

# Shots fired amid attempt to illegally push Sri Lankan Tamil asylum seekers back out to sea in Indonesia



An Indonesian policeman throws supplies to Sri Lankan refugees ©Getty Images/AFP/Chaideer Mahyuddin

<http://www.amnestyusa.org/news/press-releases/shots-fired-amid-attempt-to-illegally-push-sri-lankan-tamil-asylum-seekers-back-out-to-sea-in-indone>

## Source Credibility:

Amnesty International is a globally recognized non-governmental organization that fights against injustice and promotes human rights.

## Summary:

- On June 11, fisherman discovered a boat of Sri Lankan refugees off the coast of Indonesia's Aceh province
- Indonesian authorities fired warning shots at the boat, trying to force it back to sea
- Men, women, and children were being endangered by the reckless acts of Indonesian authorities

- The boat contains a pregnant women and nine children
- The boat intended to reach Australia
- After providing food and repairing the boat, the Indonesian Navy prepared to force the back back out to sea
- Indonesian immigration office refused to provide the Sri Lankans with shelter, forcing them to stay along the shore
- The Sri Lankans have yet to be interviewed, therefore it is unclear what they were fleeing

**Most Important Point:**

“Navy who have not allowed the people on the boat to disembark and apply for asylum, arguing the asylum-seekers lack the proper documentation. **Under international law, neither a lack of documentation nor irregular entry precludes people from seeking asylum.**”

**Human Rights Abuses:** Articles 3, 5, 13, 14, 25

Main Abuses:

Article 5

No one shall be subjected to inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

- A clearly innocent ship of Sri Lankan citizens was terrorized. Indonesian authorities fired off guns and issued threats to the people on the boat. These actions subject the refugees to a great deal of degradation and inhuman conduct.

Article 13

(1) Everyone has the **right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state.**

(2) Everyone has **the right to leave any country**, including his own

- The Sri Lankans were not welcomed into Indonesia. Rather, they were forced to remain inside the boat (which was forced to remain on the shoreline). Certainly, the right to free movement was denied.

Article 14

(1) Everyone has **the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum** from persecution.

- The Sri Lankan refugees were denied access to Indonesia. As stated in the article, international law requires countries to allow those seeking asylum into the

borders of their country. From the article, the Indonesian immigration office refused access.

### **Discussion Questions:**

1. How do you think that the Indonesian officials should have responded in this situation?
2. If the Sri Lankan boat made it to its intended target in Australia, do you think that the refugees would be granted asylum?

### **Works Cited**

"Shots Fired amid Attempt to Illegally Push Sri Lankan Tamil Asylum Seekers Back out to Sea in Indonesia." *Amnesty International USA*. N.p., 17 June 2016. Web. 19 June 2016.

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