

ISA ONLINE GUEST LECTURE

THE CRIMINALISATION OF PEOPLE SMUGGLING

IMMOBILISING ASYLUM SEEKERS IN INDONESIA-AUSTRALIA

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This talk offers an ethnographically-informed critique of the hyper-politicized debate on the facilitation of irregular migration for asylum seekers ('people smuggling') between Indonesia and Australia. Drawing on court verdicts and interviews with convicted smugglers and law enforcement officials in Indonesia, I hope to provide an overview of the causes, conditions, procedures and intricacies surrounding the facilitation of irregular maritime journeys across borders. Retracing the evolution of people smuggling networks, their operational and place-specific characteristics then allows me to problematise the consequences of the criminalisation of people smuggling not only for asylum seekers and refugees, but also for convicted facilitators. By embedding the analysis into the wider debates on externalised border protection and the fortification of destination countries to prevent access by asylum seekers, I contribute to scrutinising Australian deterrence policies, which might prevent deaths at sea, but ignore the lack of durable protection for asylum seekers and refugees in transit countries and offshore detention.



Antje Missbach is Professor of Sociology for Migration and Mobility at Bielefeld University. Previously she held academic positions at Freiburg University, Monash University, Melbourne Law School, Heidelberg University and Humboldt University. She is the author of *Separatist conflict in Indonesia: The long-distance politics of the Acehnese diaspora* (Routledge, 2012) and *Troubled transit: Asylum seekers stuck in Indonesia* (ISEAS, 2015) and co-author of *Indonesia: State and society in transition* (Lynne Rienner Press, 2019).

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