

21 February 2016 Refugee Action Coalition Media Release

People Power Wins Community Detention for Asha: Now Free All the 267

The Refugee Action Coalition welcomes the agreement to place baby Asha in community detention as a victory for people power and the “Let Them Stay” campaign on behalf of the 267 asylum seekers from Nauru and Manus Island presently in Australia.

“This is one small step for one family. We want to applaud the hospital and its staff for the stand they took to defend the safety and welfare of baby Asha,” said Ian Rintoul, spokesperson for the Refugee Action Coalition.

“Their stand and the support from other hospitals and medical staff will make it easier for other workers and staff to take a similar stand in support of the 267 threatened with return to Nauru.

"If Peter Dutton can grant community detention for Asha and her family, then it is possible to agree that all those threatened with return to Nauru can be freed into the community.

“However, we note that Peter Dutton insists they are still under threat of being returned to Nauru. We still need an ironclad guarantee that Asha and her family will not be returned to Nauru.

While there is a 72 hour undertaking of notice before any attempt to remove Asha to Nauru, a future decision about whether she would be moved would be entirely up to IHMS and the Immigration department.

"We remain determined to ensure that Asha and the 267 get an ironclad guarantee of no return to Nauru," said Rintoul.

“There is still a question mark over the fate of all of the 267 men , women, and children who need to know that they will not be returned to Nauru or Manus Island. Until there is a positive decision about the 267, the campaign to Let Them Stay will continue.

“The response in Brisbane has been tremendous, and is a very strong indication that movement to ‘Let Them Stay’ is gaining increasing community and worker support.

"People power has won a small step for Asha - now we need to step up the Let Them Stay campaign.

NO THIRD COUNTRIES - BRING THEM ALL TO AUSTRALIA

“The efforts of the Australian government to find third countries willing to take refugees from Nauru and Manus is doomed,” said Ian Rintoul, “It is more shabby politicking by the government to involved relatively poor neighbouring countries in undermining the refugee convention.

“The international community rightly regards the refugees on Manus and Nauru as being Australia’s responsibility. The government is just delaying the inevitable. Offshore detention is collapsing under the weight of the cruelty and its own contradictions.

The Australian government must bring all those on Manus and Nauru to Australia.”

For more information contact Ian Rintoul 0417 275 713