

Media backgrounder – The Aceng

A group of asylum seekers on a boat called the Aceng were intercepted at sea by the HMAS Warramunga on 8 September 2001, and then taken to Nauru by the HMAS Manoora along with people from the Tampa. UNHCR agreed to process this caseload alongside people from the Tampa, at the request of the Nauruan Government. 228 asylum seekers (201 Iraqis and 27 Palestinians) became part of the UNHCR's caseload on Nauru.

Aceng caseload – where are they now?

228 people from the Aceng became part of UNHCR's caseload on Nauru.

Of these 228:

- 27 Palestinians were recognised as refugees and resettled to Australia (13), New Zealand (10), Norway (2) and Sweden (2)
- 4 Iraqis returned voluntarily, following rejection of their refugee claims.
- 173 Iraqis (+ one new born) were resettled following acceptance as refugees or through family reunion cases of accepted refugees, to:
 - New Zealand (48)
 - Sweden (8)
 - Australia (103)
 - Denmark (6)
 - Canada (9)
- 4 Iraqis (a family with a very ill mother) were brought to Australia on a temporary safe haven visa in early August 2004. This family was one of a number of 'humanitarian cases' raised with DIMIA by UNHCR.
- 11 Iraqis were subsequently recognised as refugees and accepted into Australia in December 2004, following a review of their cases by the Australian Government in the light of new information from Iraq.
- 1 case is pending from the December 2004 review.
- 4 cases were reviewed by Australia in December 2004, but found not to be in need of international protection, and another 4 cases elected not to have their cases reviewed.
- This leaves 9 Iraqi asylum-seekers from the Aceng on Nauru, including one whose case is still pending.*

**While these people have been found not to be 'Convention refugees', UNHCR has asked that they not be forcibly returned given the generalised situation of insecurity and instability in Iraq. We have asked that the Australian Government give them a form of 'complementary protection' (ie. a temporary leave of stay outside of detention) until such time that they can return in safety and dignity to Iraq. We have also asked that such 'complementary protection' be given to other failed Iraqi asylum seekers on Nauru and in detention in mainland Australia.*