

It is my belief that Mr John Howard has a mandatory duty to defend and uphold Australian law and Australian Courts and especially the High Court of Australia. So with the recent Federal Court ruling Mr. Howard and DIMIA must not send any assylum seekers back to their original country unless they can prove that it is safe in that country.

A part of this is to not threaten the people as they have in the past. A young friend of mine, unaccompanied by any family member, was detained on Nauru as a part of the governemnts 'Pacific Solution'. On many occasions he was in tears, depressed and scared as a result of the prospect of being sent back to Iraq. DIMIA's lack of understanding, decency and humanity is beyond belief.

This lack of concern and understanding continues when 12 young single men are being kept under intolerable conditions on Nauru, at our Governments instigation.

Governement needs to think more about the mental anguish of asylum seekers incarcerated for lengthy periods and once released there must be adequate support to help the people adjust into the community. Detention time must be kept to a minimum.

Greater funding and resources should be available to expediate the processing of asylum seekers applications. As soon as health, identity, security checks have been resolved completed asylum seekers should be release into community facilities until their claims may be fully processed. Assylum seekers must not be kept behind barbed wire - not kept in concentration campo conditions. They are not criminals to be held as prisoners, they are innocent, traumatised people who need our help.

Such treatment as solitary confinement is a crime against humanity. Officially, solitary confinement is not used in detention centres. Just by calling it the Management Unit does not change the fact that people are held in confinement bordering on sensory deprivation. Detainees are kept in solitary confinement- no court has found these people guilty of an offence, no court has ordered that the person be held in this manner. And the Governemnet insists that no court has power to ineterfere in the manner of detention.

It must be remembered that to come to Australia without authority and to seek asylum is not an offence against Australian law. These people are not illegals as Mr. Howard portrays. Article 14 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights gives all people the right to seek asylum in any territory they can reach. This governemnet has disregarded this agreement.

mandatroy detention is a moral wrong. The treatment of these people, in particular the children is reprrehensible, is inhumane and a crime.

We are supposed to be a counrty that gives everyone a fair go, who supports the underdog. I am saddened and disallusioned that my country has forgotten this and that people such as Mr. Howard and Amanda Vanstone can continue to subject innocent men, women and children to inhumane conditions.