

WHO DIES BETWEEN INDONESIA AND AUSTRALIA?

BRIEFING 2 for the EXPERT PANEL

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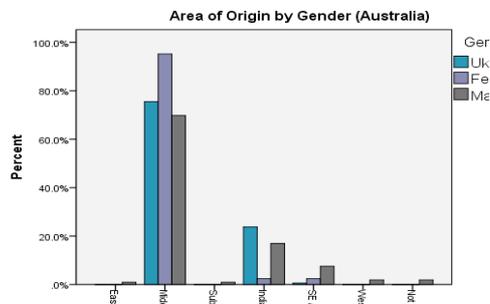
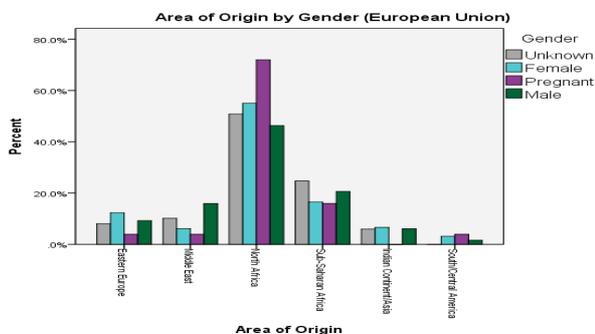
**BORDER CROSSING
OBSERVATORY**
BORDERS, CRIME, JUSTICE

THE DEATHS OF WOMEN

*International empirical evidence shows that women die in greater proportions in environmentally hazardous irregular border crossings than at any other part of an irregular migration journey. **The risk of death during irregular travel is not evenly distributed.***

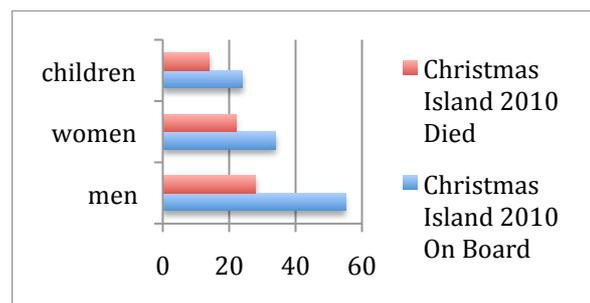
The Risks of Death Between Indonesia and Australia Are Not Evenly Distributed

Those people most likely to die between Indonesia and Australia come from countries where access to visas for regularised travel to Australia are very difficult: in particular Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran and Sri Lanka. An analysis of border crossing deaths in Europe and Australia shows that it is irregular border crossers from regions 'target hardened' (ie inadequate access to visas) that are most likely to die seeking entry (see Spijkerboer, 2007).



Evidence also suggests there are a range of factors that inform some groups using facilitators and boats that are more risky than others. In the European context evidence suggests that facilitators would use more expendable vessels and some nationalities as 'decoys' for the authorities that would enable larger vessels carrying larger numbers of people to travel undetected.

The major death events between Indonesia and Australia have seen a greater proportion of women and children drowning. This survival disadvantage may be for a range of reasons including but not limited to women and children being located below deck, unsuccessful in competition for life vests, lower rates of swimming and women attempting to save children in their care. In the 2001 SIEVX incident: Male deaths: 77%, Female deaths, children 95%. In the 2010 Christmas Island incident: Male deaths 51%; Women 65%; and 58% children.



PREVENTING DEATHS OF ASYLUM SEEKERS BETWEEN INDONESIA AND AUSTRALIA

The impact of regularised entry (visas) and border control measures needs to be considered in terms of the impact it will have on the changing demographic and travel configurations of passengers between Indonesia and Australia. Measures likely to increase the proportion of women and children on board boats is likely to have a disproportionate impact on the proportion and number of deaths of women and children.

