

2016 09 20 Refugee Action Coalition Media Release

Turnbull Can't Hide Australia's Shame - Nauru Fathers Arrested Following Kids Protest

Nauru's detention regime has plunged further into crisis with the announcement that Connect will not re-tender to provide refugee services on the prison island. But the announcement is just one small symptom of a dysfunctional regime.

The daily protests in the family camp have continued since 20 March and escalated on Sunday night, 18 September.

Four men, fathers of asylum seekers and refugees were arrested by Nauruan police last Sunday night following a protest by children who put rubbish on the road and threw stone at a bus going along the road between the family compound RPC3 and the refugee camp, Anuiju.

Around 25 Nauruan police descended on the family compound to arrest the children but after determined resistance from pregnant wives and families in the RPC 3, and children chanting, "Stop Torture. Freedom Forever;" police left the children, but arrested four men. (Attached is a photograph of the Nauruan police car in Anuiju on 18 September.)

Refugee and asylum seekers who attempted to take videos or photographs of the police were threatened with arrest.

It is understood that the men were released on the Sunday night after they signed an undertaking at the police station.

"The incident points to the far wider issue of Nauru and offshore detention. In the guise of service providers, Connect has already been complicit in Australia's systematic mistreatment of asylum seekers on Nauru. Connect have often used the police themselves rather than protect refugees from the arbitrary and often brutal treatment of an unaccountable police force," said Ian Rintoul, spokesperson for the Refugee Action Coalition

"But many refugees see the Connect decision as the end game that started when they were arbitrarily separated from family and other asylum seekers on Christmas Island in 2013.

"Despite Turnbull and Dutton's posturing in New York, the government will finally be faced with the need to bring all the asylum seekers and refugees to Australia. The sooner, the better."

Refugee groups in Australia will hold solidarity vigils and protests to coincide with 200 days of protest on Nauru on 5 October.

Sydney Solidarity with Nauru rally, Wednesday 5 October, 5.30pm. Town Hall.

Supported by Refugee Action Coalition, Mums 4 Refugees, Teachers for Refugees, Doctors 4 Refugees, Australian Women Supporting Women on Nauru, Grandmothers Against the Detention of Children, People Just Like Us, Love Makes A Way.

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