

February 2 2016 Refugee Action Coalition MEDIA RELEASE

PROLONGED DARWIN HUNGER STRIKE HIGHLIGHTS  
GOVERNMENT VISA CONTRADICTIONS

Refugee advocates are increasingly concerned for the welfare of a Bengali asylum seeker in Wickham Point, Darwin, has been on hunger strike for 52 days.

The 37 year-old asylum seeker who arrived in Australia on 15 June, 2013 has not had his claim for asylum processed in over 31 months.

After being transferred from Christmas Island to Wickham Point in August 2013, the Bengali man was told he would be granted a bridging visa, but nothing has happened since then.

The Bengali man has also been assaulted on 5 January by Serco guards when they transferred him from Shark to Sun Compound in an attempt to isolate his hunger strike protest.

He was returned to Shark compound on 7 January. An official complaint has been made regarding the assault.

The Bengali man's hunger strike is a continuation of the hunger strike protests in Darwin of 18 Bangladeshis in December who had not been processed although some had been in detention for three years.

“There is no excuse for being detained for 31 months. The deliberate bureaucratic delays are a form of torture,” said Ian Rintoul, spokesperson for the Refugee Action Coalition. “This hunger strike exposes the government mindset that is behind the recent reports of record levels of long term detention in Australian detention centres.

“It is simply a lack of political will and the ruthless determination to make an example of asylum seekers who arrive by boat.”

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