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Boochani Arrested By Manus Immigration to Force Transfer

Behrouz Boochani, the Iranian asylum seekers who staged the tree protest yesterday in Foxtrot compound has been arrested at a meeting with Immigration and forcibly relocated to Oscar compound – a compound for those found to be refugees.

Boochani had been summoned to the meeting this morning at 9.45am, following a promise yesterday that his positive refugee case would be reviewed. He never came back to Foxtrot compound.

Boochani is among a group of around 50 people who have never made an application for refugee status in PNG. Yet, on 18 April he was handed a letter indicating that he had been found to be a refugee.

Around 45 others, who have also refused to make applications, however, were handed notices that they had been rejected.

Boochani has consistently questioned the PNG assessment process that could make such directly contradictory findings.

His tree-top protest yesterday highlighted the inconsistency, the lack of transparency, and the corruption of the determination process.

Boochani is a high profile asylum seeker; a dissident Iranian journalist who has been adopted by the international journalist association, PEN, as a political prisoner detained by Australia.

Boochani's forced transfer comes at the same time as refugees are being told that the gates of Oscar and Delta compounds will be "open" tomorrow, Wednesday, 27 April, and that people who apply, will be able to leave the detention centre by bus between the hours of 7am and 4pm.

Refugees are deeply suspicious of the move; considering that Immigration has left themselves many ways that people can be left behind and thus forced to go to the transit accommodation at East Lorengau.

Many also remain fearful of locals because of the attack on the detention centre in February 2014, that left Reza Bararti dead and scores of others seriously injured.

The move to "open" the gates seems to be part of PNG Immigration attempts to avoid the consequences of the pending constitutional Supreme Court case that not only seeks orders that the detention centre be closed, but also ask for compensation for the breach of human rights inflicted on all detainees sent there from Australia.

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