



AUSTRALIAN
COUNCIL
FOR
INTERNATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT

ACFID Resolution No. 3/2017

Resolution on the closing of the Manus Island detention facility in PNG

Approved at ACFID Council AGM 01 November 2017

Preamble:

- A. Noting the Australian Government has closed the Manus Island detention centre on 31 October 2017 and removed support to the refugees and asylum seekers held on the island.
- B. Noting that over the past 12 months, the suffering of around 2100 people who remain on Nauru and Manus Island under Australia's offshore processing policy has continued unabated—with 3 men held on Manus Island having died, 2 by suicide.
- C. Noting that UNHCR recently stated that it “is profoundly troubled by the mounting risk of offshore processing arrangements and their extraordinary human toll” and expressed concern for the health and well-being of the people being detained, noting the inadequacy of health services, the discontinuation of vital torture and trauma services and the failure to consult the Manusian community about the planned changes.”¹
- D. Noting, the UN Human Rights Council Committee responsible for assessing Australia's adherence to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) recently criticised Australia's “chronic non-compliance” with its ICCPR obligations.²
- E. Noting that Australia's three-year term on the UN Human Rights Council will increase external scrutiny on Australia's human rights record, and;
- F. Concerned that Australia's treatment of people held on Nauru and Manus Island will significantly undermine its capacity to advocate for improvements in human rights conditions in other nations.
- G. Noting that while 1783 of the people held on Nauru and Manus Island have been found to need refugee protection, just 54 refugees have been resettled to the United States to date under a resettlement arrangement negotiated last year.³

¹ UNHCR: Australia must prevent looming emergency in Papua New Guinea, 18 October 2017 -

<http://www.unhcr.org/news/press/2017/10/59e8a0384/unhcr-statement-australia-must-prevent-looming-humanitarian-emergency-papua.html>

² Ben Doherty, 'Unacceptable': UN committee damns Australia's record on human rights, The Guardian, 19 October 2017 -

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2017/oct/19/unacceptable-un-committee-damns-australias-record-on-human-rights>

³ Heather Higginbottom, Time Magazine (2017). *You Probably Missed the Big Story Buried in the Latest Trump Leaks*, 10 August 2017: <http://time.com/4894058/donald-trump-malcolm-turnbull-refugees-famine/>

- H. Welcoming that Australia was elected to the UN Human Rights Council on 16 October 2017 for a three-year term to commence in January 2018.
- I. Recalling that at the 2016 AGM, ACFID members voted to condemn the Australian Government's policy of sending asylum seekers and refugees to Nauru and Manus Island.

ACFID Council resolves that:

1. The people seeking asylum, and those already found to be refugees, who have been detained on Manus and Nauru for over four years due to Australian Government policies are the legal and moral responsibility of the Australian Government and not the Governments of PNG or Nauru;
2. Urgent humanitarian action is needed by the Australian Government to bring a cessation to the suffering of people with high rates of mental ill health due to Australia's offshore detention practice;
3. The Australian Government must bring all refugees and people seeking asylum to Australia while determinations are made about durable solutions for each of them.

Moved: Karine Laroche, Union Aid Abroad - APHEDA

Seconded: Matthew Maury, CEO, TEAR Australia