



Indonesian police documents detail boat turnback

George Roberts
ABC News Online
17 June 2015



Mark Knight, 16 June 2015

Indonesian police have provided new details about how Australian authorities allegedly intercepted an asylum seeker boat, transferred the passengers onto two boats and sent them back to Indonesia.

One of the boats provided by Australia allegedly ran out of fuel and the asylum seekers had to climb onto the other boat which later crashed onto a reef.

The documents, provided to the ABC by local police deputy chief commissioner Ronalzie Agus, detailed the journey of the asylum seekers from West Java to the waters off East Timor and back to Indonesia.

In their investigation into the turn-back operation and the allegations that Australia paid money to the crew, Indonesian police have interviewed six witnesses

as well as the captain and crew of the boat. Some of the passengers have also reported that an Australian Customs official paid money to the crew. En route they ran aground on a reef and had to be rescued by local villagers.

Indonesia has reacted angrily to claims of payments. The head of Indonesia's military (TNI), General Moeldoko, has reportedly described the tactic as unethical. He also defended Indonesia's ability to adequately patrol its vast waterways.

"Our sea border is so long — 81,000 kilometres — with our current military power, with its insufficient navy capabilities ... some sectors were sometimes missed," he was reported as saying.

Immigration authorities are holding the 65 asylum seekers at a hotel in Kupang, West Timor.

WEB

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-06-17/indonesian-documents-detail-boat-turnback-and-alleged-payments/6551472>

ABOUT BUDDIES

The **Buddies Refugee Support Group** is a Sunshine Coast group which advocates for just and compassionate treatment of refugees, consistent with the human rights standards which Australia has developed and endorsed.

We support policies towards refugees and asylum seekers that reflect respect, decency and traditional

Australian generosity to those in need, while advancing Australia's international standing and national interests.

We are an independent community group and meet on the 4th Sunday of each month at 11am, 24 King Street Buderim.

Confidentiality

Your email address is completely confidential. The Bulletin is sent Bcc [Blind carbon copy] and no-one else sees your email address.

To contribute to Buddies

Buddies' fundraising contributes to refugee and asylum seeker support. You can direct debit to: **SUNCORP BANK**, BSB 484-799
ACCOUNT NO: 605927994
ACCOUNT NAME: BUDDIES REFUGEE SUPPORT GROUP

Or you can contribute to 'The Box' at our meetings and events. Your donations are much appreciated by those we help.



For your DIARY...

■ **Saturday 20 June, 11am**
World Refugee Day Rally Brisbane
(see below)

■ **Sunday 28 June, 11am**

Buddies meeting, 24 King St, Buderim.
Guest speaker: Deborah Rays
Chairperson: Brenda Smith brendaldryburgh@hotmail.com

■ **Sunday 19 – Friday 24 July**

Learn English Holiday program
kaylaszumer@gmail.com 5476 8910

■ **Sunday 26 July, 11am**

Buddies meeting, 24 King St, Buderim
Guest speaker: Chilemwa Harriet Nkowane-Poole
Solicitor and migration agent assisting Buddies



WORLD REFUGEE DAY RALLY

Saturday 20 June, 11am
King George Square, Brisbane

Speakers include:

- **Benedict Coyne:** Australian Lawyers for Human Rights
- **Senator Larissa Waters:** Greens senator for Queensland
- **George Goring:** former electrician at Nauru turned whistleblower
- A speaker from the **Burmese Rohingya community**

The government's tough deterrence policies have a human cost. The refusal of Tony Abbott to do anything to help the estimated 8000 Rohingya asylum seekers and others has taken Australia's harsh anti refugee policies to a new low. Children and others have been sexual and physically abused on Nauru. Thousands of lives are being slowly destroyed by the mental torture of endless detention.

Let them land let them stay • Humanitarian assistance for Rohingyas now • Settlement of refugees out of Indonesia now • Close Nauru and Manus hellholes now • End mandatory detention • No TPVs • Respect refugee rights!

WEB

<http://www.rac-qld.org/#!/campaigns/c1gbp>

WANTED

■ HOMESTAY HOSTS FOR NEXT LEARN ENGLISH HOLIDAY

Sunday 19 – Friday 24 July

If you would like to host an asylum seeker from Brisbane, please contact Kayla Szumer on kaylaszumer@gmail.com 5476 8910, 0427 380 235.

■ DRIVERS

Our Sri Lankan asylum seeker friend Anton, who is recovering from a heart attack and stroke (very likely a result of the ill treatment which forced him to flee his homeland) is receiving intensive therapy at the Maleny Hospital. A huge thank you goes out to the Buddies who have already taken a turn at getting Anton to and from his treatment sessions. The hospital have kindly extended him another week of treatment – from Monday 22 to Friday 26 June. The drop-off and collection times at the hospital are 8am and 3:45pm.

If you could do one of these ten trips, please contact Bronwyn Bell ASAP belz@squirrel.com.au 5445 3727.

■ COMPUTER

Nadir, our Hazara asylum seeker friend who is currently facing deportation in August, has been provided with furnished accommodation by the Jubilee Parish in Brisbane. He has received a television following our request last week, but if we can we would still like to find a computer for him. This will help fill the hours and distract his thoughts from the dire situation he finds himself in.

If anyone can help with this item, please contact Fergus Fitzgerald fergfitzgerald7@gmail.com 0458 880 572.

■ WORK OPPORTUNITY

Our Sri Lankan asylum seeker friend Abdul (who has lived in Coolum with his AHN hosts, Russell and Gayle for the last few years) has recently had his bridging visa extended for another twelve months and for the first time since his arrival in Australia has now been granted work rights.

Abdul was a practising accountant in Sri Lanka and hopes to be able to study and upgrade his qualifications here. Meanwhile he is prepared to work in any field and is actively seeking work wherever he can find it. He is young, fit and hardworking. He has very good English and has his own transport.

If you know of someone who might be able to assist Abdul in his quest for work, please contact him at ahhasbullah@yahoo.com 0405 030 825.

WANTED: VOLUNTEERS TO ANSWER WEBSITE PHONE QUERIES

Buddies has established a rotating roster to handle the phone queries which come in via our website. At any one time, the phone numbers of two members are listed on the website. No names are shown and numbers are rotated every six months. The quantity of calls varies but averages around one a week, so it's not an onerous task. We would like a few more people to join this roster.

If you'd be happy to take a turn, please contact Scott Grimmatt buddies@scottgrimmatt.id.au 5445 5497.

WANTED: MORE NAMES FOR OUR 'BUDDIES FOR BUDDIES' LIST

Buddies maintains a B4Bs spreadsheet which lists any Buddies members who are happy to have their contact details included. This greatly assists in facilitating easier communication between members. This list is opt-in only. It is different to the Buddies database where confidentiality of all details is strictly maintained. If you would like to be added to our B4Bs list, please contact Nettie Knox nb.knox1@bigpond.com 5445 8425.

ENGLISH CONVERSATION CLASSES

The Caloundra Community Centre in Queen St Caloundra offers an English conversation class on Thursdays, 9:30 – 11:00 am. Classes are free and are open to everyone regardless of their level of English, age or residential status.

For further information, please contact Tomas Passeggi admin@calcomm.org.au 5491 4000.

WEB

www.caloundracommunitycentre.org



PETITION TO SIGN: WADS OF CASH ON THE HIGH SEAS

**Sarah Hanson-Young
The Greens, 15 June 2016**

Tony Abbott has refused to deny serious allegations that \$30,000 of Australian taxpayer money was used to bribe people traffickers carrying a boat load of asylum seekers to turn around and go back to Indonesia.

Today, the Greens tabled an Order to Produce Documents to force the Government to reveal what really happened out on the high seas.

The Government is using weasel words to avoid the truth. First, Immigration Minister Dutton tells us that it didn't happen. Then, Abbott claims this is a secret 'on-water matter'. Today, Philip Ruddock says that bribing people smugglers is cheaper than detaining asylum seekers. So which one is it? It either happened or it didn't.

Will you sign this petition declaring that you don't want taxpayer money spent on bribing people smugglers?



WEB

http://www.sarahhansonyoung.com/bribes_and_boats?utm_campaign=bribes_boats&utm_medium=email&utm_source=sarahinthesenate





OPINION: Paying people smugglers: Is Abbott dealing with the devil?

Julian Burnside
The Drum, 12 June 2015

Part of the united rhetoric of the Coalition and Labor is to condemn people smugglers. Both sides of politics describe people smugglers as “evil” and as “the scum of the earth”. If that generalisation is correct it automatically consigns Oskar Schindler and Dietrich Bonhoeffer to the worst category of infamy.

If the Coalition are genuine in their judgment of people smugglers, it would be a very strange thing to do business with them. But Tony Abbott has tried repeatedly to duck the issue, appearing to concede that the Government had paid people smugglers to return their customers to Indonesia.

WEB
<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-06-12/burnside-paying-off-the-people-smugglers/6541888>

OPINION: A heavy price to (kind of) stop the boats

Ben Eltham, New Matilda, 16 May 2015

A recent letter to the editors of Melbourne’s Age said it best. “Each time Australian governments, of both stripes, have lowered the bar on treating asylum seekers as less than human, I have thought, ‘They can’t stoop any lower’,” wrote Chris McGregor of Cabarita. “Time after time I have been proven wrong.”

He was left at a loss when confronted with the latest gobsmacking revelations from the War on Boats: that Australian officials allegedly paid people smugglers to turn around a NZ-bound boatload of asylum seekers and sail it back towards the Indonesian coast.

WEB
<https://newmatilda.com/2015/06/16/heavy-price-kind-stop-boats>

Contributed by Diana Woolley

Manus Island: Australia’s Guantanamo?

John Donnison
BBC News Online, 12 June 2015

Head to Australia by boat. End up in a place like Papua New Guinea. That in essence is the message at the heart of Australia’s asylum seeker policy.

You might be seeking a new life in one of the world’s richest countries but you’ll wash up in one of the world’s poorest. PNG’s Manus Island is a place Australia does not want the world to see. Dubbed by some “the Guantanamo of the Pacific”, it is home to one of Australia’s off-shore detention centres, where around a thousand asylum seekers are locked up.

It is extremely difficult for journalists to get visas to go there. So we travelled undercover, posing as tourists. We managed to smuggle our camera past Australian officials and reach the camp.

WEB
http://www.bbc.com/news/world-australia-33113223?post_id=895463320524894_895463387191554



Byron welcomes refugees

Chris Dobney
Echo Netdaily, 12 June 2015

Byron Shire mayor Simon Richardson (centre) signed a Refugee Welcome Zone declaration during a recent council meeting. The signing took place in front of a group of former refugees and their supporters, who welcomed the ‘commitment in spirit’ while acknowledging more needed to be done to help settle refugees in the shire.

The commitment is to ‘welcoming refugees into our community, upholding the Human Rights of refugees, demonstrating compassion for refugees and enhancing cultural and religious diversity in our community.’

WEB
<http://www.echo.net.au/2015/06/byron-now-a-refugee-welcome-zone>

Contributed by Mike and Falu Eyre



Asylum seekers lose freedom of information rights

Michael Brull
New Matilda, 17 June 2015

New Matilda has gained access to an email sent by the immigration department, stripping asylum seekers of basic rights: the right to Freedom of Information (FOI) requests.

Previously everyone in Australia had the right to request documents relating to them. When making claims for asylum, asylum seekers who came by boat would send in FOI requests, seeking information about things like original entry interviews they did with the government. Now, not only is legal assistance not available, but the government has announced a new policy, whereby asylum seekers who are not currently allowed to make protection visa claims will not have their FOI requests processed and will have those requests returned to them.

WEB
<https://newmatilda.com/2015/06/17/asylum-seekers-lose-freedom-information-rights>



How do Aussie kids feel about asylum seekers?

Kate Aubusson
The Age, 16 June 2015

When 18 Australian children were asked how they felt about refugees, their answers blew "we stopped the boats" right out of the water.

During a week of immigration policy blowback that has seen our nation's leaders refuse-to-deny, refuse to engage and refuse to step out from behind their four-word slogans, this bunch of savvy six to 11-year-olds are showing them how powerful straight talking can be.

The video project 'How Do Australian Kids Feel About Refugees' sought to find out how children, from a range of social and cultural backgrounds, made sense of our immigration policy.

WEB
<http://www.theage.com.au/national/how-do-aussie-kids-feel-about-asylum-seekers-20150615-ghorc9.html>

SATIRE: PEOPLE SMUGGLING BEST WAY TO CRACK SYDNEY PROPERTY MARKET

The Shovel, 13 June 2015

As house prices become increasingly unaffordable, more Australians are saving for their first home deposit by taking a gap year as a people smuggler. "It's a guaranteed income, it's good money, and it's chance to travel too," Brendan Maroney said today. He's already saved \$120,000 by skipping four trips from Jakarta to just off the coast of Jakarta.

WEB
<http://www.theshovel.com.au/2015/06/13/people-smuggling-now-best-way-to-crack-sydney-property-market>



From left: Shahin Shafaei, Osamah Sami and Rain Fuller

TWO REFUGEES AND A BLONDE



Two refugees are using YouTube and humour to break down stereotypes by creating a 10 part web series called Two Refugees and a Blonde.

Actor and writer Osamah Sami and director Shahin Shafaei are both refugees. Another refugee, Behrouz Harvasi, also stars.

Sami was born to Iraqi parents who settled in Melbourne. Shafaei arrived from Iran via Indonesia in 2000. After spending nearly 22 months at the Curtin Immigration Detention Centre he began acting, writing and directing, with a one-man show which he took around the country.

WEB
<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-06-14/two-refugees-and-a-blonde-using-humour-to-break-down-stereotypes/6543102>

CARTOON: PAY THE BOATS: A CARTOON ABOUT NOTHING AT ALL

First dog on the Moon, 15 June 2015

Isn't it amazingly amazing that Tony Abbott once claimed paying people smugglers was aiding terrorism? And now this.

WEB
<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/jun/15/pay-the-boats-a-cartoon-about-nothing-at-all>



Minutes of Lobby Group Meeting, 11 June 2015



Chairperson: Audrey Raymond, note-taker: Penny Rivlin
Present: Audrey, Penny, Margaret Landbeck, Wendy Oakley, Bronwyn Bell
Apologies: Terry Boyce, Lindel Greggerly

Follow-up: from last meeting,

Audrey will try to contact community groups to talk about Buddies and the asylum seeker scene. Bronwyn suggested that the Buderim War Memorial group had a long list of local community groups (of which Buddies is one). Audrey is keen to address less sympathetic people and give them an awareness of the refugee situation, local and worldwide, the financial costs to taxpayers and the consequences to Australia's international reputation.

Promoting Buddies with a DVD would be great but costs are too great.

Radio promotion

An offer had come from Noosa Community Radio for Buddies to run a regular feature later this year. This would be a great opportunity to let locals know the effects of what Canberra is doing.

Sunshine Coast Daily

Bronwyn has monitored SCD daily re letters and articles that need a speedy response but group members agreed they needed to be a bit more proactive. Greater use could be made of Freddie Steen's letters which are always spot on and factually correct.

Letters

Rebecca Lim's (Romero Centre) list of questions that could and should be asked of all politicians was discussed. Bronwyn offered to write a letter relating to the question about the use of inadequate and punitive off-shore detention for one group of asylum seekers as a method of deterring new arrivals.

Audrey has written two letters for the Bulletin and next meeting – one highly topical for Peter Dutton, Malcolm Turnbull and Labor shadow cabinet MPs. It was agreed that Mal Brough should be kept in the loop about Buddies' opinions.

Margaret introduced a discussion on the worldwide refugee problem, and how all governments need to work together to accept a proportion of refugees. Australia cannot just say 'nope', it's a regional and world response that is needed. Being punitive could very likely cause radicalisation of the young. Refugees are actually a net benefit to Australia. Margaret will research the issue of regional and global co-operation.

Penny will write to Professor Gillian Trigg on behalf of Buddies to thank her for her fortitude and persistence in supporting human rights, despite the belittling comments coming from our elected representatives.



There IS no legal queue. And three other incorrect facts

Robert Tickner
The Guardian, 15 June 2015

Talking about refugees and asylum seekers in some circles can be a dubious endeavour. Before you know it, you're entangled in an angry debate.

In the lead up to Refugee Week, Australian Red Cross surveyed people to discover just what they know. In the process, we learnt the public is pretty misinformed on some basic facts.

Fact 1: It's not a crime to come to Australia by boat without a visa and ask for protection (Seven out of 10 people believe it is.

Fact 2: There's no official queue for people coming to Australia seeking a safe place to live (six out of 10 people think there is.)

Fact 3: Only 1% of the world's refugees is likely to be given safe haven in any given year (six in 10 people don't know that.

WEB

http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/jun/15/theres-no-legal-queue-and-three-other-facts-australians-get-wrong-about-asylum-seekers?CMP=ema_632

Contributed by Diana Woolley

Lindel may like to write about one of 'her' suggested topics when she returns - Doctors working in detention centres cannot comment on conditions and delayed treatment of patients.

Other business

Margaret's idea of being able to share a link about one or two articles from the Bulletin on Facebook was very timely. (Gen Y and 00s get their news almost solely from Facebook-type communications, not TV or newspapers. Apple is to offer a service to compete with Facebook for news.

The sad case of Nadir who faces deportation on August 6th was discussed. Peter Dutton has the power to prevent him being returned to his homeland, where he faces danger of death or injury. A GetUp petition and approaching TV/radio stations was suggested.

Next meeting:

Margaret's house - 28 Parklands Blvd, Caloundra - 3pm, Thursday 13 August