

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS
AUSTRALIAN CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION SERVICE

Question No. 19

Senator Humphries asked the following question at the hearing on 16 October 2012:

Senator HUMPHRIES: Just finally, then, is the service aware of any evidence, say, since the beginning of this calendar year, of boats having set out from Indonesia but not having reached Australia's waters or having failed to reach Australia's mainland?

Mr Pezzullo: Yes, we are aware of some cases that fit that description. In several of those cases, and I just want to answer this fairly carefully and will probably therefore decide to take the detail on notice, we hold grave fears for what has happened to those vessels.

Senator HUMPHRIES: How many vessels are we talking about?

Mr Pezzullo: They would be in the single digits, but what I would prefer to do is just very carefully work my way through with other agencies that assist us with this analysis and assessment, and give you a considered answer on notice.

Senator HUMPHRIES: All right, thank you.

The answer to the honourable senator's question is as follows:

The Australian Customs and Border Protection Service is aware of a eight asylum seeker vessels this calendar year that have reportedly set out from Indonesia bound for Australia, but failed to reach Australian waters or the mainland.

In five instances these vessels were intercepted or rescued by Indonesian authorities in or near Indonesian territorial waters shortly after their departure:

- **30 August 2012:** foundered vessel in Sunda Strait, west of Java. Reports indicate that the vessel had up to 150 people on board. 55 survivors, one deceased person recovered and up to 94 unaccounted for.
- **20 April 2012:** foundered vessel near Wonogoro, East Java. No loss of life.
- **4 April 2012:** foundered vessel 1 nautical mile off Cipatujah, Southern Java. No loss of life.
- **8 April 2012:** distressed vessel 10 nautical miles off West Java involving passengers being offloaded to *MV Hermia*. No loss of life.
- **12 April 2012:** distressed vessel near Sumbawa/Lombok, no loss of life.

Customs and Border Protection holds grave fears for those people on board an asylum seeker vessel that reportedly departed Indonesia in late-June 2012.

- **30 June 2012:** reports of a vessel with 67 people on board missing *en route* to Australia.

Customs and Border Protection is also aware of two vessels capsizing *en route* to Australia:

- **27 June 2012:** foundered vessel approximately 107 nautical miles north of Christmas Island. One deceased, up to three unaccounted for and 130 rescued.
- **21 June 2012:** foundered vessel north east of Christmas Island. 17 confirmed deceased, approximately 75 unaccounted for, 110 rescued.