

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS
AUSTRALIAN CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION SERVICE

Question No. 66

Senator Brandis asked the following question at the hearing on 26 May 2009:

Can the Committee be provided with a chronology of significant events leading up to, and following the SIEV 36 incident?

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

A chronology of significant operational events for SIEV 36 is shown at **Attachment A**.

ATTACHMENT A

Chronology of Operational Events - Suspect Irregular Entry Vessel 36

Wednesday 15 April 2009

- HMAS ALBANY intercepted and boarded SIEV 36 approximately 2 nautical miles south west of Ashmore Is. HMAS ALBANY reported 49 people, including two crew, were on board. The Navy Patrol Boat HMAS CHILDERS was on task in the Ashmore Island area. The Australian Customs Vessel ASHMORE GUARDIAN was also on station.
- HMAS ALBANY secured the vessel overnight.

Thursday 16 April 2009

- Early AM HMAS ALBANY handed over the vessel to HMAS CHILDERS.
- An explosion occurred on board the intercepted vessel at 08:15 (AEST). The vessel was not under tow at the time of the explosion.
- 9 Australian Defence Force (ADF) personnel were on board the intercepted vessel at the time of the explosion.
- HMAS CHILDERS and HMAS ALBANY recovered all survivors from the water. The search continued supported by personnel from ASHMORE GUARDIAN.
- Multiple casualties resulted from the explosion with three people deceased and two people reported missing.
- All ADF personnel were accounted for.
- Medical assistance was rendered by ADF and Customs and Border Protection personnel via triage to casualties.
- 5 ADF personnel presented with minor injuries and were administered first aid.
- The ADF Joint Task Force 639 Headquarters in Darwin, under the command of Commander Border Protection Command, had the lead responsibility for incident response and casualty evacuation control and coordination. Commander BPC was in command of the overall activity.
- The Patrol Boats proceeded to the Floating Production Storage and Offload (FPSO) ship, FRONT PUFFIN for casualty evacuation at about 10:30 (AEST).
- Air Force AP-3C Orion and Customs and Border Protection Service Dash 8 aircraft conducted a Search and Rescue operation for the two missing persons under the control of the Australian Maritime Safety Authority's Rescue Coordination Centre (RCC). ASHMORE GUARDIAN'S tender provided a surface search and response.
- HMAS CHILDERS and HMAS ALBANY arrived about 14:30 (AEST) and transferred the high priority casualties to FRONT PUFFIN for further triage and evacuation.
- HMAS CHILDERS remained alongside FRONT PUFFIN until all casualties had been evacuated from FRONT PUFFIN. HMAS ALBANY departed after disembarking her high priority casualties for high speed transit to Darwin with 13 people who were assessed as less seriously injured.
- At approximately 18:15 (AEST) the first helicopter with a doctor arrived at FRONT PUFFIN.
- Transfers of people commenced and were subsequently completed at approximately 02:00 (AEST) Friday 17 April 2009.
- At Truscott the casualties were again triaged and flown to specialist facilities in Darwin, Broome, Perth or Brisbane hospitals for medical assistance.

Friday 17 April 2009

- Transfers of people to Broome, Darwin or Perth occurred overnight Thursday 16 April. The first casualties were reported to have arrived at Darwin shortly after midnight (AEST).
- First casualties arrived at Perth 04:46 (AEST).
- Upon arrival in Darwin HMAS ALBANY was met by paramedical and other government agency staff to assist the casualty reception at 13.30 (AEST).
- HMAS CHILDERS arrived in Darwin at 16.30 (AEST).
- Bodies of the three deceased passengers were transferred to the custody of the NT Coroner to investigate the cause of death.

Details of movements from Truscott

By Air

- 8 people to Darwin
- 1 person to Broome who was subsequently transferred to Perth
- 22 people to Perth

Taken to Darwin by HMAS ALBANY

- 13 people assessed to be less seriously injured remained on HMAS ALBANY and were taken to Darwin