

13 May 2015

Immigration Department

Immigration Tower
7 Gloucester Road
Wan Chai

Attention: Ms. Tiffany Y L Lam, Communications and Public Affairs Section

Dear Ms. Lam,

Monthly request for USM statistics

Several duty lawyers reported to Vision First that Unified Screening Mechanism (USM) results are not being publicized presumably to avoid comment and analysis. While such a policy might support a strategy to deny refugees hope with the aim of encouraging voluntary departures, in our view, it collides with government accountability and public interest.

In 2015-16 the estimate for providing legal assistance to claimants is [\\$108 million](#), while the overall budget for service provision to this population is reported to be [\\$644 million](#). These ballooning figures have drawn the scrutiny of lawmakers and the attention of the media.

It is further noted that the Immigration Department's "Annual Report 2014", [generally available early the following year](#), has not yet been published, although partial statistics relating to USM were provided to journalists reporting on the asylum sphere.

Considering the growing expenditure and public interest, Vision First encourages the Communications and Public Affairs Section of the Immigration Department to publish Unified Screening Mechanism (USM) statistics on a monthly basis. These should include:

- Number of new claims lodged;
- Number of claims determined at first instance with results;
- Number of claims determined at appeal with results;
- Number of claims withdrawn per month;
- Number of claims pending.

We would be grateful for statistics relating to the first four months of this year.

Sincerely yours,

Cosmo Beatson

Cosmo Beatson
Executive Director