

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 1 November 2005

IMMIGRATION AND MULTICULTURAL AND INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO

(106) Output 1.3: Enforcement of Immigration Law

Senator Kirk asked:

It now appears, according to the IDCU's final report of 10 January 2005, that Mrs Bakhityari was indeed an Afghani citizen. Is the Minister willing to provide this report for scrutiny?

Answer:

The Identity Checking Unit (IDCU) is an agency of the Afghan Government that provides identity verification services for the Afghan Government. The Afghan Embassy advises the department of its findings in relation to identity investigations, but does not provide it with the IDCU reports.

DIMIA has not received any formal notification from the Afghan Government that any of the Bakhtyari family are citizens of Afghanistan.

On 22 December 2004, the Afghan Embassy released a press release stating that the findings of Mrs Bakhtyari's identity were inconclusive and require further investigation. This was reiterated in a letter from the Afghan Ambassador to the Minister on 27 December 2004 (attached).

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Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
Canberra - Australia

The Hon. Amanda Vanstone,
Minister for Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Ref: OUT-1685
Date: 27 December 2004

Re: The Bakhtiyari Family

Dear Minister,

On 23 December 2004 we received from Boylan & Co lawyers, acting on behalf of Mr. Ali Bakhtiyari, certain documents for verification including copies of two Afghan National ID cards (Tazkara) each purportedly belonging to Mr. Ali Asghar Bakhtiyari and Mr. Mazhar Ali respectively.

I would like to inform that the subsequent investigation by the relevant agencies in Afghanistan has proved both the Afghan National ID cards to be counterfeit.

We have communicated the results of the investigation to the above lawyers with the request that they forward the original copies of these documents to us so that they would be destroyed.

As for the identity of Mrs. Roqia Bakhtiyari, our press release of 22 December 2004 still stands valid. We have investigated the validity of certain recent media reports apparently alleging that the Afghan authorities have discounted their previous statements.

We can assure that no relevant and responsible Afghan authority in Kabul has spoken on this issue to any media representative. The relevant Afghan authorities' views are consistent to their previous statements on this issue.

Yours sincerely,

Ambassador