

Submission No. 17

Date Received

The Secretary,
 Joint Standing Committee
 on Migration
 Fax 02 6277 4427

13th July '08

Dear Secretary,

RECEIVED
 14 JUL 2008

Re: Submission to Standing Committee
on Migration.

BY: MIG

In July '04, I became mother-in-law. He was in detention nearly 7 years by the time he was released. Asylum seekers from Iran who fled in similar circumstances were often released within months. I expect that we will never know why it took so long for to be free.

It is with his experience and others we came to know, that I ask you to consider the following submission.

The Federal Government needs to -

1. Abolish mandatory detention and replace with Reception Centres for the purposes of administration.

Unless there are concerns regarding the character or identity of a person, they should not be detained.

People could be cared for in the community. I'm told that Australia still has people in detention over 2 years. Under Sec 195a of the Migration Act, the Minister could release them into the Community Care Program run by the Red Cross while their situation is resolved.

Most other countries don't have detention and if so, it's short-term.

2. Give access to health care and the right to work to all people seeking asylum. Canada and Norway give the right to work almost immediately. Many people will have the skills we're looking for.

A simple amendment to the Regulations is all that is needed to allow all asylum seekers access to health care.

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3 Repeal the Migration Act under which asylum seekers are billed for the cost of their detention and waive existing debts. The cost of administering this process is reportedly greater than debts able to be repaid.

4 Claims for protection and asylum should be initially recorded by one to one interviews, rather than based on written applications.

Also, overhaul and simplify the way in which the R.R.T determines claims. Currently, decisions are not open and transparent and reasons for decisions are not given. Introduce a model that allows humanitarian claims to be assessed at the same time as refugee claims.

5 End privatisation of detention centres. I saw at first hand the lack of accountability with a private company in control of a detention centre. Current contracts expire in Dec. '08 and I'd like to think that this Labor Government, would not continue to allow a private company to profit from people seeking asylum and protection.

6 Re-configure the international situation in a fundamental way to help ensure that people don't need to leave and ensure that cooperative agreements we have with other countries don't lose integrity.

yours sincerely,
 Cynthia Pilli
 (Cynthia Pilli)

P.S. I'd greatly appreciate a message by phone or fax that my submission has been received and is sufficiently clear to read. If not, I'm happy to post the original to an address for the Committee.