

## ALLEGATIONS OF PAYMENTS TO SIEV CREWS

### CURRENT ISSUE

Media reporting has claimed that Australian officials paid thousands of dollars to the captain and crew of a people smuggling venture that was returned to Indonesia.

### KEY FACTS/KEY FIGURES

- Fairfax media reporting has quoted the Indonesian police chief on the island of Rote as saying six crew members aboard a recently returned venture to Indonesia had been paid US\$5000 each by Australian officials.
- The captain of the vessel advised the police chief that the money had been given by an ACBPS officer.
- It has been reported that three AFP officers would be visiting Rote this week, although the nature of their visit was not confirmed.
- When asked about this matter on 9 June 2015, the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection denied Australian officials had paid the crew of a boat to stay away from Australia.

### QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES

**Is the Department aware of these allegations, how has it investigated them, and has it established if they are accurate?**

- The Australian Government does not comment on or disclose operational details where this would prejudice the outcome of current or future operations.
- A range of information concerning operations is released by way of a monthly media statement and operational update fact sheet. This next release will occur in early July.

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OSB-1015

OPERATION SOVEREIGN BORDERS – JOINT AGENCY TASK FORCE

**ALLEGATIONS OF PAYMENTS TO SIEV CREWS**

**BACKGROUND AND CHRONOLOGY (NOT FOR PUBLIC RELEASE)**

- s33(a)(iii), s47E(d) [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- s47E(d) [REDACTED]
- s33(a)(iii), s47E(d) [REDACTED]

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## **ALLEGATIONS OF PAYMENTS TO SIEV CREW**

### **CURRENT ISSUE**

Media reporting has claimed that Australian officials paid thousands of dollars to the master and crew of a people smuggling venture that was returned to Indonesia.

### **KEY FACTS/KEY FIGURES**

- The Australian Government does not comment on or disclose operational details where this would prejudice the outcome of current or future operations.
- A range of information concerning operations is released by way of a monthly media statement and operational update fact sheet. This next release will occur in early July.
- The priority the Australian Government is, and always will be, the protection of life at sea.

### **QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES**

**If asked, has the Indonesian Government asked the Australian Government for an explanation of these allegations?**

- Australia continues to work closely with Indonesia to strengthen bilateral cooperation across the broad range of common interests and cooperation we share.
- Australia remains committed to working with Indonesia to improve our ability to address people smuggling and to respond to Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) issues in the region.

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- s47E(d) [REDACTED]
- s33(a)(iii), s47E(d) [REDACTED]
- Fairfax media reporting has quoted the Indonesian police chief on the island of Rote as saying six crew members onboard a vessel recently returned to Indonesia had been paid US\$5 000 each by Australian officials.
- The master of the vessel advised the police chief that the money had been provided by an ACBPS officer.
- Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi advised the media on 13 June 2015 that she had sought further information from Australia's Ambassador to Indonesia, Mr Paul Grigson.
- When asked about this matter on 9 June 2015, the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection denied Australian officials had paid the crew of a boat to stay away from Australia.
- When asked whether Australian authorities ever paid people to return asylum seekers, the Minister for Foreign Affairs replied: "No."
- On Friday 12 June 2015, the Prime Minister said "we don't comment on operational matters, but we are determined to ensure that illegal boats don't get to Australia. We will do whatever is reasonably necessary to protect our country from people smuggling and from the effects of this evil and damaging trade that costs lives"; "What we do is we stop the boats by hook or by crook because that's what we've got to do, and that's what we've successfully done and I just don't want to go into the details of how it's done because like a lot of things that law enforcement agencies have to do, it's necessary, it's difficult and at times I suppose it's dangerous work, but we deal with it and we've stopped the boats"; and "the short answer is the Australian Government will do whatever we need to do to keep this evil trade stopped."

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