



AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSION ISLAMABAD

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Press Release

Seventh group sent to PNG under Regional Settlement Arrangement

The Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) today confirmed the transfer to Papua New Guinea of a seventh group of 40 asylum seekers subject to the new regional settlement arrangement (RSA).

Under the new arrangement signed with PNG on July 19, unauthorised arrivals are 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,” a DIAC spokesman said.

The charter flight, with the group of 40 single adult men – consisting of 38 Iranians and two Iraqis – escorted by the Australian Federal Police, DIAC staff, interpreters and medical staff, departed Christmas Island about 11pm last night.

The group landed in Manus Province at about 7.15am where they will be accommodated while their asylum claims are processed by the PNG Government.

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 is working with PNG to expand the Manus Island regional processing centre, as well as exploring 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.

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