

2018 03 14 Refugee Action Coalition Media Release
Government Attempts To Remove Biloela Tamil Family From Australia

Although court documents had been lodged in the Federal Circuit Court for the Tamil family, and a directions hearing scheduled for early May, last night (Tuesday) the government attempted to remove the Tamil family of four from Australia.

Concerns escalated in the hours from late Tuesday afternoon, when communication with the family who were being held in family compound of the MITA (Melbourne Immigration Transit Accommodation), was suddenly lost.

A hurried phone call from the plane that was carrying the family alerted lawyers and supporters that the family was being removed from Australia.

The family had been placed on a plane carrying up to 25 other Tamils being removed (some forcibly) to Sri Lanka. The family of four were taken off the plane, once the government understood there were moves to call an urgent court hearing late Tuesday night.

“It is astonishing that the government should have attempted to remove this family,” said Ian Rintoul, spokesperson for the Refugee Action Coalition, “The government knew that court documents had been lodged. They knew that there was intense community interest and concern. They wanted to try and shut that down.

“It looks like a blatant attempt to put the family beyond reach of the community or legal action. The government has shown no concern for the safety of the family or the concerns of the tens of thousands who have signed the petition calling for family to be returned to Biloela.”

In two days, over 58,000 people have signed an online petition; and the petition is growing by the minute.

“The plight of this family has shone a light of the stark reality of the government anti-refugee policies. They wanted to ride rough shod over the rights of the family and the concerns of the Biloela community. But more and more people are becoming aware of the human costs of the government’s policies to the refugees and asylum seekers and to the wider community. Biloela is not buying the government’s fear-mongering ; they want the Tamil family back in Biloela.”

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