

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES HEARING : 27 February 2017

IMMIGRATION AND BORDER PROTECTION PORTFOLIO

(AE17/048) - Number of people not returned on the basis of non-refoulement obligations - Operation Sovereign Borders

Senator McKim, Nick (L&CA 92) asked:

Senator McKIM: That is what I assumed, but I just wanted to clarify it. If Mr Manthorpe or Mr Mansfield have further information they can provide it. On the basis that that is correct, and that was my assumption, can you provide data to the committee about how many on-water claims for asylum have been conducted and what the results of those were, just purely in numerical terms?

Mr Manthorpe: I don't think I have data on that with me.

Mr Mansfield: No, we do not, but to add to the commissioner's remarks, the on-water assessment process is to confirm the circumstances of people and their reasons for seeking to enter Australia. That is the purpose. And to ensure that for people who are returned the department is confident they do not engage Australia's non-refoulement obligations.

Senator McKIM: How many people have not been returned on the basis that doing so might engage the non-refoulement obligations?

Mr Mansfield: We would have to take that on notice.

Senator McKIM: All right. To clarify, the questions I am asking are these. How many on-water assessments have been done—and perhaps if you have the numbers since 2013, since Operation Sovereign Borders started? And provide a breakdown annually, which I presume is possible. Also, how many people were not returned on the basis of the potential for engaging our non-refoulement obligations? Is it clear what I am asking for?

Mr Mansfield: Yes.

Answer:

There have been 740 people returned since the commencement of Operation Sovereign Borders on 18 September 2013 to 31 January 2017.

In November 2014, one person was transferred to a regional processing centre but they subsequently elected to return home. This is the only person who has not been returned directly from an on-water operation on the basis that further assessment of their claims were required.