

PETITION

We call for a judicial inquiry to investigate the sinking of SIEV-X

TO THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT AND MEMBERS OF THE SENATE

The petition of certain residents of Australia draws to the attention of the Senate:

That on Friday 19 October 2001, a grossly overcrowded boat, known as SIEV-X, carrying approximately 397 asylum seekers sank in international waters between fifty and sixty-five nautical miles south of Java, in an area that was at the time under intense surveillance by the Australian Defence Forces as part of Operation Relex; with the loss of approximately 353 lives; and that Australian authorities were aware of the departure of SIEV-X from Sumatra on 18 October, and yet there was no attempt by the Australian Defence Forces or Coastwatch to locate or intercept this boat, with a view to ensuring the safety of the people on board;

That during 2001, the Australian Federal Police conducted a secret People Smuggling Disruption Program in Indonesia, in cooperation with selected elements of the Indonesian Police Force and various other individuals; and that an Indonesian-based informant of the Australian Federal Police, Kevin John Enniss, has claimed to have sabotaged and sunk boats carrying asylum-seekers;

That there is a growing belief in the community that the Australian government and/or its agents deliberately neglected to ensure the safety of the lives of the asylum-seekers on board SIEV-X, and may even have been in some way responsible for the sinking of the boat as a deterrent against unauthorised asylum-seekers attempting to come to Australia by boat from Indonesia

Your petitioners therefore ask the Parliament to urgently pass a motion calling on the Prime Minister to establish an independent judicial inquiry with full powers to subpoena witnesses to investigate all the circumstances surrounding the disruption, departure and sinking of the asylum seeker boat known as SIEV-X, and all activities of the Australian Government, its servants, agents and collaborators in regard to SIEV-X, including:

1. All surveillance activities conducted by Coastwatch and the Australian Defence Forces in the area between Christmas Island and Indonesia; and all decisions regarding interception or non-interception of asylum-seeker boats and rescue or non-rescue of asylum seekers during the period of Operation Relex;
2. All activities by the Australian Federal Police and its partners, agents and informants to disrupt people smuggling in and from Indonesia;
3. All information reaching the People Smuggling Taskforce in the Prime Minister's Department and the DIMIA/AFP People Smuggling Strike Team, and all decisions made and actions taken by the members of those bodies;
4. All information reaching Ministers and their advisers relating to the above, and all decisions made and actions taken or authorised by Ministers and their advisers.

NAME

SIGNATURE

ADDRESS

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....