



AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSION ISLAMABAD

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Press Release

Second group sent to PNG under regional settlement arrangement

The Australian Department of Immigration and Citizenship today confirmed the successful transfer to Papua New Guinea of the second group of 39 asylum seekers subject to new regional settlement arrangement.

“This latest transfer to Manus Island sends the clearest possible message that coming to Australia by boat is not the way to gain Australian residency,” a departmental spokesman said.

Under the new arrangement signed with PNG, unauthorised arrivals will be sent to PNG for assessment and if found to be refugees, will be settled there.

“People found not to be refugees may be returned to their home country or a country where they had a right of residence, or held in a transit facility,” the spokesman said.

The charter flight, with the group of 39 Iranian men, escorted by the Australian Federal Police, DIAC staff, interpreters and medical staff, departed Christmas Island late yesterday.

The group landed in Manus Province today where they will be accommodated while their asylum claims are processed by the PNG Government.

“The transfer should leave no doubt that Australia intends to stick by its commitment that, as of July 19, no matter where an asylum seeker arrives in Australia by boat, they won’t be settled in Australia,” the spokesman said.

There is no cap on the number of people who can be transferred to PNG and transfers will continue on a regular basis. Women, children and unaccompanied minors will be transferred in due course as appropriate arrangements are made.

Australia will work with PNG to expand the Manus Island regional processing centre, as well as explore the construction of other regional processing centres in PNG.

“If people are paying thousands and thousands of dollars to a people smuggler, they are buying a ticket to a country other than Australia,” the spokesman added.

The latest transfer follows the successful transfer of 40 people on 1 August, who were the first group of people who had arrived by boat in Australia without a visa and had been transferred to Papua New Guinea for processing of their claims to asylum.

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