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Immigration Threatens Forced Transfer on Manus Asylum Seeker Deemed To Be Refugee

Behrouz Boochani, an Iranian asylum seeker has never made an application for protection since he was forcibly transferred from Christmas Island to Manus Island in 2013.

Although Behrouz has never made a protection application, last week, 18 April, PNG Immigration determined that he was a refugee regardless. (PNG immigration notice attached).

Yet, another 45 asylum seekers, who have also refused to make a protection application in PNG, have been told that because they have not made an application they have been rejected.

Now, in an attempt to undermine the stand, Immigration has told Behrouz, that because he is a refugee, he must shift to Oscar compound, as part of a reorganisation drive in the Manus Island detention centre that seeks to concentrate all those found to be refugees in Delta and Oscar compounds.

Behrouz has refused. Immigration and Wilson Security have now threatened that he will be forcibly transferred to Oscar, from Mike (using PNG police if necessary) on Sunday morning, 24 April.

Behrouz told the Refugee Action Coalition, “I have never accepted their positive result. I want to show to all people that their process is fake. Where would you find an asylum seeker who would rather be in a ‘negative’ prison than be found to be a refugee? Only in Manus.”

Behrouz is one of around 50 people who have refused to recognize the legitimacy of refugee processing on Manus Island. But Behrouz has a high profile as a dissident Iranian journalist, recognised by the international writers’ organisation, PEN, as a political prisoner imprisoned on Manus.

His stand against being processed on PNG makes him an international embarrassment to both the PNG and Australian governments – so he has to be moved.

“The mistreatment of Behrouz has highlighted the absurdity of Manus Island detention, and the farce that is refugee processing in PNG,” said Ian Rintoul, spokesperson for the Refugee Action Coalition.

“No re-organisation of Manus detention compounds can hide the crime that is being perpetrated on the asylum seekers on Manus Island.”

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