

JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON AUSTRALIA'S IMMIGRATION DETENTION NETWORK
AUSTRALIAN SECURITY INTELLIGENCE ORGANISATION

Mr Scott Morrison MP asked the following question at the hearing on 22 November 2011:

Mr Irvine: Yes, you are absolutely right: that was the basic decision. But, in practice, what we have done to assist DIAC is to put a number of people into DIAC to assist them to make that triage decision.

Mr MORRISON: When did that happen?

Mr Irvine: Quite early on. It has been in operation now for some months.

Mr MORRISON: How many people have you got in there?

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

ASIO provided a classified response to the Committee on 14 December 2011.

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Mr Scott Morrison MP asked the following question at the hearing on 22 November 2011:

Mr Irvine: Yes, and our initial assessment and decision was that the IMA cohort could be treated in the same way as other cohorts in respect of this initial triaging process. As things have developed, we have actually put people over there to help them do it.

Mr MORRISON: I am encouraged that you have, because it was a real concern that I had, that ASIO was not involved in that triaging process. But if I could just restate that for notice: when was the decision taken to actually do that? I would also like to know why that decision was taken, and was training provided to DIAC officers by ASIO for the implementation of that criteria, and, if so, what? Again, I am happy for you to take all of that on notice, unless you would like to comment now.

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

Prior to and following the commencement of the Framework in April 2011, ASIO provided Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) officers with training on the implementation of the security indicators. ASIO also established appropriate administrative procedures to enable DIAC to undertake this function as directed by Government in December 2010.

In May 2011, ASIO and DIAC agreed that it would be more appropriate for the triaging to be undertaken solely by ASIO.

Since June 2011, all triaging pursuant to the framework is undertaken by ASIO; this includes establishing the security criteria as well as implementing and applying the criteria for security assessment referral. However, DIAC may provide feedback on the security indicators within the Framework as required.

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Mr Scott Morrison MP asked the following question at the hearing on 22 November 2011:

Mr MORRISON: Would you be able to provide to the committee on notice the number of negative assessments you have made for non-IMA onshore asylum claimants?

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

ASIO has not issued any adverse security assessments for onshore Protection (Visa Class 866) applicants since January 2010.

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Mr Scott Morrison MP asked the following question at the hearing on 22 November 2011:

Mr MORRISON: You would also provide assessments for offshore applicants, for those who have been granted. Is that right?

Mr Irvine: Yes, we can, if they are referred to us.

Mr MORRISON: For those under the 200-class visas, so offshore applications through the UNHCR and the humanitarian program. I am happy for you to take it on notice.

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

ASIO has issued one adverse security assessment for an offshore Refugee (Visa Class 200) applicant since January 2010.

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Mr Scott Morrison MP asked the following question at the hearing on 22 November 2011:

Mr MORRISON: Were you aware that ASIO had to conduct many assessments in 2007 for IMAs?

Mr Irvine: I was not in ASIO at the time. I will have to get it.

CHAIR: They have been doing a lot of fishing.

Mr MORRISON: If ASIO can confirm that that would be helpful.

Mr Irvine: I can tell you that in 2008-09 we did 207.

Mr MORRISON: If there are figures for 2007-08 I would be interested.

Mr Irvine: I do not have those.

Mr MORRISON: If we could get that on notice and for 2006-07 I would be grateful.

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

In the 2006–07 financial year, ASIO issued approximately 817 security assessments for IMAs.

In the 2007–08 financial year, ASIO issued approximately 239 security assessments for IMAs.

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Senator Hanson-Young asked the following question at the hearing on 22 November 2011:

Senator HANSON-YOUNG: They would not be asking to put those people into community detention because they would have never been in detention in the first place if they were applying onshore. My point is: if somebody has arrived in Australia by plane and they then apply for a protection visa, are they subject to any type of ASIO security assessment?

Mr Irvine: If they are referred to us by immigration.

Senator HANSON-YOUNG: How often would that happen?

Mr Irvine: Off the top of my head I cannot tell you but I can probably find out.

CHAIR: You can take it on notice.

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

In the financial year 2009–10, 1415 onshore protection visa applicants were referred to ASIO for security assessments; and in financial year 2010–11, 799 onshore protection visa applicants were referred to ASIO for security assessment.

The majority of these arrived in Australia on legitimate visas and later claimed protection.

A total of 129 onshore protection visa applicants over both years were irregular air arrivals (IAAs).

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Senator Hanson-Young asked the following question at the hearing on 22 November 2011:

Senator HANSON-YOUNG: What we really need to know is the percentage of people who are given permanent visas, who are already living in the community and who are then referred by DIAC to you, to ASIO, for a thorough assessment.

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

ASIO does not hold information on the total number of Onshore Protection visa applicants.

Questions about the total number of Onshore Protection visa applicants and the proportion of such applicants who are referred for security assessment should be directed to the Department of Immigration and Citizenship.

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Senator Hanson-Young asked the following question at the hearing on 22 November 2011:

Mr Irvine: Clearly, if the government wanted us and Immigration actually referred cases to us for review, we would do so.

Senator HANSON-YOUNG: How often would the immigration department ask for cases to be reviewed?

Mr Irvine: I cannot give you the figures on that. I do not think it is particularly often. I just don't know.

Senator HANSON-YOUNG: Would you be able to take that on notice for a 12-month or two-year period?

Mr Irvine: Yes, I will take that on notice.

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

As at 22 November 2011, the Department of Immigration and Citizenship has requested ASIO review one adverse security assessment issued for an Irregular Maritime Arrival.

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Senator Hanson-Young asked the following question at the hearing on 22 November 2011:

Mr Irvine: There is a canard going around at the moment that we do security assessments on young children. We do not. There may, one day, be a time when Immigration will refer to us a teenager for special consideration, but we simply do not subject children under the age of, I think, 16 to a security assessment process.

Senator HANSON-YOUNG: So 16-year-old or 17-year-old unaccompanied minors could be referred to you?

Mr Irvine: They could be. I do not know how many have.

Senator HANSON-YOUNG: Could you take that on notice?

Mr Irvine: Yes.

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

The Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) refers visa applications to ASIO for security assessment based on ASIO's intelligence-led, risk-managed criteria. Generally minors are not referred for security assessment, but where there are security concerns, ASIO may request the referral of minors, whether accompanied or unaccompanied, for security assessment. DIAC may also initiate the referral of minors for security assessment where there are possible security indicators.

As at 22 November 2011, ASIO has not issued any adverse security assessments in relation to minors. Following DIAC request, ASIO has issued 304 security assessments in relation to unaccompanied minors aged between 16 and 18 years.

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Mr Robert Oakeshott MP asked the following question at the hearing on 22 November 2011:

Mr OAKESHOTT: You mentioned 'within current resources' several times in that exchange. In that model you just stepped us through, I would imagine that would require substantial resources at your end. Have you done any work to put a figure on that?

Mr Irvine: No, we have not.

Mr OAKESHOTT: Would you be able to ballpark it?

Mr Irvine: No, not off the top of my head. I could take it on notice. But it is one of those 'pieces of string' questions, in the sense that it is going to depend on the actual numbers arriving at any one time, the way in which they are processed and the rate at which they are processed by DIAC itself and so on. There is a whole series of factors involved.

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

ASIO provided a classified response to the Committee on 14 December 2011.

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Mr Scott Morrison MP asked the following question at the hearing on 22 November 2011:

Mr MORRISON: Could you also give us an idea of what the annual cost is of undertaking the assessments you currently undertake for the IMAs? Do you have a figure of what it is currently costing you each year on the current system you are using for IMAs.

Mr Irvine: That is going to be an interesting question. We will take it on notice.

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

ASIO provided a classified response to the Committee on 14 December 2011.