

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS
AUSTRALIAN SECURITY INTELLIGENCE ORGANISATION

Question No. SBE15/114

Senator Collins asked the following question at the hearing on 20 October 2015:

1. How many Australians are currently fighting in the conflicts in Syria and Iraq, or are living in territory controlled by Daesh?
2. How many Australians have travelled to Syria and Iraq to participate in the conflict, or to live in territory controlled by Daesh, in the last 12 months? Is that figure higher than in the previous 12 months?
3. How many Australians have returned from fighting in Iraq and Syria?
4. How many Australians have been killed fighting in Iraq and Syria?

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

1. ASIO has identified around 110 Australians currently fighting or engaged with terrorist groups in Syria and Iraq.
2. To gauge the scale and trends of Australian involvement in the conflict zone, ASIO relies on the number of Australians offshore in relation to the conflict. In December 2014, ASIO was investigating around 70 offshore Australians. Currently ASIO is investigating around 110 offshore Australians. During the same period the number assessed to have been killed increased from 15 to 41.
3. Approximately 30 Australians have returned from the conflict.
4. ASIO assesses at least 41 – and possibly as many as 44 – Australians have been killed in Syria/Iraq as a result of their involvement in the conflict (ASIO is still seeking corroboration of 3 reported deaths).