

2016 04 28 1506 Refugee Action Coalition Media Release

Noose Tightens On Manus Island. Protest: “Not Manus, Not Nauru,” Mr Dutton

Further legal action, in the PNG Supreme Court, on behalf of hundreds of detainees presently on Manus Island is scheduled for Monday 2 May.

The action to enforce the constitutional rights of the asylum seekers sent to Manus by the Australian government will seek more explicit orders from the court for the release and return to Australia, of those asylum seekers and refugees.

The proceedings will also seek orders in relation to all aspects of the breach of their human rights endured since 2013, and will seek compensation for those human rights' breaches.

The Australian and PNG government have not just breached the constitutional right to personal liberty, but have also denied them the protection of law (in regard to access to legal representation and the courts); freedom from torture and inhuman conduct; their right to be treated with humanity and 'with respect for the dignity of the person'.

Regardless of any future arrangement between the Australian government and PNG, all the asylum seekers and refugees presently in Papua New Guinea are covered by the present Supreme Court general ruling and are specifically covered by the case brought by Ben Lomai, scheduled for next Monday. There is no appeal from the Supreme Court ruling.

“It is shocking that Opposition Immigration spokesperson, Richard Marles, is demanding any continuation of offshore detention in Papua New Guinea. The Labor Party should take the opportunity to admit it’s been a terrible mistake and to drop its offshore policy,” said Ian Rintoul, spokesperson for the Refugee Action Coalition.

“Not only have people been detained for almost three years, they have suffered appalling human rights abuses over that time for which government Ministers and corporations must be held to account.

“The Manus people must be brought to the mainland. After three years of torture, the hell of Christmas Island is no alternative to the hell of Manus Island.

“The talk of sending them to Nauru is just wishful thinking by Peter Dutton. Besides being unseemly, such a move would be politically impossible. Nauru is in meltdown. And public opinion is running against the idea. The Let Them Stay movement has already won majority opinion for those from Nauru and Manus to be able to stay in Australia.”

“Dutton is ducking and diving, but in the end, there is only one alternative – to close Manus and Nauru; and bring all the refugees and asylum seekers to Australia. The Manus detainees in detention in Australian mainland detention centres should be set free immediately.”

The Refugee Action Coalition has called a protest calling on the government to “Bring Them Here”: at Sydney Immigration offices, 12.30 pm, Friday 29 April, Lee St, City (near Railway Square).

Speakers will include: Jim Casey, Greens candidate for Grayndler; Nicole Judge, former Manus workers, Danielle Austin, Mums for Refugees and former nurse on Christmas Island.

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