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## Refugee Advocates Warn Against Any Removals to Nauru

The Refugee Action Coalition has warned the government against sending refugees back to Nauru, in the present circumstances.

At least two people detained in the Brisbane Immigration Transit Accommodation (BITA) have been told that they could be returned to Nauru “soon”.

Astonishingly, one of the people told that will be sent to Nauru is a refugee brought from Manus Island, for medical treatment.

It is now impossible for the government to send anyone to Manus, since the PNG Supreme Court ruled that the Manus Island detention centre was unlawful.

“People found to be refugees on Manus Island are owed international protection. To send a refugee from Manus to Nauru, would be sheer bloody-minded exercise of power,” said Ian Rintoul, spokesperson for the Refugee Action Coalition.

The announcement has raised the anxiety levels among refugees and asylum seekers in BITA.

“This just appalling politicking by the Minister who is desperate to turn refugees a political football in the election campaign,” said Ian Rintoul.

“The situation on Nauru is vulnerable and volatile. The Minister is recklessly playing with asylum seekers’ lives. Sending anyone back risks intensifying more desperation in an already fragile situation in the wake of Omid and Hodan burning themselves.

“The Minister already needs to explain how a young Somali woman could be returned to Nauru, even though she was on suicide watch in BITA. That decision has had dreadful consequences.

“Political opinion has also shifted with majorities in favour of the ‘Let Them Stay’ campaign to allow 267 asylum seekers from Nauru and Manus to remain in Australia.

“We urge the Minister to urgently reconsider any proposal to send anyone back to Nauru.”

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