

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 21 OCTOBER 2008

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

(78) Output 1.3: Border Security

Senator Fierravanti-Wells asked:

Further to an article in *The West Australian* of 18 August 2008 by Tiffany Laurie, is the Australia Government aware of the warnings from the UN agency that people smuggling out of Indonesia was returning to the high levels of 2000 and 2004? If so, what is the Government's response to such warnings?

Answer:

The Government is aware of the article in *The West Australian* and remains committed to strong border security arrangements. The Rudd Government has retained mandatory detention for unauthorised arrivals for the management of health, identity and security. It has also maintained an architecture of excision and non-statutory processing of people who arrive unauthorised at an excised offshore place. This processing will be done at Christmas Island.

The Rudd Government has reinvigorated efforts to work closely with partners in our region through a renewed commitment to regional forums and enhanced opportunities to build capacity in home and transit countries to prevent and respond to people smuggling, human trafficking and irregular migration.

The Government recently agreed to a series of new measures at a cost of \$44.1 million to further combat people smuggling in cooperation with regional partners. These include:

- an additional \$7.9 million to further develop the border movement alert system (CEKAL) in Indonesia to enable more reliable detection of people of concern and assist in preventing people smuggling and irregular migration;
- further funding and support for the Bali Process for people smuggling initiatives; and
- funding for additional analytical resources to focus on people smuggling and the movement of people in and towards South East Asia to better address the issue and its impact on Australia and the region.

The Australian Government also assists displaced persons by working with countries and international organisations to create protection spaces, identify durable solutions and address the potential for irregular migration outflows from vulnerable displaced populations.

People smuggling was a key point of discussion on both visits the Minister for Immigration and Citizenship has made to the region – the first in January 2008 to Indonesia and the second in August to Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and Singapore.

In November 2008 the Minister and His Excellency, Mr Andi Mattalatta, Minister of Law and Human Rights, Republic of Indonesia agreed to renew and intensify the cooperation between the two countries, in particular in relation to efforts to deter people smuggling. Also during November, Ministers meeting at the Australia-Indonesia Ministerial Forum reaffirmed Australia's and Indonesia's commitment to working together under the Lombok treaty in the area of law enforcement cooperation, in particular in relation to people smuggling and trafficking in persons.