

Refugee Action Coalition  
MEDIA RELEASE

## NAURU REFUGEE WOMEN CELEBRATE INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY WITH PROTEST

Nauruan refugees and children of all nationalities celebrated International Women's Day, yesterday, 9 March, with a protest at the Ijuw compound – photos attached.

The protest comes less than a week after scores of women and children were arrested and mistreated by Nauruan police on 4 March.

Like other refugees, the women refugees had money and mobile phones stolen by police. Women refugees were also subjected to religiously motivated abuse.

Police removed the headscarves of all the Muslim women in custody and verbally abusing the women; telling them, "There are no Muslims here [ie Nauru]."

One Somali woman was forced to strip to her underwear.

"The massive operation to stifle peaceful protests last week has not deterred the Nauruan refugees," said Ian Rintoul, spokesperson for the Refugee Action Coalition.

"Yesterday's protest has sent a clear message to the Nauruan and Australian governments – that the abuse has to stop and the discrimination has to stop.

"Nauru will not resettle the refugees, but is taking tens of millions of dollars a year to warehouse refugees for Australia, for up to five years."

The police repression only adds to the oppressive physical and social conditions on Nauru. As more refugees are released, the accommodation has got worse. Families are in converted, windowless shipping containers that are intolerable in the heat and humidity.

They are forced to boil the water used for toilets and washing because drinking water is too expensive given the tiny allowances given to refugees.

Other photos available on request

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