

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 22 May 2006

IMMIGRATION AND MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO

(204) Output 1.3: Enforcement of Immigration Law

Senator Kirk asked:

In the letter to Minister Vanstone dated 27 December 2004 the Afghan Ambassador said: "We have investigated the validity of certain media reports apparently alleging that the Afghan authorities have discounted their previous statements (regarding Roqia Bakhtiyari). 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".

As the details referred to are the fact that at least some of Roqia's relatives have claimed her as a resident of Jaghouri, was the journalist ever questioned regarding this factually false statement?

Answer:

The journalist who made the claims relating to the above statement was not questioned by the Department.

On 27 December 2004 the Afghan Ambassador wrote to the Minister to advise that the Afghan Government's view remained that as previously stated - that investigations into Mrs Bakhtiari's identity were inconclusive and required further investigation.

The Department notes that even if it were to be established that, Mrs Bakhtiari is an Afghan national, which has not been confirmed by the Government of Afghanistan, this does not change the fact that the family was found by the Government of Pakistan to be nationals of Pakistan.