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Fears of Attempted Suicide Charge Following Nauru Refugee Arrest after Attempted Self-Immolation

Refugee advocates are concerned that another refugee will be charged with attempted suicide after Nauru police arrested a 38 year-old Iranian refugee on Tuesday afternoon.

The Iranian refugee had splashed himself with petrol and set himself alight before neighbours intervened with a fire extinguisher to prevent a catastrophe. Fire-fighters and police attended the incident, with police arresting the man and taking him to the police station (Photos attached).

The Iranian man, Adnan, lives with his wife and two children (a boy, 13 and a daughter, one) in the Anuijo camp, across the road from the main gate of the family camp. The couple and their son were sent to Nauru in 2013, but their one year-old daughter was born in Darwin a year ago.

His daughter has extreme behaviour problems, and injures herself, but her condition has gone untreated on Nauru. The couple fears that their daughter has a congenital mental disorder as a result of medicine prescribed during the Adnan's wife also suffered extreme depression during the pregnancy.

Desperate to draw attention, to his family's agony, Adnan attempted self-immolation. Fortunately, Adnan does not appear to have suffered severe burns.

But fellow refugees and advocates are extremely concerned that Adnan will be charged with "attempted suicide" as a result of the incident.

The threat of an attempted suicide charge follows the conviction of another Iranian man, Sam Nemati, for that charge, in April. Nemati's conviction arose out of an incident with Connect (the refugee service provider) and Nauru police in January.

"It would be worse than absurd, if Nauruan police charge Adnan with attempted suicide," said Ian Rintoul, spokesperson for the Refugee Action Coalition. "Adnan and his family need urgent help. It is obvious that there is no help forthcoming on Nauru. The family should be brought to Australia.

"Police action like this against refugees can only make things worse. The police are using criminal charges to cover-up the abuse that is the reality of incarceration on Nauru."

The incident comes as protests on Nauru continue. Today will be the 32nd day of protest at the family camp. For the last four days, those protests by asylum seekers in the family camp have been joined by protests inside the Anuijo refugee camp.

The refugees have been warned by police that they must stay inside the camp or they will be arrested.

"Adnan's arrest is one more reason the protests will continue. There is no justice on Nauru," said Rintoul.

For more information contact Ian Rintoul mob 0417 275 713

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Posted by: Ian Rintoul <rintoulian10@gmail.com>

