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Briefing – Border Protection Taskforce

Assisted Voluntary Returns (AVR) of potential irregular immigrants (PIIs)

DIAC's engagement in Indonesia is focused on supporting whole-of-government efforts to combat people smuggling activity and irregular people movement, collaboration on immigration matters at the operational and technical level, and ongoing work to increase protection space in the region.

Australia supports Indonesia's efforts to prevent people smuggling, including by funding the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to assist PIIs who are likely to attempt, or who have attempted, unauthorised travel to Australia.

Regional cooperation arrangements (RCA) and IOM

s. 33(a)(iii)

Asylum seekers under IOM care who raise protection claims are referred to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) for assessment. Similar arrangements have been implemented in Papua New Guinea and East Timor and other regional countries when required.

s. 33(a)(iii)

Operation of the RCA

s. 47E(d)

IOM issues the PII with an IOM identification number and a basic necessities pack which includes clothes, linen, food, and hygiene products. IOM also

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informs PIIs of UNHCR and refers those who wish to raise protection claims to UNHCR.

s. 33(a)(iii)
[Redacted]

If a PII does wish to raise protection claims, UNHCR registers them as an asylum seeker. The asylum seeker is given a UNHCR letter of attestation and referred for refugee status determination (RSD) assessment.

Assisted Voluntary Returns

A total of 12,216 PIIs have been cared for under the RCA since its inception in December 1999 to the end of April 2012. Of these, 2,002 persons have been resettled to a third country as refugees and 2,478 persons have accepted AVR from Indonesia. This indicates a total 'lifetime trend' of 20.28% of migrants under RCA care that have opted to undertake AVR from Indonesia since December 1999.

The majority of the AVR caseload in Indonesia has consisted of Afghan, Iranian, Iraqi, Sri Lankan and Vietnamese nationals.

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)
[Redacted]

¹s. 47F(1)
[Redacted]

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1.5.1.3 Assisted Voluntary Returns (AVR)

The RCA enables IOM to arrange travel for irregular migrants who wish to return voluntarily to their country of origin under the Assisted Voluntary Return (AVR) programme. IOM Indonesia provides;

- a. Pre-departure assistance - counselling, medical assistance, transport assistance arrangements (including travel documentation), among others;
- b. Transportation assistance - departure assistance, escorts, pre-embarkation medical checks, medical escorts if needed, and other like services; and
- c. Post-arrival assistance - in close coordination with IOM offices in return countries, migrants reception, and health-related support. IOM Indonesia also provides reintegration grants to returning irregular migrants.

The provision of funding for AVRs allows irregular migrants a safe way to return to their country of origin in circumstances where the irregular migrant considers that their ability to secure resettlement is limited or impossible. s. 33(a)(iii)

Since January 2012, IOM has supported 3,199 assisted voluntary returns, as outlined below in Figure 3.

