
About Australia's Asylum Seekers

At present, the largest groups of asylum seekers in Australia are **Hazaras** and **Tamils**. Both are minorities in their home countries. Both are victims of "ethnic cleansing" or genocide.

Hazaras live mainly in Afghanistan and Pakistan. They are persecuted by terrorist groups such as the Taliban and their allies. Hazaras differ in both ethnicity and religion from these groups. The Taliban and their allies oppress and kill Hazaras because they see them as enemies, inferior outsiders and heretics.

Tamils come mostly from Sri Lanka where they are an ethnic minority with a history of fighting for autonomy. For a long time the government of Sri Lanka has impoverished, tortured and killed Tamils. The Australian government claims that this persecution has stopped, but the claim is not credible.

An "Illegals" Q&A

Q Are asylum seekers arriving by boat 'illegal'?

A No

Q Are they breaking any international law?

A No

Q Are they breaking any Australian law?

A No. **Australia has signed up to international law that allows asylum seekers to come.**

See The 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (the Geneva Convention)

Q Why do so many politicians call asylum seekers arriving by boat 'illegal'?

A We can't find any good reason. We think it is because **it makes the asylum seekers sound scary, like criminals.**

Q Why do politicians want to make asylum seekers sound scary?

A **Ask them.** It might have to do with votes.



Who Seek Asylum In Australia?



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Find out more about us and how you can help at:

basp.org.au/be-involved/

About our Border Protection

The present Government is accused by the Opposition of failing to protect Australia's borders.

There is no evidence for this. The evidence actually suggests that Australia protects its long sea borders very well.

Most people who come to Australia by sea are found before they reach land and are put in detention centres. So far over 90% of them have been accepted as refugees. Recognised refugees stay, the others are sent back.

This is not a failure of border security. The accusation is a scare tactic trying to suggest that asylum seekers are a menace.



Mind Your Language

Asylum seekers

Asylum seekers are people who arrive in a country seeking protection from danger ("asylum"). They ask to be accepted as refugees because their lives are threatened. Between 2007 and 2011 about 40,000 asylum seekers came to Australia.

Boat people

Boat people are refugees who have left a country by sea. In Australia we first called the Vietnamese 'boat people' after 1975 when they fled in small boats after the conquest of South Vietnam by North Vietnam.

Refugee

Refugees are people forced to leave their country in order to escape war or persecution. For those same reasons, they cannot return.

Economic refugee

This somewhat derogatory term is used to describe people claiming to be refugees not because they are persecuted, but because they want to "better" themselves financially. Those who use it are often attempting to make people's asylum claims seem self-serving and less worthy of our attention.

What Needs to be Done?

We want Australia to be a country where human rights prevail. This means everyone seeking asylum knows they will be given a prompt and fair hearing.

So what can you do to help?

Stay Informed

There are plenty of information sources available. The BASP website—basp.org.au—not only provides information but also links to many other useful sites.

Advocate for Asylum Seekers

Write a letter to your local MP, the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition or the Immigration Minister. Tell them you expect your government to treat asylum seekers with humanity and respect. You can find ways to reach your MP, along with some letter ideas, on the BASP website.

