

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

BUDGET ESTIMATES 2017

Australian Federal Police

Question No. BE17-165

Senator Pratt asked the following question on 05 June 2017:

The 8th IDC report indicates the AFP undertook 169 new investigations of trafficking and slavery-related matters in that year. It also reports that 38 individuals were referred onto the Support Program.

- 1) What happened to the other 131? Please account for this discrepancy (169 / only 38 referrals)
- 2) Were these cases or individuals?
- 3) Of those 131, how many:
 - a) were not referred onto the Support Program because they were unwilling to cooperate with law enforcement?
 - b) were young people impacted by forced marriage?
 - c) were any subject to removal by the DIBP?
 - d) were successfully linked to another service provider?

The 7th IDC report indicated the AFP received 119 referrals in the previous year and yet the same number (38) were referred onto the Support Program.

- 4) Can the AFP account for this trend?
- 5) If referrals to AFP are increasing, why are not the number of referrals to the Support Program increasing as well?

The response to the honourable Senator's question is as follows:

Q1) – Q3)

The 8th IDC report refers to 169 referrals in 2015-16. These referrals are not reflective of the number of ongoing investigations, confirmed cases of human trafficking or confirmed victims.

Of the 169 referrals, 69 were in relation to forced marriage. This included referrals of both young persons and adults in, or at risk of, forced marriage.

There are a variety of reasons as to why a person is not referred to the STPP, including but not limited to:

- A victim has not been identified.
- The victim does not wish to assist or cooperate with police, or proceed with a matter.
- The threshold for referral to the program is not met. (To be referred to STPP a victim must be identified and there exists reasonable grounds to suspect they have been subject to human trafficking.)

- Victim's reluctance to participate in the STPP during the initial phase of the investigation, or during or after the 45 day reflection period provided as part of the STPP.

The AFP is unable to provide any further statistical breakdown or comment on the 131 matters involving no referral to the STPP in the requested timeframe.

The AFP is unable to comment on statistics relating to removal. The Department of Immigration and Border Protection would be best placed to provide such advice.

Q4) – Q5)

The number of referrals has increased, specifically those relating to forced marriage (33 in 14/15 FY). The increase in referrals can be attributed, in part, to community engagement and education that is being undertaken in relation to human trafficking, specifically forced marriage.

With a number of the forced marriage referrals the AFP is able to undertake early intervention and provide education and support to families preventing or disrupting the offence from taking place.

Further, in some cases, the forced marriage is not imminent so actions are undertaken to protect the potential victim and educate and support the family. In these cases where there are no concerns for the safety of the victim, they remain within the family home or within the family circle and do not wish to be referred to the STPP.

Information is provided to all identified victims or suspected victims of support services that can assist. The AFP is not able to quantify how many of these went on to contact or seek support from the service provider outside of the STPP.

Each case of suspected human trafficking, including forced marriage, must be treated with fairness and respect to the wishes of the individual concerned. This includes the choices made by the victim to seek help and assistance.

Ongoing comparison of yearly trends, beyond a two year period, regarding both referrals and support services acceptance, is considered to be a more reliable indicator of effectiveness.