

## QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

### ADDITIONAL BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 9 FEBRUARY 2010

#### IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

#### **(66) Program 2.1: Refugee and Humanitarian Assistance**

Senator Hanson-Young asked:

What support is Australia currently providing to Indonesia, Malaysia and other States in the Asia-Pacific to assist them to ensure effective protection of asylum seekers and refugees in their jurisdiction? Specifically;

- a) What is Australia doing to improve the living conditions for refugees and asylum seekers in the Asia-Pacific region?
- b) How is Australia increasing refugees' in the Asia-Pacific region access to durable solutions?

*Answer:*

- a) *What is Australia doing to improve the living conditions for refugees and asylum seekers in the Asia-Pacific region?*

The Australian Government assists displaced persons in the region through a number of programs.

Through DIAC's Displaced Persons Program (DPP), international and non-government organisations deliver humanitarian needs assistance to displaced persons and, where possible, assist them to attain durable solutions. These include voluntary sustainable return, local integration or resettlement.

In 2008-09, DPP projects assisted displaced persons in Malaysia (through UNHCR - see below), Indonesia (through UNHCR – see below) and Thailand, as well as various other locations globally. A range of new project proposals are also currently being considered for 2009-10.

#### *Indonesia*

Under the regional cooperation arrangements (RCA), DIAC supports the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to provide accommodation, food and medical attention for irregular migrants intercepted in Indonesia en route to Australia.

DIAC also supports Indonesian authorities to improve existing immigration detention facilities, staffing and operations. This has included the refurbishment of facilities at Tanjung Pinang and Kalideres, and training of detention centre staff. In 2009-10 DIAC is provided ongoing support in this area.

DIAC's assistance to UNHCR in Indonesia enhances their capacity to:

- provide regular counselling of asylum seekers and refugees on the refugee status determination (RSD) process, timeframes and possible resettlement outcomes; and
- organise activities for asylum seekers and refugees including: vocational training; language and computer classes; and information sessions on HIV/AIDS and sexual and gender based violence.

### *Malaysia*

DIAC supports UNHCR in Malaysia to:

- provide refugees and asylum-seekers with access to basic and general medical care; and
- support community empowerment and the development of sustainable livelihood opportunities.

*b) How is Australia increasing refugees' in the Asia-Pacific region access to durable solutions?*

In addition to the DPP as outlined in (a) above, DIAC also supports the delivery of protection enhancement assistance to high priority countries in the region. This includes building capacity to identify the protection needs of displaced persons and irregular migrants, make protection decisions and establish processes for reintegration or return solutions.

Support has also been provided under the RCA in a number of countries in the region, including Indonesia, East Timor and Papua New Guinea to fund voluntary returns of failed asylum seekers and other asylum seekers and refugees who choose to return home voluntarily.

DIAC assists UNHCR in the region to support capacity building activities in approximately twelve Pacific Island states. These initiatives are designed to assist local governments to develop procedures to make refugee status determinations, strengthen national asylum laws and identify solutions for displaced persons, including refugees.

### *Indonesia*

DIAC supports UNHCR in Indonesia to undertake asylum seeker registrations and RSD processes.

Under the RCA, DIAC assists IOM to undertake voluntary returns for failed asylum seekers and other asylum seekers and refugees who choose to return home voluntarily.

## *Malaysia*

DIAC supports UNHCR in Malaysia to enhance asylum seeker registration and RSD processes.