

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 19 OCTOBER 2010

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

(54) Program 2.1: Refugee and Humanitarian Assistance

Senator Cash (L&CA 57) asked:

What guarantee, if any, has been given to the Romanian government about these individuals?

Answer:

The refugees were transferred to the Emergency Transit Centre in Romania under the terms and conditions governing the use of the facility set out in a tri-partite agreement between the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Government of Romania. Under the terms of the agreement, the UNHCR identifies refugees in need of resettlement and evacuation to the centre, and the Romanian Government gives approval.

The UNHCR and the Romanian Government agreed to the use of the centre for the refugees from the *Oceanic Viking* while resettlement countries completed their processes. The terms of the agreement specify a period of stay of six months in the centre and stay was approved for the refugees for six months which expired on 19 or 30 June 2009, according to their arrival date. The terms of the agreement provide for one extension of stay of six months which was sought and granted in July 2010.

Australia undertook to the UNHCR to consider for resettlement any refugees not accepted by countries of first referral, and that the terms and conditions governing use of the facility would be met.