

RAC Sydney
MEDIA RELEASE
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NAURUAN REFUGEE SHOT WITH AIR GUN PELLET AND THEN BEATEN BY LOCALS

A 16 year-old Lebanese refugee has been treated in hospital after being attacked yesterday (Tuesday 14 April), first by a local Nauruan armed with an air rifle, and then by two lifeguards. The boy was attacked at a swimming spot near Anibare Lodge this (Tuesday) afternoon.

The local has sprayed a few pellets in the direction of refugees near the swimming hole, when one of the pellets struck the Lebanese boy in the arm.

The shooter took off, but his identity was obvious to all in the vicinity.

The refugee appealed for the lifeguards who were on duty to help him and to call the police to identify the shooter. The lifeguards admitted they knew the shooter but bluntly refused to help or call the police or agree to identify the shooter to the police.

After further appeals from the boy for help, what followed was a sustained bashing of the boy by the two lifeguards, leaving him covered in cuts, scratches and a badly injured knee that required hospital treatment.

“This is just one more instance of the daily discrimination and physical attacks now facing refugees on Nauru. A few days ago, a young female refugee was sexually assaulted in a car.

“While three Nauruans were arrested by the police in regard to the sexual assault, in many other instances, even when identities are known, the police refuse to act. The unwillingness of the Nauruan government or police to act has allowed a minority to attack refugees with impunity,” said Ian Rintoul, spokesperson for the Refugee Action Coalition.

“The latest incidents also add to the concerns expressed by former Save the Children workers and administrators and others who worked on Nauru that ‘Nauru is such a small island it is impossible for people to avoid local perpetrators.’

"The climate of impunity also makes Nauru unsafe. There have been a number of instances where alleged perpetrators have threatened victims and witnesses following attacks.

“The reasons to close Nauru become more compelling day by day,” said Rintoul.

“Close Nauru” is a major demand of Sydney’s “Welcome Refugee” rally, which thousands of refugee supporters are expected to attend, this Sunday, 19 April, 1pm, Belmore Park.

Speakers include:

Ged Kearney, President ACTU

Dr Sue Wareham, Medical Association for the Prevention of War

Kyol Blakeney, President Sydney Uni SRC

Lydia Shelly, Islamophobia Register

Shokufa Tahiri, Hazara refugee

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