

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES HEARING: 24 March 2017

IMMIGRATION AND BORDER PROTECTION PORTFOLIO

(AE17/250) - Turn-backs breakdown update - Operation Sovereign Borders

Senator Pratt, Louise (L&CA 38) asked:

Senator PRATT: I will put my questions on record. I would like to know when turn-backs took place, where they were intercepted, how many people were on board each vessel, how many children were on board each vessel, where the boats originated from, how many turn-backs involved transferring people onto new vessels and how many times Australia Border Force provided medical treatment to people on board those boats. I gather you would be making public interest immunity claims?

Mr Quaedvlieg: Just to clarify the time period of your question, are you asking those questions from the commencement of Operation Sovereign Borders to today? A lot of that information has already been provided either to the Senate or—

Senator PRATT: I understand that. It is really an update from when that information was last provided.

Mr Quaedvlieg: In that case, I would have pressed the PI claim.

CHAIR: This is been raised in this committee any number of times. Rulings have been made and they have been upheld in the Senate.

Senator PRATT: But I am sure, as Mr Pezzullo appreciates, the parliament understanding the so-called effectiveness of turn-backs is something that needs to be embraced and understood by the parliament in order that it remain a plank in our policy to prevent, for example, more people ending up in detention on Manus and Nauru, surely.

Mr Pezzullo: All I can do is make mention of your questions to the minister and it will be a matter for him to determine whether or not he wishes to provide any advice to this committee.

Answer:

Since the last Senate Estimates hearing in October 2016, there has been one people smuggling venture with a total of 25 persons on board intercepted en route to Australia.

All 25 individuals on board were returned to Sri Lanka.

Due to operational sensitivities, no further information will be provided.