

Anti-Human Trafficking Policy

- As a part of Thailand's policy to combat human trafficking and people smuggling, which is high on our national priorities, Thailand is prompted to clamp down illegal migrants, especially overstayers, in our territory. It has been found that some of these illegal migrants are involved in criminal activities in Thailand, including people smuggling, trafficking, and forgery of documents. A recent example was the arrest of an Iranian who has been living in Thailand for 25 years with a fake passport and also used Thailand as a base to produce fake passports for clients around the world. This is one of the biggest law enforcement operations concerning forgery in many years.

- The trend of strengthened immigration measures is in fact global, including in more developed countries such as European countries or Australia. This policy is a response to global migration crisis, particularly with the increasing threat of trans-national crimes and terrorism around the world. They have led to a number of arrests of illegal migrants, human traffickers and smugglers, and other criminals involved in human trafficking and document forgery in the past year. This prompts every country to strike a right balance between humanitarian concerns and domestic security reason.

- As our record shows, many of illegal migrants are part of transnational human smuggling and trafficking networks, either as criminals or victims. These efforts by the Thai authorities are indeed part of the efforts to combat these crimes, with the aim to protect and prevent these migrants themselves from falling prey to such criminal groups.

Humanitarian Assistance

- Over the past two years, the UNHCR's statistics shows a sharp rise in the number of refugees and asylum seekers granted with UNHCR status entering Thailand both legally and illegally, from 4,549 in January 2014 to 8,928 in January 2016, or almost doubled.

- Thailand recognizes that among these illegal migrants there may include those with genuine prosecution needs.

- Even though Thailand is not a party to the 1951 Refugee Convention, we have long committed to humanitarian tradition as shown by our track record. The Thai authorities have tried their best to ensure adequate and appropriate treatments in accordance with international standards.

- We have been working closely with the UNHCR to facilitate resettlement in third countries. However, UNHCR's refugee status determination and resettlement takes a long time. These factors together have created a tremendous burden for Thailand with wide reaching impact on its security and socio-economic development.

UNHCR Status and Domestic Laws

- Despite being registered as refugees or asylum seekers with the UNHCR in Thailand, these people still have to abide by Thai laws. In cases when they are found to break the law, they can be arrested by our law enforcement officers. Many have falsified documents or engaged in criminal activities/groups targeting their compatriots. Therefore, the arrests mentioned in the article were conducted in accordance with normal legal procedures and due process of law and did not target any specific groups.

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