



Australian Government
**Department of Immigration
and Border Protection**

Operation Sovereign Borders

Fact sheet

The Australian Government has tough border protection controls to protect its borders and combat people smuggling.

What is Operation Sovereign Borders?

Operation Sovereign Borders is the Australian Government's military-led border security initiative to stop the boats, prevent people from risking their lives at sea, and preserve the integrity of Australia's migration program.

If you get on a boat without a visa you will not end up in Australia.

Australia has committed to resettling 12,000 refugees displaced by the conflict in Syria and Iraq. Does this mean the Australian Government policy is softening?

No. The Australian Government announcement to resettle refugees fleeing the conflict in Syria and Iraq has no impact on Australia's policy to stop people attempting to travel to Australia illegally by boat.

The additional humanitarian places are for refugees currently located in Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey who are registered with the UNHCR. These places will not be provided to anyone arriving in Australia illegally by boat.

Australia remains committed to protecting its borders and will continue to stop anyone who attempts to come illegally by boat - regardless of where they are from.

Australia has a new Prime Minister. What does this mean for those who travel to Australia by boat without a visa?

Australia's change of Prime Minister does not change Australia's policy to safely turn back boats or transfer people to other countries for processing and resettlement.

Any people smuggling boat attempting to enter Australian waters, or travel to New Zealand through Australian waters, will be detected, intercepted and safely removed.

The Prime Minister stated there will be no resettlement of the people on Manus (Papua New Guinea) and Nauru in Australia – they will never come to Australia.

[I have heard that boats are still successfully arriving in Australia. Is this true?](#)

No. Do not believe the lies of people smugglers. Only one boat arrived in Australia in 2014, and every person on board that vessel was transferred to the country of Nauru for processing.

[What changes have been made to resettlement from Indonesia?](#)

The Australian Government has changed its rules for refugee resettlement from Indonesia.

If you travel to Indonesia to register with UNHCR you will not be considered for resettlement in Australia.

The rules apply to everyone. There are no exceptions.

[What if I was already registered with UNHCR in Indonesia before 1 July 2014?](#)

Australia will continue to resettle some refugees who registered with UNHCR in Indonesia before 1 July 2014.

However, there will not be as many places allocated—this means the waiting period in Indonesia to be resettled in Australia will be much longer.

[I have heard that Australia only turns back boats to Indonesia. Is this true?](#)

No. It does not matter which country people are from, which route they take, or which country they depart from, there are two outcomes for people who travel illegally by boat to Australia:

- they will be intercepted and safely removed from Australian waters; or
- they will be sent to another country for regional processing.

[What if my relatives are already in Australia? Is it any different if my relatives already have a visa or are Australian citizens?](#)

It does not make a difference if you already have family in Australia. The rules apply to everyone who tries to come to Australia illegally by boat.

[The people smugglers told me that I would be eligible to settle in Australia.](#)

Do not believe the lies of people smugglers. These criminals will steal your money and place your life and the lives of your family at risk - for nothing.

You risk losing everything, including your life and the lives of your family if you come to Australia by boat without a visa.

[What will happen if illegal maritime arrivals make it to the Australian mainland without being intercepted?](#)

Australia's tough border protection measures mean that boats will not make it to the mainland without being intercepted.

If people try to come to Australia illegally by boat, there is no way they will ever make Australia home. The way to Australia is closed.



Does the policy apply to women, children and unaccompanied minors?

Yes. The rules apply to everyone: families, children, unaccompanied children, educated and skilled - there are no exceptions.