



AUSTRALIAN
COUNCIL
FOR
INTERNATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT

ACFID Resolution No.3/2016

Resolution on condemning Australia's policy of offshore detention

Approved at the ACFID AGM 26 October 2016

Regarding: The Australian Government's policy of sending asylum seekers and refugees to Nauru and Manus Island in Papua New Guinea.

People seeking asylum who arrive to Australia or an external Australian territory (such as Christmas Island) by boat are sent to Nauru or Manus Island. The goal of this policy is to deter people from trying to seek asylum by boat. As at 31 August 2016, 823 people are detained on Manus Island and 410 people, including 49 children, are detained on Nauru.¹

Many organisations and individuals have spoken out about the dire conditions on Nauru and Manus Island, and the subsequent physical and mental harm to adults and children detained there. The harm caused to people on Nauru and Manus Island is the responsibility of the Australian Government. Australia set up the detention centres, Australia sends people to these detention centres, and the National Audit Office estimates that Nauru and Manus costs Australia over \$573,000 per person detained, per year.²

The UNHCR and members of the United Nations Human Rights Council have raised concerns that Australia's offshore processing policy breaches the human rights of the asylum seekers and refugees detained on Manus and Nauru. Earlier this month the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child identified on Nauru 'inhuman and degrading treatment including physical, psychological and sexual abuse against asylum seeking and refugee children'³. The Supreme Court of Papua New Guinea had found that detention on Manus Island contravenes PNG's

¹ Department of Immigration and Border Protection, *Immigration Detention and Community Statistics* (31 August 2016)
www.border.gov.au/ReportsandPublications/Documents/statistics/immigration-detention-statistics-31-aug-2016.pdf.

² Australian National Audit Office, *Offshore Processing Centres in Nauru and Papua New Guinea: Procurement of Garrison Support and Welfare Services* (13 September 2016) www.anao.gov.au/work/performance-audit/offshore-processing-centres-nauru-and-papua-new-guinea-procurement.

³ <https://un.org.au/tag/nauru/>

constitutionally-protected right to liberty. Amnesty International's recent report on the conditions on Nauru, 'Island of Despair', states that the Australia's processing of refugees and asylum-seekers on Nauru is a deliberate and systematic regime of neglect and cruelty, and amounts to torture under international law.⁴

ACFID:

1. Condemns the Australian Government's policy of sending asylum seekers and refugees to Nauru and Manus Island;
2. Applauds ACFID members and others who continue to highlight the harm caused to children and adults detained on Nauru and Manus Island;
3. Affirms that Australia's offshore detention policy undermines the credibility of Australia's bid for a seat on the UN Human Rights Council for 2018 -2020; and
4. Calls on the Australian Government to take all necessary steps to urgently resettle the people detained on Nauru and Manus Island in a safe, humane and sustainable country of resettlement and to cease with a policy of offshore detention.

Mover: Nigel Spence, CEO, ChildFund Australia

Seconder: Ken Davis, International Program Manager, Union Aid Abroad
APHEDA

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⁴ Amnesty International, *Island of Despair: Australia's "Processing of Refugees on Manus"* (2016) static.amnesty.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/ISLAND-OF-DESPAIR-FINAL.pdf.