

2017 11 02 Refugee Action Coalition Media Release
Manus Refugees Dig In To Defy Siege

Manus refugees are literally digging in as they prepare to survive the government siege of the Manus detention centre.

Video clips attached give a snapshot of life inside the detention centre, day 2 of the siege.
(Available at
<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/lzpx7oli01ph87c/AABLA7mqfaS0faoLEt36H6nea?dl=0>)

Overnight refugees dug a well in Oscar compound that has given them a precious source of water - good enough to drink, if needs be, and will ensure some toilets can be flushed.

Some people are sleeping outside to escape the oppressive heat and airlessness of the converted shipping containers that used to be their accommodation.

In 2015, hundreds of Manus detainees staged a mass hunger strike when the government first tried to force them to move to East Lorengau. It was just a year since locals had attacked the camp and murdered Reza Barati.

In 2015, the government took away the drinking water - see photo attached - and took scores of others to prison, in their attempt to break the detainee's resistance.

In 2015, the determination of the hunger strike won. Not one refugee has been forcibly transferred to East Lorengau. But many refugees have been bashed, robbed and mutilated with knives and machetes in attacks around the Lorengau settlement.

Almost three years later, and the struggle of the men imprisoned on Manus is the same. Only this time the government has cut off the water, the power and their food.

East Lorengau is still unsafe; as is West Lorengau and Hillside, even if they were habitable.

No provision has been made for proper medical care. Refugees have been told a GP clinic will operate in business hours at East Lorengau, but otherwise refugees and asylum seekers will only have access to the Lorengau hospital which does not even have enough resources to provide medical care for the Manusians. No one has explained how anyone living in the community will be paid an allowance or how they will be fed.

Most of all, the refugees and asylum seekers are still being deprived of their freedom and a secure future.

The Refugee Action Coalition in Sydney has called a protest for Saturday, 4 November, 1pm, Hyde Park North.

(There will also be protests in Brisbane, 6pm Friday 3rd November at King George Square; and Melbourne: 2pm Saturday 4th November, State Library)

For more information contact Ian Rintoul 0417 275 713

Posted by: Ian Rintoul <rintoul@rintoul.com>

