

Mrs Amina Daligand

Submission No.	65
Date Received	17/7/08

15 July 2008

The Committee Secretary
Joint Standing Committee on Migration

RECEIVED
17 JUL 2008
BY: MIG

Dear Sir/Madam

I have been visiting the Villawood IDC weekly since 2001. Lately I visit every 3 weeks only. Being a 76 years old pensioner, the petrol has become too expensive and it's a total trip of 62 kilometers each time. For a long time the stress would start from the morning while getting ready preparing fruit, juices, cakes or some ethnic food I had cooked to remind some prisoners of their country of origin.

Stage 1 was the punishment section where those who had committed crimes and had served prisons sentences where detained, double dipping in the prison's jargon. But there were also refugees in stage 1 and a lot of them were submitted to brutality and very rude language, sometimes from other inmates, sometimes from guards.

I remember one young man from Turkish origin. He had come to Australia as a toddler with his parents who were simple country folks, partly illiterate. When they naturalised, they were not aware that they should enter their child's name on the form. As a teenager this young man committed some minor crime and served a prison sentence. Now he was under the treat of deportation to Turkey as it was discovered he was not Australian in spite of the fact he had spent most of his life here. I remember his distressed mother visiting him and not comprehending why she would not see her son anymore. He did not know much of the Turkish language and this was going to be a problem for him in Turkey.

Some guards were particularly nasty. One who would not give his full name would unscrew my pen, refused to let me take some fresh mint on the pretext that vegetables were forbidden. He would make up new rules every time. One day I was bringing some newspaper articles for a particular case and he would not let me take them inside saying it was not allowed. Luckily there was a woman employee who said to him she would phone Immigration to ask. She phoned and came back saying it was allowed. A woman guard encouraged me to complaint about him saying he had a grudge against women. He shouted at me and other women visitors.

(Please find enclosed a copy of the letter of complaint I wrote on 18/12/2002)

Every week I was visiting a 17th year old young man who was liberated after 4 years and is now an Australian citizen and who is still my friend. He was a very courteous and gentle person. He told me how he had been walked up one morning by a woman guard saying to him "wake up you f.. bastard"

Which remind me of another incident, when I was visiting stages 2 and 3. We had to park our cars outside of the centre but were allowed to park inside if we had a disabled label, which was my case. One day I was driving in, bringing two women visitors. I stopped at the gate waiting for the guard to approach to indicate the label authorising me to drive inside. As he walked to my car I heard him say loudly to the other guard: "She's got a f.. sticker" I was shocked by the language and did lodge a written complaint.
(Please find enclosed copies of the complaint and reply dated 3/10/2005)

I know of a young man who is now outside on a bridging visa E (not allowed to work, to receive Medicare, to study or even to do voluntary work) and whom I often see as a friend. Since being outside, he survives on \$90.00 a week given as a charity by BAS. Some years ago he became sick with a stomach ulcer. I found a doctor who agreed to see him for free and arranged for tests to be made for free too. Later on another doctor in a North Shore hospital gave free treatment to this young man who was cured. But it was not easy finding all these kind doctors and I drove the young man to all those different places.
(Please see copy dated 2/7/2005 about his weekly signing)

This same young man told me of two incidents while he was in detention:
He witnessed how a prisoner made a remark to a guard. The displeased guard grabbed him by the throat and pushed him against the wall while pressing on his throat.
The same young man told me how a woman guard asked him to have sex with her. He was shocked and angry and told her "You work here because you are ugly and you cannot get a job outside in an office or shop"

I also was told by an ex woman inmate how some inmates and guards smoke marijuana together.

There were probably other incidents which I have forgotten. I know of several prisoners who have been deported and we have never heard of again. Especially those deported to Algeria or Sudan. I remember K a Sudanese who was detained for 7 years and was deported to Sudan. He was a very educated person, had an excellent command of English and had inspired respect to inmates and guards alike. After his deportation, we found he was detained in Sudan as he had been an activist and protester of his country's policies.

I often cry thinking about the unjust suffering of those people who told me "I came here asking for asylum because I was told Australians were kind people"
I think of those who were deported to danger, torture or horrible prisons. And yet I am unable to stop visiting, though I must admit it has become less stressful since the children have been freed. We use to queue outside of the gate in order to visit. Then inside the visiting yard (and its cold out there in winter) we would wait and wait, often having to ask the yard guard to call the inmates again.

One day I never saw some prisoners whose names I had put on my visiting list. When I went out I asked the employees at the reception who had been on duty when I entered.

A woman came forward. I asked her why I did not see some people I had put on my list. She said I probably forgot. When I insisted I did not forget and there were on my list, she went inside and returned saying. "Your list was blown away by the wind"

(Please find enclosed copy dated 6/8/2003)

That is how it was some years ago. Now there are hardly any visitors. We don't queue any more. The employees at the reception are courteous and treat me well as they have known me for years. It seems that the rude employees are not there anymore or are hidden. The barbed wires have been removed from the top fences. I don't visit stage 1 any more. I wish I could stop visiting altogether, but I can't.

I ask that the detention centres should be closed altogether for good.

Or that people will stay only a maximum of 3 months while their status are checked and then be allowed to wait outside and work if on bridging visas.

I am adding copies of 4 more documents as follows:

- A very disturbing condition in Villawood (undated) sent to Chilout coordinator
- The exploitation of Detainees in the Immigration Centres (2/7/2005)
- A complaint to A Vanstone about the food and the payment of work to detainees (28/10/2005)
- A copy of a letter to SMH (15/7/2004)

Thank you to all who are active in changing those unjust conditions shameful of our country.

Yours sincerely

A Daligand

Centre Manager
Villawood Detention centre
15 Birmingham rd.
Villawood 2163

Mrs. A. Daligand

18th December 2002

Sir,

I am lodging a complaint in view of the attitude and behaviour of an employee of the centre in stage 1

The person in question is named [redacted] but he would not give me his surname and he only says he is in the centre control room.

Every Tuesday, for the past few months I have been visiting some friends in stage 1.

The last 3 weeks I had to bear silently the stress caused by the above named [redacted] he makes up a new rule every time.

The first week, he refused to let me take a pair of shoes to a detainee. Later on the same afternoon, I went to stage 2 where the employee told me there was no fuss for a pair of shoes and after giving the details, the shoes were given to the detainee.

The following week I had some printed newspaper articles giving news of what is happening overseas in one of the detainee's country. The same [redacted] told me the articles were not allowed. He acted in an aggressive way and I was frightened. He did not seem to be steady on his legs. He stopped me from talking and said "don't talk over me" Luckily there was a woman agent of Immigration. She phoned the department and told him it was ok to take the articles in.

Yesterday I was taking 150 gr of cheese, 200gr of olives and a bunch of mint, but the same [redacted] told the mint is not allowed. I asked when the rule came in force, he replied 4 weeks ago. (During the past weeks I had taken mint and there was no objection) I asked him to show it to me in writing. He replied it was not in writing.

Every week I have suffered very high stress.

I think the above named [redacted] is a tyrant who takes advantage of his position to terrorise women visitors. In fact, I told another employee of the centre about the happenings and she told me that [redacted] has also an aggressive attitude toward his colleagues and she advised me to complaint.

I told [redacted] I was going to complaint about his actions and he replied, "You can complaint all what you like"

I would like to know what will be done about this employee and I require an apology from him

I wait for your reply and hope you will consider this as urgent as I do not want to be on the verge of a heart attack every time I visit the centre.

Thanking you

Yours faithfully

A. DALIGAND

Mrs Amina Daligand

By post on 4/10/05

The Manager, GSL
Villawood IDC
P.O. Box 413
Chester Hill 2162

3rd October 2005

Dear Sir,

I have a disabled label on my car allowing me to enter the visitor parking area during my visit to the centre.

On Wednesday 28th of September 2005 as I was driving in through the gate and stopped for the guard to examine the label, I heard him say to the other guard "She's got a f...sticker" The remark was loud and it was heard by the two women passengers in my car. We were shocked. Were we insulted because we wear scarves? I am 73 years old and expect some respect. When I went inside I told a staff member who was also shocked and told me that the guard on duty at the gate was

I expect an apology (loud please too) at my next visit on the 12th of October and that measures will be taken to train how to behave and to show respect to elderly women and to people in general.

I hope for a prompt reply that is why I am including my phone/ fax number

Thanking you for your attention

Yours faithfully

A. Daligand

C/C: A. Vanstone
The Ombudsman
P. Georgiou MP



Australian Government

Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs

Ms Amina Daligand

Dear Ms Daligand

Thank you for your letter of 3 October 2005 to the Minister for Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs, Senator the Hon Amanda Vanstone, concerning your visit to the Villawood Immigration Detention Centre (IDC) on 28 September 2005. Senator Vanstone has asked that I respond on her behalf

I have referred your complaint to the detention services provider at Villawood IDC for investigation. I understand that an officer from the detention services provider has been in contact with you to discuss the matter.

I appreciate you raising your concerns as it is important to the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs to ensure that any persons detained in or visiting immigration detention facilities are treated with courtesy and respect.

Thank you for raising this matter with the Minister.

Yours sincerely

Director
Detention Review and Complaints Handling Section

11 October 2005

Mrs Amina Daligand

My copy

2nd July 2005

^{HR}
~~To the Hon Member~~ P. Georgiou *HR*

Dear Mr Georgiou,

Thanks for your reply of the 1st of June and for the article in the Age on 26 May 2005. Again I thank you for you stand about the detention of refugees. There is some improvement.

A young friend of mine on bridging visa E who has to sign every week at the Dimia office in the city told me "I was told to go to sign every second week" This is good for him. The train ticket costs \$8.00 and he is not allowed to work Or to receive Centrelink. He added "this time they did not bark at me when Asking for my I D"

This young man is very depressed because he has to survive on charity. He is a very proud person and this is destroying him mentally. When I tell People that such visa conditions exist, they are shocked.

I have been a weekly visitor to Villawood IDC for the last three and half years. I would like to stop because it is also causing me a lot of stress. But I cannot Stop because I would feel very guilty. I have written a report about some of the Conditions inside the **concentration camp** which I find intolerable. Of course the most intolerable is the detention itself.

Again I thank you for your humanity for people in distress.

Yours faithfully

A.Daligand

cc 'The Hon B. Baird, J. Moylan, and R. Broadbent

Copy to which you kindly replied on 19/7/2005

Mrs. A. Daligand

ACM Manager
Immigration Detention centre
15 Birmingham Rd.
Villawood 2163

6th August 2003

Dear Mr. ACM manager,

Yesterday I was visiting 3 detainees as I have been doing every week for the last 18 months.

I had written 3 names in alphabetical order on the required form.

I entered the visiting area at 2 pm.

At 2.30pm the 3rd detainee on my list arrived as other visitors had called him.

At 2.45pm, I asked the guard in charge of the detainees ID cards to call the two that I visit every Tuesday and whose names I had written on the form. At 3 pm I went to ask him again. He replied he had to ask his boss before calling the names. Then he said the two names were not on my form. I was astonished and I said but the names are written on the form. I asked him the name of his boss; he said, "She is not there now the shift has been changed." He proposed to ask permission again to call the two detainees. They finally arrived at 3.30pm.

They told me "We were surprised our names were not called because we expected your visit as you do every week. If you don't intend to come which is rare, you always warn us in advance"

On my way out at 5.15pm, I asked the 3 guards at the desk "who was on duty at 2 pm?" they reply altogether, "we were"

I then asked "Who said I had not written 3 names on my form?" A female guard went in the office and came back with this tale. "Your form was blown by the wind and when the outside guards asked the office to call again the woman (boss?) in the office looked at the form in front of her and did not see the names." I then said "she should apologise" Reply "oh no the form was blown by the wind" I added "then the wind should apologise, thank you very much"

Mr ACM Manager, the story as you can judge yourself is a pack of lies.

Is there a policy of discouraging visitors is this den of miser?

I do expect this time a reply and some action on your part. Last time I wrote you on behalf of a detainee whose goods had been stolen, you had never replied.

I also had written about the nastiness of a guard called Steve in stage 1.

It is time to investigate, as during my verbal exchange with other visitors, there are many events of this kind.

Also I would like to ask why the tables and chairs in the visiting yard are never washed. It's absolutely disgusting the conditions they are in.

Thanks for your attention

Yours faithfully,

A. Daligand

No Reply

A very disturbing condition in Villawood

During my weekly visits to the Villawood Immigration detention centre, I have found out that the 5 children of a family from Tai Wan are suffering very serious neglect.

Two women detainees told me of the following:

The tot called _____ left alone in the parent's room, while the parents are in the visiting yard. This child has scars and marks on his neck which one detainee describe as cigarettes burns, the other thinks it could be ringworms.

The older boy aged about 12 is smoking cigarettes. The children are all in dirty condition and the parent's room is also very messy and dirty.

A detainee has witnessed that Peter had fallen 6 steps down stairs, but the father would not take him for a medical check up. He gave him a boiled egg to eat instead.

I have myself had several opportunities to observe this family where they were in the visiting yard. I noticed the body smell of the mother who has just given birth to her youngest a few months ago. I noticed the strange behavior of the father.

A woman detainee has asked the doctor to do something about the conditions and neglect of the children. So far nothing has ~~happen~~. The detainee told me it seems one child is under developed.

been done for the children
In the kitchen the father help himself to food first. When he put a plate of food in front of a little child, he makes no attempt to cut the food in pieces suitable for a small child to feed himself. He just let the child struggle by himself.

The mother was seen beating an 18 months child with a shoe. When a woman detainee tried to intervene, she was told by other detainees, it's the way we teach children.

I ~~myself~~ think that the parents are not normal mentally and they are unable to care for their children properly.

There should be an investigation about the state of health and hygiene of those children. The family's names are approximately as follow. (I had to ask a detainee whose writing of English is not very good to conv the names at the door of the parents).

Sent To child care coordinator

ust to let you know that a Taiwanese speaking lawyer/migration agent
who visits Villawood, , is going to see if she can see
them. office number is

Thanks for telling us about it

Coordinator
ChilOut

fax: 02 9332 2701
coordinator@chilout.org

The exploitation of Detainees in the Immigration Detention Centres

If they wish to, detainees are employed by GSL inside the detention Centre. They work ~~as cooks~~ in the kitchen, ~~or~~ garbage details, ~~etc...~~ ^{with force}

For a full week of work they are paid \$70.00. But they are not paid in cash. They Are paid in phone cards (Telstra cards, local calls only) and in **cigarettes** GSL pays only \$7.00 for a phone card that is resold at \$10.00 to the working Detainee. From their miserable earnings the detainees are not even able to buy a Card to phone to their families overseas

Another health hazard is the meals time.

Breakfast at 7 am to 8 am. For those who slept in, they have to do without and Some detainees sleep in because they watch TV most of the night since they are Bored all day.

Lunch at 11.30 to 12.30.

Dinner at the unholy time of 16.30 to 17.30, meaning there is a gap of **Thirteen and half hours** between the previous evening meal and breakfast How beneficial to children and teenagers.

Detainees employed in the kitchen and handling food do not pass any health Check. A detainee working in the kitchen was observed suffering from Ringworms. He was not removed from kitchen duties.

Obviously Australian Health Regulations are not applied in the detention camps. In spite that the camps are situated on Australia territory

Detention is used to deter people to come to Australia illegally. Is it Necessary to cause health injuries to deter them?

Amina Daligand

2nd July 2015

Mrs Amina Daligand

Senator the Hon A. Vanstone
Minister of Immigration and Multicultural
And Indigenous Affairs, PO Box 25
Belconnen ACT 2616

FAX 6264 4466

28/10/2005

Dear Minister

During my visit to the centre, I have found out that GSL is misleading the Muslim detainees by providing them with non Halal (not allowed) meat and telling them it is Halal. who delivers meat at the detention centre is not a halal butcher. Previously the Muslim detainees were provided which they believe are halal. But now they are given which are not halal. This is very upsetting in this time of Ramadan. Why is GSL giving false information to the detainees?

Also I have found that the detainees' health is put at risk because of the inadequate supply of vegetables. They are continuously fed corn and peas. They should have spinach for iron and they should be given vegetables according to the season as these cost less as well as being beneficial to health. The so called shampoo and body wash provided are hardly anything more than detergent and are causing serious scalp and skin problems to detainees.

Detainees in Immigration Centres are not criminals. Some have the ^{status} of refugees under the Geneva Convention. All should be treated humanely. Another shocking condition is the payment of those who work in phone cards (on which GSL make a profit) and CIGARETTES. As GSL not heard of the danger of lung cancer and of the Campaign to stop people smoking?

It is time that a thorough investigation is initiated and measures taken to correct the above named conditions. I can assure you that a lot of people like me would be very pleased. I thank you for your attention.

Yours faithfully,

A.Daligand

C/C the Prime Minister J. Howard
P. Georgiou MP Member for Kooyong
The Hon B.Baird for Cook

FAX 6271 5414

FAX 03 9882 3773

FAX 9540 1587

Fax no THURSDAY

27/10/05

FAX : (02) 9649 7142

Assalamu alaikum

Brother

Villawood IDC kitchen management gives us _____, which are not halal. The first week of Ramadan they supplied us _____, which were halal. They stopped supplying those because those were bit more expensive.

The chicken meats are brought from _____ And all other meats are supplied from _____, which are doubtful.

We want you to investigate these butchery shop either they are halal or not. Thank You for your co-operation.

Regards,

Mohammed

Stg. 2, Villawood IDC

Telephone: (02) 8718 9200

Facsimile: (02) 8718 9206

26th Oct. 2005

15th July 2004

Family reunions or separations?

The immigration government policy claims to aim at reuniting families as it was shown yesterday at the Villawood immigration detention centre.

Between 8 am to 10 am the immigration officers attempted to coerce 5 families to move to Baxter detention where the mothers and children would be detained in separate houses. (Where even a window cannot be open at night without a security intervention) and the fathers would be kept inside the camps.

Three Chinese families and one Korean were taken to Baxter. The last family resisted and at visiting time we found them in a state of stress and fear. The mother was very pale and still shaken. The children were also very confused and traumatized. The father too was angry and shaken.

In Villawood they are visited by friends or relatives. The children go to school where they are doing well.

In Baxter they would be separated from the father/husband adding to their stress.

The connections made by friends/supporters would be terminated as the far away location of Baxter would not let us visit. A written application is required in order to visit Baxter.

During the visit another family was protesting from the roof of a small building. They were holding a large sign: no to 2 Baxter, we don't want 2 go.

The detainees fear that today there will be more attempts to take families to Baxter

This would confirm the lies of this government stating they are no children in detention.

A few days ago it was announced the government was throwing a life line to TPV holders. After years of incertitude they could apply for permanent visas. But... how many will be successful? How many will be deported by force?

A couple of tricks before the elections?

Of course the ideal solution would be to have applicants/refugees leaving in the community while waiting for their applications to be processed.

This would save a lot of money to us taxpayers and put the managers of the centers out of business.

MD

*Note: This is a copy of a letter I had sent to
the SM Herald*