

RAC Sydney
MEDIA RELEASE
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STAND-OFF IN WICKHAM POINT DETENTION CENTRE TO PREVENT NAURU TRANSFER

Around 70 asylum seekers are blockading Sun compound in the Wickham Point detention centre to try to prevent mostly asylum seeker families from being returned to Nauru. The 70 asylum seekers are also families from Nauru who fear being returned.

“We are just trying to help each other,” one asylum seeker told the Refugee Action Coalition, from inside Wickham Point.

The stand-off began around 2.00 pm Darwin time, when Serco officers attempted to forcibly remove people to Sun compound as a preliminary measure to their transfer to Nauru.

Serco officers have withdrawn from the compound although there are now fears that Serco could use its emergency response team - read, riot squad – to break the blockade.

Serco had attempted to move a number of mostly Iranian families including children into Sun compound where there is a high security Red section to hold asylum seekers prior to removal.

There are also reports that asylum seekers intervened to prevent the removal following married couples and families being separated by Serco guards, and that there is one pregnant woman among those scheduled for removal.

The Nauru transfers have become a feared almost weekly routine in

Wickham Point and has led to a number of people self-harming to prevent their removal to Nauru. At least two people attempted suicide last night to try and prevent their removal to Nauru.

“Nauru is not safe for asylum seekers or refugees. There is limited medical facilities, which is why so many people are being sent to the mainland for medical treatment,” said Ian Rintoul, spokesperson for the Refugee Action Coalition.

“The Minister should immediately halt the removals to Nauru, and begin the process of bringing all asylum seekers and refugees to the mainland.”

For more information, contact Ian Rintoul 0417 275 713

WELCOME REFUGEES RALLY AND MARCH:

“Close Nauru” and ‘close Manus Island” are key demands of Sydney’s “Welcome Refugee” rally, which thousands of refugee supporters are expected to attend, this Sunday, 19 April, 1pm, Belmore Park.

Speakers include:

Graeme McGregor | Refugee Campaign Coordinator | Amnesty International Australia

Ged Kearney, President ACTU“

Dr Sue Wareham, Medical Association for the Prevention of War

Kyol Blakeney, President Sydney Uni SRC

Lydia Shelly, Islamophobia Register

Shokufa Tahiri, Hazara refugee

