

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 27-28 May 2013

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

(BE13/0075) PROGRAM – 4.1: Visa Compliance and Status Resolution

Senator Rhiannon (L&CA 15-16) asked:

Senator RHIANNON: It is about people being returned to Sri Lanka. Does the department notify involuntary returnees of the possibility of making a complaint to the Australian High Commission of mistreatment—obviously if it occurs—by Sri Lankan officials when they return to Sri Lanka?

...

Senator RHIANNON: So, with regard to—sticking with the procedures—so you are saying they can make a complaint. So what is the procedure for them to make a complaint?

Mr Bowles: I will ask Ms Larkins to answer that.

Ms Larkins: Senator, we sometimes do have cases. I am aware of three cases- one from 2009 and two from 2002, where we were made aware of allegations of mistreatment on return. So people do raise issues with us, and when those issues are raised, the high commissioner in Sri Lanka investigates those claims. We have not found any of the three claims that have been made to be substantiated.

...

Ms Larkins: 2012, sorry

...

Ms Larkins: In some cases, the post does talk to the individual. So, in one of those cases, the post talked to the individual, who said they has suffered no harm upon return.

Senator RHIANNON: Did they talk to the individuals in all cases?

Ms Larkins: I think that is one of the options. I am not sure in all cases.

Senator RHIANNON: Could you take that on notice, to determine if the individuals were spoken to?

Ms Larkins: Yes.

Answer:

All individuals referred to above were contacted and spoken to by Department of Immigration and Citizenship staff.