



## Expected Impact

- Breakfast targets an increase in DA and Picker utilization from 60% to 85% — directly reducing the need to over-hire to compensate for untracked break time
- Coordinators gain real-time visibility into break activity across their entire floor for the first time
- The Control Room now reflects break status in real time, preventing order assignment to unavailable employees
- Break policy is fully configurable per fulfillment point — no engineering effort required to adjust rules
- A global notification center has been established in the dashboard, creating infrastructure for future real-time features
- Progressive rollout in progress — being tested across select fulfillment points before full deployment

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