

2016 05 13 1855 Refugee Action Coalition Media Release  
Protests for Freedom Begin on Manus

Protests have begun inside the Manus detention centre - at Mike and Fox Compounds on Thursday, and today Friday 13 May, in Delta and Oscar Compounds.

In Delta, the banner reads, "Trafficked illegally here. Close Manus prison now."

Asylum seekers and refugees are growing tired of the delay in closing the detention centre and releasing them from the hell of the last almost three years.

"People are tired and are demanding to leave to Manus forever. The Supreme Court ordered that the government must take us from here," one refugee told the Refugee Action Coalition from Manus.

The detainees are growing angry at the deliberate attempts by the Australian government to thwart the decision of the PNG Supreme Court that declared that the detention centre was unlawful at the end of April.

The protests are expected to escalate tomorrow as frustration with the wait for freedom grows.

Despite statements from the PNG Immigration officials saying that the Manus detention centre is open, neither asylum seekers nor refugees can walk out of the centre which is on a naval base. The arrangements have not changed at the centre in the past week or so.

People are required to register and then take an official bus to the settlement at Lorengau. Although, up to 100 asylum seekers from Mike and Fox have taken the ride to Lorengau, over the past few days, yesterday only two from Foxtrot went outside. Very few refugees have gone outside at all.

A communities meeting inside the detention centre expressed its concern at the bus trips and today, most people declined to take the bus.

"The refugees do not want to be seen to cooperate in any way with the PNG regime that has been put in place by the Australian government," said Ian Rintoul, spokesperson for the Refugee Action Coalition. "Every day the Australian government stalls on bringing everyone from Manus to Australia is another day they breach the Supreme Court orders and the human rights of the prisoners on Manus.

"The Immigration Minister Peter Dutton is trying to stall until after the federal election, but patience in PNG is wearing thin."

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