



**Bali Process Ad Hoc Group
Technical Experts Working Group on Irregular Movements
Kuala Lumpur 11-14 June 2012**

BALI PROCESS AD HOC GROUP

**FOURTH TECHNICAL EXPERTS GROUP ON IRREGULAR MOVEMENTS
KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA, 11-14 JUNE 2012**

CO-CHAIRS' STATEMENT

1. The Fourth Meeting of the Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime (Bali Process) Ad Hoc Group (AHG) Technical Experts Working Group on Irregular Movements was held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia from 11-14 June 2012. The meeting was co-chaired by Malaysia and Australia. The meeting was attended by representatives of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Australia, Peoples Republic of Bangladesh, Malaysia, Maldives, Republic of the Union of Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Kingdom of Thailand, United States of America, and Vietnam as well as representatives from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM). Representatives from Canada, Hong Kong and the United Kingdom also attended the meeting.
2. The meeting focussed on irregular movements across land, riverine and air borders and associated challenges faced by members.

Proceedings

3. The meeting was opened by Y. Bhg Dato' Alwi Bin Hj Ibrahim, Senior Deputy Secretary General, Ministry of Home Affairs and Ms Jane Duke, the acting Australian High Commissioner to Malaysia. The meeting was co-chaired by Muhd. Khair Razman Mohamed Annuar, Under Secretary, International Division, Ministry of Home Affairs and Mr Bill Pettitt, Principal Intelligence Advisor, Australian Department of Immigration and Citizenship.
4. Dato' Alwi warmly welcomed members to Malaysia and to the meeting. He urged members to galvanise efforts in addressing the negative consequences of irregular movements in order to reduce security threats to our borders. Dato' Alwi highlighted the Bali Process' landmark consensus last year for members to share the burden of managing irregular movements in the Asia Pacific region by endorsing the Regional Cooperation Framework. Dato' Alwi hoped that the Regional Support Office will come to fruition and realise our aspirations to collectively address this issue in a holistic manner.



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5. Ms Duke reinforced Dato' Alwi's sentiments and commented that regional and international partners need to find ways to detect the criminal networks that underpin people smuggling, human trafficking and terrorism in order to develop credible, effective solutions for those who are vulnerable. Ms Duke emphasised that whether by land, sea or air, irregular movements remains a genuine threat to our borders. The technical experts working group on irregular movements is one means to collectively develop workable solutions for the region.
6. Co-chairs welcomed Hong Kong as special guest to this AHG meeting.

Key Theme

7. The main focus of the meeting was to explore irregular people movements in air, land, riverine and seaports environments. The Co-chairs provided an overview of irregular people movements in this region and noted that people smuggling, human trafficking or terrorist-related movements, impact every Bali Process member. It was highlighted that criminal networks actively seek to exploit weaknesses in immigration borders or by-pass them altogether to move their clients or victims. It was stressed that criminal networks have become highly sophisticated in their ability to quickly change their modus operandi to counter disruption efforts.
8. The Co-chairs commented on the importance of sharing information and immigration intelligence to identify and disrupt irregular movements including the need for a central data repository to better analyse and detect organised immigration fraud and irregular movement trends. Transnational criminal activity, including narcotics trafficking, is a key feature of people smuggling and human trafficking networks operating in the region.
9. The Co-chairs elaborated on the challenges faced by some member countries due to their extended and in many cases porous land and riverine borders. The importance of improved visa integrity processes and increase training of border staff was highlighted. It was also noted that members could seek to work more effectively with airlines, utilising the provision of the ICAO convention and existing enforcement regimes to encourage more cooperation in addressing irregular movement flows.
10. The meeting was also an opportunity to discuss the proposed Regional Training Program. The proposal was an outcome of the Third meeting of the Technical Experts Working Group on Irregular Movements held in Negombo, Sri Lanka on 14-16 November 2011.



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Country Presentations – Irregular movements across land and riverine environments

11. Country presentations were divided into two themes. On day one the workshop focussed on irregular movements across land and riverine borders. The country briefs from Canada, Myanmar, Malaysia, Thailand, the United States of America and Vietnam highlighted the porous nature of often remote and extended land and riverine borders and the difficulties of applying appropriate measures to combat irregular movements along the entirety of the border. The briefs reported on the activities at key crossing points and in many cases highlighted the challenges faced in managing high volumes of daily traffic.
12. The briefings also highlighted the effectiveness of bilateral integrated border management initiatives. In addition the briefs noted the benefits derived from more open immigration information and intelligence exchanges which facilitated the effective use of resources. This has often resulted in improvements in detecting irregular movements and effective targeting of cross-border operations.
13. The United States brief in particular highlighted the difficulties of managing multiple land borders and the intense resourcing required at high risk locations.
14. The Thai and Malaysian briefs emphasised the advantages of joint border arrangements. This included the necessity for effective joint agency coordination with customs, police and the military due to shared border management responsibilities.
15. Myanmar highlighted the difficulties of managing extended and extremely remote land borders. Myanmar also briefed on their extensive efforts at several key locations in Thailand to support their nationals who are working in Thailand. Myanmar is endeavouring to provide their nationals with temporary passports and coordinate visa and other arrangements with the Thai authorities.
16. Vietnam reported on the split responsibility for management of its borders between Border Guard Command, Ministry of Defense, having responsibility for the land and sea borders while the Immigration Department, Ministry for Public Security (MPS) have responsibility for airports. However MPS have overall responsibility for managing immigration issues.
17. The briefs emphasised the importance of sharing immigration related information and intelligence and focussed on challenges that have arisen due to limited resources. The current global economic crisis highlights the need to develop smart ways of operating with less resources, including the advantages of developing joint integrated border management.



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18. It was acknowledged that within the irregular movement flows seen in the region there may be asylum seekers and refugees needing international protection. Border management processes needed to include mechanisms that enabled the identification and referral of smuggled persons and trafficking victims in accordance with international, regional and national legal standards and principles.

Country Presentations – Irregular movements in the air environment

19. Briefings focussing on air environment by Australia, the Maldives and Sri Lanka emphasised the importance of increased immigration information and intelligence sharing and the need for joint cooperation at airports. The advantages of multilayered approaches to immigration border management were emphasised by Australia. It was also noted that Sri Lanka was seeking to implement a similar approach around their newly introduced electronic travel authorisation using elements of the advanced passenger processing concept.
20. Some member states including the Maldives have economies based on tourism and any measures implemented to make borders more secure must not unnecessarily impede the facilitation of genuine travellers. To this end threat and risk analysis is essential to effectively target high risk travel and ensure low risk travellers are facilitated.

Regional Training Program

21. Delegates moved into two breakout groups to consider the proposed Regional Training Program. It was noted that there was a lack of clarity and detail in the current proposal to enable clear decisions to be made. In general, delegates expressed that training efforts should concentrate on technical and operational capabilities.
22. The workshop participants agreed that Australia and the Maldives will develop a comprehensive questionnaire to survey individual country training needs, their training capacities and identify relevant expertise that could be drawn upon to facilitate a regional training program.



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23. The questionnaire will be distributed to members in July for their consideration and be asked to provide a response by August 2012. The analysis of the completed questionnaire will inform the direction and scope of the training proposal and provide a way forward. It is envisaged that a working group of interested members will convene in September 2012 to discuss the training program.
24. It was also noted UNHCR's offer to participate as a facilitator in an expert capacity in training activities in relation to refugee protection in the context of mixed migration movements.

Regional Immigration Liaison Officer Network Reports

25. Participants again recognised the value of the Regional Immigration Liaison Officer Network (RILON) as a forum for sharing information on irregular movements in major hub locations in the region. Participants welcomed the special presentation on the successful implementation of RILON in Colombo, Sri Lanka.
26. Colombo RILON provided an overview of the establishment and progress of their group, including strategies for overcoming challenges surrounding information sharing and limited resources. It was noted that RILONs should be based around a consideration of local factors and be flexible in terms of structures and member participation. Colombo RILON reported that major successes have included increased coordination to combat irregular movements and improve the integrity of visa processing by members states. Moving forward the Colombo RILON will focus on visa integrity training for local staff, airport interdiction exercises and promotion of regular migration.
27. Maldives highlighted the need for greater emphasis by RILON groups to be placed on the sharing of timely information and intelligence to disrupt irregular movements.
28. Australia updated members on the upcoming inaugural meeting of the Kuala Lumpur RILON meeting to be held on 15 June 2012.

Hong Kong Special Presentation

29. The Hong Kong SAR brief highlighted a range of activities to detect and address irregular movements at their international airport and the associated ferry network servicing the airport from multiple locations including Macau and mainland China.



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30. The briefing also emphasised the high importance placed on establishing strong relationships with diplomatic missions and Airline Liaison Officer (ALO) networks which operate at Hong Kong International Airport. As an example of this cooperation, Hong Kong provided an overview of Operation Sky League. This series of operations has occurred annually for the past three years and has targeted irregular movements at both the airport and associated ferry terminals. During these operations officers, including the ALO networks, have targeted persons moving irregularly and their associated facilitators.
31. The briefing highlighted the commitment that Hong Kong has made to distributing timely information and intelligence reports to other agencies and their international partners to warn them of potential irregular movements. These efforts by Hong Kong SAR have highlighted the positive outcomes that can be achieved by having established networks for immigration information and intelligence sharing. The meeting welcomed the presentation and there were important lessons that could be shared and disseminated to other members.

IOM Special Presentation and update on the Bali Process Secure Website

32. Participants welcomed IOM's progress report on the establishment of the Bali Process secure portal for effective exchange of data (SPEED). The portal is expected to be operational within a month. The presentation highlighted the benefits of members actively contributing information on a timely basis for sharing via the website. It was noted that information is only stored on the website after being approved by the authorising officer from each respective Bali Process member states, regions and international organisations. There is a requirement to have a platform to discuss issues and develop guidelines for future development of the website. The AHG Technical Working Group on Irregular Movements is an appropriate group to undertake this activity.
33. IOM also reported on the Document Examination Support Center (DESC) which is a centre that can support front line officers in their decision making processes on questionable travel documents. DESC is a one stop shop for verification of documents, cross checking and identifying trends. It was also highlighted that DESC will have the provision to create and disseminate document alerts for participating countries.



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Recommendations

1. Members agreed that Australia and the Maldives will develop a comprehensive questionnaire to survey training needs and current training capacities in members states.
2. Members agreed to establish a working group of relevant immigration training experts to further explore possible training modules and curriculum based around the detailed survey questionnaire.
3. Members agreed that the AHG Technical Experts Working Group would be the appropriate group to discuss future issues and policy matters including proposed guidelines on the content to be included in the Bali Process secure web portal.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Technical Experts Working Group on Irregular Movements will be held in six months time. A location for the meeting will be canvassed in the coming months.

Conclusions

Co-chairs expressed appreciation to the IOM, the Ministry of Home Affairs, Malaysia and the Australian High Commission in Kuala Lumpur for their assistance in the logistical and secretariat arrangements.

The Co-chairs and members expressed its appreciation to the Government of Malaysia for its generosity and hospitality in hosting the Fourth Meeting of AHG Technical Experts Working Group on Irregular Movements.

Australia and Malaysia (Co-chairs)
Bali Process Ad Hoc Group
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Kuala Lumpur, 14 June 2012