

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 17 OCTOBER 2011

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

(SE11/0222) Program 2.1: Border Management

Senator Hanson-Young asked:

Adverse security clearances: How many Sri Lankans have failed ASIO security checks and how many are awaiting the results of this process? What is the average waiting time for such checks to be completed? What are the main grounds for denial of a security clearance? What has happened to those who have not passed security clearances?

Answer:

Between 1 July 2009 and 30 September 2011, 45 Sri Lankan nationals were the subject of adverse security assessments by ASIO. This figure includes 12 Sri Lankan nationals who were on the Oceanic Viking (OV) in October 2009.

As at 30 September 2011, there were 266 irregular maritime arrivals (IMAs) who were Sri Lankan nationals awaiting the results of their security assessment.

Questions regarding the time it takes for security assessments to be completed should be addressed to ASIO.

Questions relating to grounds for adverse security assessments should be addressed to ASIO.

Where ASIO issues an adverse security assessment it advises the Department that an individual presents a direct or indirect risk to security and recommends that a visa not be granted.

Eight of the Sri Lankan nationals from the OV with an adverse security assessment did not enter Australia and were resettled in another country. The four Sri Lankan nationals from the OV who did enter Australia and the 33 Sri Lankan IMAs with adverse security assessments are in immigration detention. They will remain in immigration detention until they are able to be removed from Australia. The Government is pursuing options for the resettlement of these remaining individuals in third countries. Removal action will only take place where it would be consistent with Australia's international obligations.