

Humanitarian?

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It is called the Humanitarian Program for a reason.

It gives a new life and peace to persecuted human beings who need protection from persecution.

But apparently you must be a 'good refugee', chosen from a UNHCR pool of refugees waiting patiently "over there" for resettlement, and only in the small number allocated annually by Cabinet, as part of the Migration Program of around 200 000 people pa.

How politically inconvenient therefore, that 'bad refugees', who come direct, self funded and by boat, turn out to be mostly "genuine" refugees who fled persecution and cannot go home. As a deterrent to others, Australia puts them in "harm's way", simply because officials did not select them. In our name they are tortured with indefinite detention, indefinite separation from loved ones. It is as if we Australians fail to comprehend the many horrible forms persecution actually takes.

A truly humanitarian policy would welcome and care for the desperate and brave men women and children who make their own way here, and hear their claims of persecution as quickly as possible. It would seek to stop the causes for perilous refugee journeys. It would seek international cooperation, and fund peace and reconstruction programs. For those who prove to be refugees, or have compassionate and compelling humanitarian circumstances, of course there is place for you in this diverse society with personal links to just about every other nation on earth. You will help to make this nation even greater.

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