

2017 03 24 Refugee Action Coalition Media Release

## Refugee Activists Action To Prevent Deportation From Villawood

Refugee activists have gathered outside Villawood Detention Centre to try and prevent the deportation of a 60 year-old Iraqi man, 'Saeed', who came to Australia in 2012.

Saeed, from a religious minority in Iraq, faces persecution if he is forced to return there. His brother, who arrived on the same boat as him, made a successful asylum claim, but Saeed was refused on an administrative technicality. He has spent four years in detention, and is believed to be being deported to Iraq this afternoon.

The action follows Saeed's transfer to Villawood from the Melbourne Immigration Transfer Accommodation Centre, which activists tried to blockade yesterday.

"Saeed is still weak from his recent hunger strike," said Refugee Action Coalition spokesperson Ian Rintoul. "It is callous in the extreme of Peter Dutton to try to deport him back to danger".

"The same experiences in Iraq led Saeed and his brother to escape together," Rintoul continued. "While in Australia, he has been systematically prevented from exercising the rights he has as an asylum seeker. The fact he is being deported on a technicality when his brother has been recognised as a refugee is yet another example of Dutton's contempt for life and safety."

"Dutton and the government are trying to turn Australia into a post-rights country for refugees. It's unacceptable that Saeed is being deported at all; that Dutton's deporting him in his current state is even worse. We're gathering at Villawood to say that refugees should be allowed to stay in Australia, and to do everything we can to make sure Saeed isn't deported."

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