

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS
ATTORNEY-GENERAL'S PORTFOLIO

Group: 3

Program: Other Agency

Question No. SBE14/194

Senator Xenophon asked the following written question from the 20 November and 11 December 2014 hearings.

I have been informed that the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office has agreed to look at the feasibility of a British police inquiry into the Balibo Five murders. I understand in order to do this, they say they must first find out the basis on which the AFP reached their decision to discontinue the investigation.

1. What liaison has occurred between the Australian and British governments in order to provide the latter with a detailed explanation of the AFP's decision? What meetings/discussions have taken place?
2. Has this explanation been provided yet? If not, why not?
3. What is the AFP doing - Interpol warrants, watch lists, etc. - to ensure that the killers of Australian citizens and residents are brought to justice?

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

1. The AFP commenced an investigation into the deaths of the Balibo Five on 20 August 2009. The AFP undertook regular liaison with the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) during the course of this investigation.
2. The AFP has exhausted all inquiries in relation to this matter and will be taking no further action at this time. The AFP conveyed the reasons for this decision to the FCO in dialogue commencing October, 2014 with a more formal briefing to be arranged at a time convenient to the FCO.
3. Australia has appropriate arrangements in place to effectively respond to and address serious crimes. The AFP works collaboratively with foreign law enforcement partners, including Interpol, in an effort to ensure those that perpetrate serious harm against Australian citizens are brought to justice. This international cooperation is facilitated by AFP's International Network comprising AFP appointees in 29 countries.