

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS
AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE

Question No. 81

Senator Ludlam asked the following question at the hearing on 20 October 2008:

In relation to the Burmese regime:

- a) has the AFP provided counter-terrorism support or other kinds of support to the Burmese regime in the past
- b) what has been the nature of this support, and can you provide a breakdown of the costs of this support to the AFP?
- c) does the AFP currently provide counter-terrorism support or other forms of support to the Burmese regime? If not, when did these activities cease? If so, can you outline the nature of this support, its' budget impact, and its estimated future budget impact, and
- d) is this support under review in the light of the situation in Burma?

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

a) The Australian Federal Police (AFP) has not provided any kind of support to the Burmese regime. The AFP has not provided training to any Burmese military personnel or to any other Burmese intelligence agency.

Myanmar's police force is a civil police force and has been since the British annexed Burma in 1885. Following Burma's independence in 1948, it continued functioning largely based on the British policing model. It has been a member of INTERPOL since 1954. The MPF reports to the Minister for Home Affairs whereas the Military, including Military Police report to the Minister for Defence. The AFP does not engage with either the Military or Military Police.

The AFP has provided limited support to the Burmese police in the form of training assistance and police cooperation in the interests of combating transnational crime.

b) Training assistance to the Burmese Police has been in the form of:

- Training in Australia for five police officers from Burma in the last five years and sponsored limited attendance at workshops and conferences focussing on narcotics.
- Training was held in Canberra and at the Australian Institute of Police Management at Manly and was funded through the AFP Law Enforcement Cooperation Program. The focus of the training was on management and transnational crime, in particular narcotics.

- Similar training has taken place in Burma, Vietnam, Singapore, Thailand, Hong Kong, China, Malaysia, Korea, Philippines and Japan. Workshops, meetings, seminars and forums have focused on issues including: high tech crime investigations, intelligence, child sex tourism, transnational sexual exploitation, hazardous chemical investigation, money laundering and financial investigations, local precursor control and English language training.
- The Jakarta Centre for Law Enforcement Cooperation has also funded the attendance of 68 members of the Burmese Police Force on training courses since 2005.
- Forty of these officers attended the criminal intelligence training program which provides practitioner-level training designed to facilitate and support the investigation of criminal offences.
- Officers attending the Jakarta Centre for Law Enforcement Cooperation participated in courses that specifically addressed transnational crime issues such as narcotics, people trafficking, money-laundering, terrorism and criminal intelligence methodology, which have a direct impact on Australian national interests.
- The Jakarta Centre for Law Enforcement Cooperation provides training to law enforcement officers from all nations that are part of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and beyond. The Jakarta Centre for Law Enforcement Cooperation is based in Semarang, Indonesia. It is an initiative of the Australian and Indonesian Governments, established to improve the operational expertise of regional law enforcement agencies in dealing with transnational crime, in particular terrorism.
- The curricula of these workshops are in accordance with Commonwealth legislation. Australian policing practices and ethical standards which are compliant with international principles of human rights and ethical law enforcement conduct.
- The conduct of this training is consistent with the Australian government policy toward Burma of limited and targeted engagement with Burmese law enforcement when in the national interest.

Costs incurred relate to economy class air fares, standard accommodation and meals. An estimate of the total cost of this training is not available.

c) As above.

d) As above.