

Fact Check

Is it illegal to seek asylum by boat?

The following information has been taken directly from the Australian Parliament Website:

“Asylum seekers do not break any Australian laws simply by arriving on boats or without authorisation. Australian and international law make these allowances because it is not always safe or practicable for asylum seekers to obtain travel documents or travel through authorised channels.

Refugees are, by definition, persons fleeing persecution and in most cases are being persecuted by their own government. It is often too dangerous for refugees to apply for a passport or exit visa or approach an Australian Embassy for a visa, as such actions could put their lives, and the lives of their families, at risk. Refugees may also be forced to flee with little notice due to rapidly deteriorating situations and do not have time to apply for travel documents or arrange travel through authorised channels.

Permitting asylum seekers to enter a country without travel documents is similar to allowing ambulance drivers to exceed the speed limit in an emergency – the action would be ordinarily be considered illegal, but the circumstances warrant an exception.”

(http://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/BN/2012-2013/AsylumFacts#_Toc348096466)

It is not illegal to seek asylum.

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