

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

Question No. 51

Senator Brandis asked the following question at the hearing on 18 October 2011:

Senator BRANDIS: ... You may perhaps want to take this next question on notice. Are you aware of foreign visitors who entered Australia to participate in either of the recent two Hizb-ut-Tahrir conferences—that is, the July conference in Sydney and the October conference in Melbourne?

Mr Irvine: I will have to take that on notice.

Senator BRANDIS: Would you also take on notice how many there were and from which countries they came.

Mr Irvine: Yes.

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

ASIO is aware that Hizb ut-Tahrir held a conference on the subject of the Islamic Caliphate in Sydney in July 2011, and public seminars in Sydney and Melbourne in October 2011 on the subject of the ongoing conflict in Afghanistan. Media reporting at the time indicated a number of foreign visitors addressed the July 2011 conference.

Any persons applying for a visa to travel to, or remain in, Australia may have their application referred by DIAC to ASIO for a security assessment based on an intelligence-led, risk-managed referral framework. The details of that framework are classified for operational reasons.

Hizb ut-Tahrir is not proscribed as a terrorist organisation under Australian law. Consequently, an association with Hizb ut-Tahrir does not in itself provide grounds for restricting travel to Australia.

For operational reasons, ASIO is unable to comment on whether it has any knowledge from other sources regarding the conferences, including involvement of foreign visitors.