

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES HEARING : 08 February 2016

IMMIGRATION AND BORDER PROTECTION PORTFOLIO

(AE16/049) - UNHCR Refugees Indonesia/Malaysia - Programme 2.4: Refugee and Humanitarian Assistance

Senator Hanson-Young, Sarah (L&CA 80) asked:

Senator HANSON-YOUNG: Is there still effectively a ban, which was how it was described, on taking UNHCR registered refugees who are residing in Indonesia?

Mr Pezzullo: Our preference is to take such persons from the Middle East and other places. Now that we have defeated the boats, the next pull factor becomes getting to Indonesia because there is another way to, if you like, queue yourself into Australia so the policy position remains one of assisting Indonesia. We work with Indonesian authorities. We work with the IOM to make sure that people in Indonesia are as comfortable as circumstances can be and that they are given durable options to apply for settlement places in the appropriate manner. But our focus at the moment is really to focus on refugees from the Middle East and elsewhere but not those who have travelled to Indonesia for the conscious purpose of getting on a boat to come to Australia, which is a path that is now blocked.

Senator HANSON-YOUNG: We have not resettled anybody since that statement was made?

Mr Pezzullo: I will need to take it on notice. There is a modest program. I just need to check the facts on notice. If there are any numbers at all, they would be minuscule.

Senator HANSON-YOUNG: If someone could check the figures over the dinner break, I would be really interested to know.

Mr Pezzullo: Our policy preference though is not to draw from the pool that is in Indonesia simply because it then becomes the new pathway to be pulled into Australia.

Senator HANSON-YOUNG: To be taken on notice perhaps over the dinner break, if I could have the figures on how many people have been resettled through a referral from UNHCR from both Malaysia and Indonesia in the last 12 months, I would appreciate that.

Mr Pezzullo: We will take that on notice. If we can answer it after dinner, we certainly well.

CHAIR: I think one of your officers might be heading towards a table with that information now.

Mr Pezzullo: We will see if they intend to continue on that path.

CHAIR: If they have got the information, we might as well get it now.

Mr Kukoc: The 2015-16 offshore program includes refugees in Indonesia who registered with the UN High Commission for Refugees prior to 1 July 2014.

Mr Pezzullo: You need to have registered by a particular date; is that correct?

Mr Kukoc: Yes, before 1 July 2014 and they will be included in the 2015-16 program.

Senator HANSON-YOUNG: How many are there?

Mr Pezzullo: If the data is not readily available, we can take it on notice.

Mr Kukoc: We can take the data notice given that it is a planning number. We can only advise on the visa grants until the end of December 2015. I need to get that data for you so I will take that question on notice, if you do not mind.

Answer:

In the 12 months between 1 February 2015 and 31 January 2016, a total of 1523 persons in Malaysia and Indonesia were granted visas in Australia's offshore Humanitarian Programme. This comprised of 1023 refugees and 500 persons proposed by relatives in Australia under the Special Humanitarian Programme (SHP).

Table: Visas granted to persons in Malaysia and Indonesia in the 12 months between 1 February 2015 – 31 January 2016 in the offshore Humanitarian Programme

	Visa Stream		
Locations	Refugee	SHP	Total visa grants
Malaysia	600	500	1100
Indonesia	423	-	423
Total visa grants	1023	500	1523

All grants out of Indonesia were to persons who registered with UNHCR before 1 July 2014.