

# Project SafeCom News and Updates

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# 1. Fatima Measham: Must we remain so exceptionally cruel?

Eureka Street  
Fatima Measham  
23 May 2018

It would be difficult to pinpoint when it slipped, and different people would have different accounts, but Australia has been bogged in mediocrity for some time. It has sunk in critical areas: climate action, renewable energy, wildlife protection, education, broadband and other infrastructure.

But there is one area in which Australia has been remarkably exceptional: cruelty against people who came by boat to seek asylum.

If we hit pause for a moment on the moral ramifications of treating humans inhumanely, we can see clearly how innovative we have been at it. It does not matter which party is in government; neither seem to run out of ideas. The European far-right absolutely envies us for this.

Contracting private security firms to run facilities on sovereign islands. Designating a cut-off date for arrival after which no seaborne asylum seekers could ever be settled in Australia, even if found to be refugees. Criminalising public disclosure by offshore detention workers about conditions there. Keeping those conditions as humiliating as possible. Deliberately prolonging the determination of protection claims.

FULL STORY AT <https://www.eurekastreet.com.au/article.aspx?aeid=55660>

## 2. James Hathaway & Daniel Ghezelbash: There's a workable alternative to Australia's asylum policy

The bad example set by Australia is damaging a global system already in crisis. But it's not too late to change tack

The Guardian  
James Hathaway and Daniel Ghezelbash  
Fri 1 Jun 2018 04:00 AEST

Last week, Salim Kyawning, a Rohingya refugee on Manus Island, died after throwing himself off a moving bus. He had been stuck in Papua New Guinea for five years as the result of Australia's border protection policies. Push-backs at sea and offshore processing in Nauru and Papua New Guinea have been largely successful in stopping asylum seeker boats from reaching Australia. This has come at a high cost. Poor conditions and indefinite limbo are taking their toll on refugees held offshore. 10 refugees sent to Nauru and Manus Island have died since offshore processing was reintroduced in 2012. Salim's death was the third apparent suicide on Manus Island in the past year. Approximately 1,655 refugees and asylum seekers remain on Nauru and Manus Island. Many face acute physical and mental health issues, exacerbated or brought on from their treatment at the hands of the Australian government. There are also questions around the ethics of shifting responsibility for refugees from the wealthiest to some of the poorest nations in the region. Many Australians are deeply uncomfortable with the current policy. But options are framed in binary terms. Either accept the current cruel system, or face a resumption of asylum seeker boats and the inevitable deaths at sea.

But there is a workable alternative. A collective and cooperative regional approach could enhance refugee protection, while maintaining many aspects of the current approach that the Australian government holds dear. This includes the idea that the arrival of a refugee in a specific country should not necessarily equate to permanent settlement there, the preference for admitting refugees through the resettlement program, and discouraging asylum seekers from risking their lives at sea. The unilateral way in which Australia has pursued these policies has undermined refugee protection and set a bad example for other governments. But these policies can form part of a humane refugee policy, if used as part of a broader collective regional response.

FULL STORY AT <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/may/31/theres-a-workable-alternative-to-australias-asylum-policy>

## 3. Mark Isaacs: There's No Escape From Australia's Refugee Gulag

One branch of Canberra's notorious offshore detention system has closed. But the men who were imprisoned there are now stranded on a remote Pacific island that doesn't want them.

ForeignPolicy.com  
BY MARK ISAACS  
APRIL 30, 2018, 7:34 AM

MANUS ISLAND, Papua New Guinea — When I first entered the Manus Island detention center in early November 2017, I was confronted with an apocalyptic scene. Toilets overflowed with urine and feces; campfires burned in litter-filled corridors; blood-red graffiti riddled the walls; and zombielike figures lay slumped at odd angles on dirty mattresses and tables. Australia operated and financed this immigration detention center in Papua New Guinea, 758 miles from the Australian mainland's northernmost point.

I had arrived in the midst of a standoff between the Australian government and the refugees and asylum-seekers it had imprisoned there. After embarking on the treacherous boat journey from Indonesia to Australia, these men were intercepted by the Royal Australian Navy and transferred to Manus Island, where they were left for more than four years with little idea of what the future held and if they would ever be granted asylum.

In April 2016, Papua New Guinea's Supreme Court ruled that the detention of refugees and asylum-seekers on Manus Island was unconstitutional. Because the people held there did not arrive in Papua New Guinea of their own volition, the court ruled that they had not broken immigration law; therefore, keeping them in indefinite detention violated their constitutional rights. Eighteen months later, the Australian government was trying to circumvent Papua New Guinea's domestic laws by transferring detainees to three new "open" centers on the island. By allowing refugees and asylum-seekers free movement outside the centers, the Australian government could claim the people weren't imprisoned.

FULL STORY AT <https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/04/30/theres-no-escape-from-australias-refugee-gulag/>

## **4. Michelle Grattan: Peter Dutton's bid for more crime-fighting power has bought him a fight**

The Conversation

By Michelle Grattan

Updated May 04, 2018 09:30:30

No-one should be surprised that the Home Affairs department, with its ambitious Minister Peter Dutton and his activist secretary, Mike Pezzullo, is feeling its oats. When Malcolm Turnbull granted Mr Dutton his wish for a mega department, it was obvious how things would go.

Now we are seeing a power play which has set Mr Dutton and Foreign Minister Julie Bishop at odds, and raised questions about striking the right balances in a cyber age that brings new threats but also new invasive technology to counter them.

The issue immediately at hand is whether Home Affairs can drag the Australian Signals Directorate (ASD) — a defence-aligned organisation that spies electronically on foreign targets — into the fight against a broad range of crime in Australia.

FULL STORY AT <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-05-04/peter-dutton-asd-cyber-security-warfare-defence-afp/9725938>

## **5. Richard Ackland: Peter Dutton's power grabs may yet be his undoing**

The fate of Amber Rudd offers some hope to Australians who disapprove of Dutton and his methods

The Guardian

Tue 8 May 2018 06.34 AEST

Richard Ackland

Britain's home secretary, Amber Rudd, resigned last week over an immigration scandal the unpleasantness of which would have made our Peter Dutton proud.

Ms Rudd was supposed to be implementing a harsh policy of deportations, sending back immigrants to the Caribbean who had arrived in Britain over a period of 20 years from 1948.

Known as the Windrush generation, after the ship that brought them from Jamaica, the immigrants arrived under a program designed to fill labour shortages at cheap rates. Many stayed on in Britain while a large proportion had a tenuous legal status because their documentation was incomplete.

While Rudd was telling her prime minister, Theresa May, that she was aiming at "increased forced removals by more than 10% over the next few years" she was simultaneously telling a Commons committee, "We do not have targets for removals".

As Rudd shows, saying misleading things can be more catastrophic to a political career than running a deliberately inhumane policy.

On home turf, home affairs minister Dutton, also has responsibility for immigration, refugees and asylum seekers, yet he can revel with impunity in the inhumanity of his dead-end scheme of permanent detention.

He can seek to undermine the rule of law with rabble-rousing attacks on judges, magistrates and members of tribunals handling refugee and immigration cases. He has floated a “quasi election” proposal whereby the public would be invited to approve lawyers for judicial positions. He claims that lawyers who act for asylum seekers are “unAustralian”.

FULL STORY AT <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/may/08/peter-duttons-power-grabs-may-yet-be-his-undoing>

## **6. Human Rights Commission pushes back against Peter Dutton bid for more powers**

Home affairs minister already has too much discretion over cancellation of visas and tribunal process should remain, groups say

The Guardian  
Paul Karp  
Sat 12 May 2018 07.57 AEST

The Human Rights Commission has lobbied against expanding the home affairs minister and department’s powers to make visa cancellation decisions without a merits review and even called for them to be wound back.

Parties including the Refugee Council and the Federation of Ethnic Communities’ Council have made submissions to a parliamentary inquiry reviewing cancellation of visas on character grounds, warning that Peter Dutton already has too much discretion.

Dutton is on a campaign to expand the powers of the Home Affairs Department to make decisions without review by the administrative appeals tribunal (AAT) on questions of merit, which allows the tribunal to exercise discretion to set aside or vary decisions.

In March the government initiated a review, asking the joint standing committee on migration to review visa cancellations made on character or criminal grounds including the “present levels of duplication associated with the merits review process”.

In a submission to that review, the Australian Human Rights Commission said that the merits review is “a vital safeguard in avoiding error”.

The commission noted that the minister was able to set aside decisions of the AAT in certain circumstances “contrary to the ordinary process of merits review”.

FULL STORY AT <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2018/may/12/human-rights-commission-pushes-back-against-peter-dutton-bid-for-more-powers>

## **7. Facial matching system risks racial bias, Human Rights Law Centre warns**

Submission says bill would disproportionately affect ethnic minorities, and damage freedom of assembly and expression

The Guardian  
Paul Karp  
Wed 30 May 2018 06.12 AEST

Facial matching technology proposed by the government risks racial bias and would have a chilling effect on the right to freedom of assembly without further safeguards, the Human Rights Law Centre has said.

The warning is contained in a submission to a parliamentary committee inquiry examining the Coalition’s proposal for the home affairs department to collect, use and disclose facial identification information.

The facial matching system was agreed to in principle by states in October, but has since led to overreach warnings from Victoria and the Law Council of Australia.

Concerned parties have warned the Coalition’s identity matching services bill allows access to facial verification data by the private sector and local governments, and that it could be used to prosecute low-level crimes.

FULL STORY AT <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2018/may/30/facial-matching-system-is-racist-human-rights-law-centre-warns>

## 8. 'If GetUp want a fight, they'll get one': Peter Dutton under siege in his own seat

Sydney Morning Herald

By Michael Koziol

First published 2 June 2017 — 12:00am

He is arguably the most divisive figure in Malcolm Turnbull's government: Immigration Minister Peter Dutton, the Queensland cop turned political warrior who controls the country's borders with an iron fist.

Touted in some circles as the next Liberal Party leader and possibly prime minister, Mr Dutton nonetheless faces an uphill (and expensive) battle in the most basic of MPs' duties: retaining his seat of Dickson in Queensland.

With his margin slashed at the last election to just 1.6 per cent, left-wing activists have sniffed their opportunity to dispatch their conservative bête noir.

But the Liberal National Party is digging in to save Mr Dutton, asking the Australian Electoral Commission to redraw the electoral map to his benefit at the expense of surrounding seats and MPs.

Progressive lobby group GetUp has raised a war chest of almost \$225,000 in just one week to be unleashed against Mr Dutton in a campaign of doorknocking, robo-calls and giant billboards.

"We really see him as a threat to our democracy," GetUp director Paul Oosting said. "We see his views as very extreme and even at odds with the views of many Coalition voters."

Mr Oosting, above, said GetUp's foot soldiers will focus on local issues relevant to voters, such as schools, climate change and funding for public institutions like the ABC - rather than Mr Dutton's refugee policies.

But a confident Mr Dutton told Fairfax Media he had been inundated with support, eliciting commitments of \$650,000 to buttress his own campaign since GetUp's announcement.

"If GetUp want a fight, they'll get one," he said, describing the lobby group as a "front" for the Greens, Labor and the militant Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union. "I don't intend to lose to GetUp."

The seat of Dickson will be a focal point in the crucial battleground of Queensland, where Labor leader Bill Shorten has campaigned tirelessly this year. The state is likely to decide the election outcome.

FULL STORY AT <https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/if-getup-want-a-fight-theyll-get-one-peter-dutton-under-siege-in-his-own-seat-20170529-gwfde3.html>

## 9. 'Graveyard of dreams': Julian Burnside on the heartbreaking plight of refugees

New film Border Politics documents the harsh treatment of asylum seekers by western democracies

The Guardian

Luke Buckmaster

Thu 3 May 2018 04.00 AEST

(Border Politics is showing as part of the Human Rights Arts and Film festival in Melbourne on 12 and 16 May, and in select cinemas around Australia from 13 June)

In a scene from the Australian documentary Border Politics, presenter Julian Burnside AO QC visits a strange and surreal garbage dump on the Greek island of Lesbos, located off the coast of Turkey. Strewn across beautiful grassy hills, with aqua blue water visible in the background, is the unsettling sight of thousands upon thousands of life jackets.

Many refugees go through Turkey to get across Europe, and Lesbos is a common jumping-off point. The jackets are stacked in huge mounds, among bits and pieces of other detritus including clothes and parts of boats. They are, perhaps, an accidental monument to the journey of the refugees, whose fates are uncertain.

Many years ago Burnside, a veteran barrister who became a refugee rights advocate after working on the 2001 Tampa case in an action against the Australian government, acquired the steely and unflappable demeanour we associate with high-profile lawyers. And yet, as he sits in front of one of the mounds, contemplating how every life jacket "represents somebody's dreams of safety, of a better life", and reflects on this grim place as "a graveyard of a million dreams", you can see he is struggling to keep it together.

"You sort of get hardened to a lot of stuff," he tells Guardian Australia. "But there I was, with those life jackets, suddenly faced directly with unexpected evidence of really big, human problems of the sort I had never seen before. It had quite an effect."

Border Politics has its world premiere on Saturday at the Human Rights Arts and Film festival. In it, director Judy Rymer follows Burnside as he travels the globe, examining the harsh treatment of refugees at the hands of western democracies.

FULL STORY AT <https://www.theguardian.com/film/2018/may/03/graveyard-of-dreams-julian-burnside-on-the-heartbreaking- plight-of-refugees>

## **10. Home affairs boss accused of 'cover up' in Peter Dutton au pair case**

Michael Pezzullo refuses to answer dozens of questions about use of ministerial discretion to grant visas

The Guardian  
Helen Davidson  
Tue 22 May 2018 17.57 AEST

The head of the home affairs department, Michael Pezzullo, has refused to answer dozens of questions about Peter Dutton's use of ministerial discretion to grant visas to two au pairs.

In a Senate estimates hearing on Tuesday, the Labor senator Murray Watt suggested Pezzullo was engaging in a "cover up" by taking all questions on notice and declining to refer any to the departmental staff beside him.

In 2015 a young woman was detained at Brisbane airport, reportedly on the suspicion she was going to conduct paid work while on a tourist visa.

Australian Associated Press has reported the young woman made a phone call to a contact and was "quickly" granted a new visa allowing her to enter the country, through the ministerial intervention of Dutton, now the home affairs minister.

Further details have been stuck in a long-running freedom-of-information battle between AAP and the department.

FULL STORY AT <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2018/may/22/home-affairs-boss-accused-of-cover-up-in-peter-dutton-au-pair-case>

## **11. MEDIA RELEASE: Another refugee dies on Manus**

Refugee Action Coalition  
May 22, 2018  
Ian Rintoul 0417 275 713

A 32-year-old Rohingya refugee has died on Manus Island.

Reports indicate that the refugee was killed after he jumped from a moving bus and was struck by its wheels of the bus, around 11am very near to West Haus refugee compound.

Most refugees on Manus believe that the man's death was suicide.

The Rohingya refugee had suffered for a long time with a medical problem, for which had previously been medivacced to Australia for treatment.

"This refugee's death is one more reason to evacuate Manus Island and bring all refugees and asylum seekers to Australia," said Ian Rintoul, spokesperson for the Refugee Action Coalition

"He should never have been on Manus Island. He should not have been sent there in 2013. He should not have been returned there after he was brought to Australia for medical treatment in 2014.

"Peter Dutton is responsible for yet another death in offshore detention."

FULL STORY AT <http://www.refugeeaction.org.au/?p=6807>

## **12. Rohingya refugee held on Manus Island dies in motor vehicle incident**

Asylum Seeker Resource Centre says man suffered head injuries after being seen 'coming out of a moving vehicle'

The Guardian  
Helen Davidson  
Tue 22 May 2018 13.56 AEST

A Rohingya refugee has died in a violent motor vehicle incident on Manus Island.

The man was witnessed "coming out of a moving vehicle", according to the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre, and suffered "very serious head injuries".

He died at the scene, the organisation said. "It is not know who else was in the vehicle."

The man, whose identity is not being released until his family is notified, had a long history of physical and mental illness and had been on Manus for more than five years.

A few years ago he was sent to Australia for medical treatment but was returned, according to the journalist and refugee Behrouz Boochani.

FULL STORY AT <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2018/may/22/rohingya-refugee-held-on-manus-island-dies-in-motor-vehicle-incident>

### **13. Manus Island refugee dies in apparent suicide**

ABC News Online  
Tuesday May 22, 2018, 2:13pm

Police on Manus Island say a refugee has died in a "very unfortunate" apparent suicide.

The Rohingya man was travelling from refugee accommodation into the island's main town shortly after 11:00am when he died.

Manus province police commander David Yapu said the man's body had been taken to the local hospital and officers were speaking to other refugees who witnessed the "very unfortunate situation".

"My condolences to his immediate family," Mr Yapu said.

"This is something that we were all caught by surprise."

The man is the seventh asylum seeker sent to Manus Island by Australia who has died.

The last three of those deaths — all of which have occurred in the past 12 months — have been apparent suicides.

The Asylum Seeker Resource Centre said the latest death showed the impact of offshore detention on the men's mental health.

FULL STORY AT <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-05-22/manus-island-refugee-dead-after-jumping-from-moving-bus/9786852>

### **14. Vigil to be held on Manus Island after death of Rohingya refugee**

Police say asylum seekers are struggling to cope and warn of more suicides

The Guardian  
Helen Davidson  
Fri 25 May 2018 16.20 AEST

On Friday evening, refugees and asylum seekers on Manus Island will hold a vigil for Salim, the seventh of their group to die on the island, and the third apparent suicide in less than a year. Supporters in Sydney and Melbourne will join them.

Salim, a father of three in his 50s, died on Tuesday after jumping out of a moving vehicle. He had been on Manus Island for almost five years, under Australia's offshore immigration policy.

Salim was a Rohingya from Myanmar – a stateless man with no country claiming him. Because he sought asylum by boat, Australia would not take him. PNG gave him refugee status, but as a developing country that struggles to provide healthcare to its own citizens, Salim's ailments were beyond it.

On Manus Island, the Australian-financed contractors scaled back healthcare and other services, and by all appearances he fell through the cracks. The Australian director of Human Rights Watch, Elaine Pearson, said Rohingya refugees were not able to return home, given the situation in Myanmar. "It's a travesty that Australia has forced them to spend the last five years playing a waiting game on a remote Pacific island while living in an insecure environment with cutbacks to mental health and other services."

FULL STORY AT <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2018/may/25/vigil-to-be-held-on-manus-island-after-death-of-rohingya-refugee>

## 15. Behrouz Boochani: Salim fled genocide to find safety. He lost his life in the most tragic way

It's the third suicide in under a year, the seventh death of a refugee on Manus Island

The Guardian  
Behrouz Boochani  
Fri 25 May 2018 15.06 AEST

It's pouring rain. As usual, the sky tries to wring every single cloud and squeeze out every single drop. A rainy day ... right after a day full of nightmares.

A rainy day ... to cleanse, to wash away the sorrow, to eliminate the grief, to stop the inhumanity, to end the viciousness and barbarity. A rainy day ... after another death on Manus.

Salim died on Tuesday morning. He committed suicide. He was riding the bus that takes the refugees to town. He got up off his seat, he opened the door, and he jumped out. And moments later the wheels of the vehicle ran over his head. He was left there crushed on the concrete.

Another suicide, another extreme set of circumstances. The third death by suicide on Manus in under a year, the seventh death of a refugee on Manus in total. When I say suicide, I am using the definition that the police use to describe the death.

FULL STORY AT <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/may/25/salim-fled-genocide-to-find-safety-he-lost-his-life-in-the-most-tragic-way>

## 16. Refugees mourn Rohingya asylum seeker who died after jumping from moving bus

ABC News Online  
By Papua New Guinea correspondent Eric Tlozek  
Posted Sat May 26, 2018 at 9:24am

Memorials have been held around Australia and in Papua New Guinea for a Rohingya refugee who died on Manus Island this week.

Salim Kyawning, 52, jumped from a moving bus on Tuesday.

He is the seventh asylum seeker from Manus Island to die, and the men remaining on the island said his death highlights serious concerns about the health care and support they receive.

Mr Kyawning had a wife and three children in Myanmar.

A close friend and fellow Rohingya refugee, who wished to remain anonymous, said the family has been devastated by his death.

"If anyone can do, please, please, please do something for his family," he said.

FULL STORY AT <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-05-26/manus-island-refugees-remember-rohingya-man-who-died/9803314>

## 17. Labor's internal fight over refugee policy heats up with Ged Kearney speech

Batman MP expected to call for social security support in maiden speech to parliament

The Guardian  
Amy Remeikis  
Mon 21 May 2018 08.20 AEST

The fight over Labor's refugee policy is gearing up, with the new Batman MP, Ged Kearney, expected to lay the first signpost for where the debate is headed in her maiden speech to parliament on Monday.

With Labor's national conference approaching in July, the battlelines over numerous policy positions are being drawn up. Left-aligned members plan to push for a Buffett rule on minimum tax rates for the wealthy, and for branch members to have a say in Senate preselections.



But it's refugee policy, a flashpoint of the fight between the left and the right at the 2015 national conference, which Bill Shorten and the right ultimately won, that is shaping up as one of the biggest battles.

A draft proposal put together by the immigration spokesman, Shayne Neumann, restates Labor's commitment to move asylum seekers out of mandatory detention within 90 days, and to raise the refugee intake from 18,750 to 27,000. But it makes no mention of Manus Island or Nauru.

The 90-day processing rule would not cover refugees on Nauru or Manus, given that they have already been processed.

But Kearney, whose seat is considered one of the most progressive in the nation, will call for action over what has become indefinite detention on Manus and Nauru.

FULL STORY AT <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2018/may/21/labors-internal-fight-over-refugee-policy-heats-up-with-ged-kearney-speech>

## **18. Labor's Ged Kearney says indefinite offshore immigration detention 'shameful'**

MP says in first speech to parliament that Australia cannot afford 'ongoing cost to national psyche'

The Guardian  
Katharine Murphy  
Mon 21 May 2018 16.04 AEST

Australia as a wealthy country can afford to take more refugees, but it cannot afford "the ongoing cost to our national psyche" of subjecting asylum seekers to "shameful" indefinite detention in offshore immigration centres, Labor's Ged Kearney has said.

Kearney used her first speech to parliament on Monday to telegraph her intention to work towards a "humane refugee policy" during her time in federal politics – a public signal before a policy debate expected at the Labor conference in July and a state party conference in Victoria this coming weekend.

The member for Batman said the plight of asylum seekers was "a passionate and emotional issue" for her local constituents and she used Monday's speech to identify that the looming internal battle will be around the issue of indefinite detention.

Kearney said people currently detained on Manus Island and Nauru must be permanently resettled "as a priority", but the speech did not specify whether that resettlement should be in Australia or in a third country.

Australia, she said, must ensure that indefinite detention "never happens again". Kearney also said all refugees needed to have access to social services and income support.

"I think proudly of the great bipartisan achievements of both sides of this house: of Malcolm Fraser and Bob Hawke, who with bipartisan support provided sanctuary to those fleeing the consequence of wars in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, and later from the events of Tiananmen Square," Kearney said.

"I cannot comprehend how a nation that provided a safe home to so many in the wake of world war two – including our large Jewish community of Holocaust survivors – allowed the Tampa and the children overboard scandal to evolve into the shameful policy of indefinite detention on Manus and Nauru.

FULL STORY AT <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2018/may/21/labors-ged-kearney-says-indefinite-offshore-immigration-detention-shameful>

## **19. Victorian Labor conference to debate ending offshore immigration processing**

Exclusive: Labor for Refugees calls on party to close camps and bring asylum seekers to Australia, if it forms government

The Guardian  
Katharine Murphy  
Wed 23 May 2018 12.14 AEST

The Victorian state Labor conference is to debate an urgency motion calling for an end to offshore immigration detention and the transfer of all remaining asylum seekers to the Australian mainland within 90 days.

The state conference this weekend will discuss Labor's policy towards asylum seekers and refugees, regarded internally as front-running the debate on the hot-button issue which will play out during the ALP's national conference in July.

An urgency motion, drafted by Labor for Refugees and seen by Guardian Australia, calls on the ALP, “when in federal government, to close offshore detention centres, transit centres and other camps on Manus and Nauru within the first 90 days, and to bring all the children, women and men who are refugees or seeking asylum remaining there to Australia”.

The preamble to the motion, drafted by the leftwinger Ilia Vurtel, and to be seconded by the independent Pauline Brown, notes that in the past few months, the courts have ordered that children be brought to Australia from Nauru because of the risk of self-harm.

FULL STORY AT <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2018/may/23/victorian-labor-conference-to-hear-motion-to-end-offshore-immigration-processing>

## **20. Q&A: Ged Kearney refuses to say whether detainees should be brought to Australia**

Jim Molan says he will speak to Peter Dutton about family taken in dawn raid by border force officers

The Guardian  
Helen Davidson  
Tue 29 May 2018 06.33 AEST

The Labor MP Ged Kearney has refused to say whether people on Manus Island and Nauru should be brought to Australia, but said she was sure a Labor government would intend to get people off the islands as fast as possible.

Kearney made the comments on the ABC’s Q&A program, where a fellow panel member, an architect of Operation Sovereign Borders, the retired general and now senator Jim Molan, agreed to talk to Peter Dutton about a family who had spent 84 days in detention after a dawn raid on their Biloea home by Australian Border Force officers.

“Indefinite detention is an appalling policy and for people to be detained without any hope of ever knowing when they’re going to move in to safety is appalling and it shouldn’t happen,” Kearney said. “I think we would hope that we could get them off those islands as quickly as possible ... and settled as quickly as possible. I’m sure that that would be the intention of a Labor government.”

She would not be drawn on whether they should be brought to Australia, suggesting it was politically unwise.

Over the weekend union representatives joined forces to shut down policy debate at the Victorian Labor conference.

“We have to increase our intake and Labor is looking at increasing our asylum seeker intake,” she said, calling for an increase in offshore assessments of refugees, as were conducted under Malcolm Fraser.

Molan said the Coalition government had “solved the problem” but “naive activists” were keeping people on Nauru and Manus Island by convincing them not to return to the countries they fled.

FULL STORY AT <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2018/may/29/qa-ged-kearney-refuses-to-say-whether-detainees-should-be-brought-to-australia>

## **21. Bill Shorten says Labor would 'stop the boats' as policy debate shut down at state conference**

ABC News  
By political reporter Jane Norman  
Updated Tue 20 May 2018 at 10:31am

Federal Opposition Leader Bill Shorten has declared a Labor Government would “stop the boats” and strongly indicated there will be no change in the party’s border protection policy.

In a sign of how sensitive this issue is, the Victorian Labor state conference today shut down a potentially damaging debate over the party’s policy on offshore processing.

The motion, drafted by Labor’s left, urged the party to “close the offshore detention centres, transit centres and other camps on Manus and Nauru within the first 90 days” of a Shorten government.

But shortly before debate was due to begin, two powerful unions, the AWU and CFMEU, teamed up to defer that motion — and all others — prompting cries of “shame” from the audience.

Earlier, Mr Shorten moved to counter the Coalition’s claims that Labor would “weaken” Australia’s tough border protection policies, declaring “a Labor Government will stop the boats”.

"The current Government would like to say that there'll be another policy; there won't be," he said.

FULL STORY AT <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-05-27/shorten-vows-to-stop-the-boats-vic-labor-defers-debate/9805320>

## 22. Bill Shorten defends shutdown of refugee debate at Victorian Labor conference

Labor MPs 'beyond disappointed' as Greens say opposition supporting Peter Dutton's 'campaign of misery'

The Guardian  
Paul Karp  
Mon 28 May 2018 12.24 AEST

Labor left MPs have expressed disappointment that the Victorian conference shut down a debate on imposing a 90-day time limit on offshore detention.

The procedural move to close the state conference early by the industrial left has been interpreted as protection of Bill Shorten's position by the Construction, Forestry, Maritime, Mining and Energy Union, and indicates that any major change to the party's platform on refugees at the national conference is unlikely.

The national conference will be rescheduled after the surprise announcement that five byelections are to be held on 28 July, with September and January now under consideration.

On Sunday the industrial left teamed up with the Labor right to close the Victorian state conference, shutting down urgency motions on live exports, gender inequality in superannuation, closure of offshore detention centres, the right to strike, the rate of Newstart and recognition of Palestine.

The same grouping also combined to vote against senators being preselected by an equal vote of rank and file members and affiliated union delegates to state conference.

FULL STORY AT <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2018/may/28/bill-shorten-defends-shutdown-of-refugee-debate-at-victorian-labor-conference>

## 23. Operation Sovereign Borders chief would have 'concerns' if Labor changed policy

Air Vice-Marshal Stephen Osborne sides with Coalition's current policy when asked if he shares Peter Dutton's views

The Guardian  
Katharine Murphy Political editor  
Mon 7 May 2018 13.19 AEST

The head of the government's border protection effort, Air Vice-Marshal Stephen Osborne, has said he would have "concerns" if a future Labor government changed the structure of Operation Sovereign Borders.

Osborne made a rare entry for a public official into a bitterly contested partisan debate when asked at a press conference on Monday whether he shared Peter Dutton's oft-repeated view that Labor's policies would restart asylum boats.

Osborne said the most "appropriate" way for him to express his views in relation to the question was to note that Operation Sovereign Borders "has been very successful now, it is almost four years without a venture".

"It is built on a very particular structure and, if we make any changes to that structure, I would have some concerns, and we will leave it at that," Osborne said.

The home affairs minister, appearing alongside Osborne, then shut down further questions about the Air Vice-Marshal's views.

FULL STORY AT <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2018/may/07/operation-sovereign-borders-chief-would-have-concerns-if-labor-changed-policy>

## 24. Doctors beg Australian Border Force to move terminally ill refugee off Nauru

ABF staff on the island have made repeated requests to Canberra for intervention

The Guardian  
Ben Doherty  
Thu 24 May 2018 04.00 AEST

Doctors on Nauru have pleaded with the Australian Border Force to move a terminally ill Afghan refugee off the island for palliative care.

The oldest Afghan Hazara held on Nauru, 63-year-old Ali\*, has advanced lung cancer and his prognosis, according to doctors familiar with his case, is "dire".

Ali's health has deteriorated precipitously over the last two months and doctors have repeatedly told the ABF he requires palliative care that cannot be provided on Nauru. He is currently in the Australian-built RPC1 camp on the island, which doctors on the island have said is "dangerously inadequate".

Members of the Afghan Hazara refugee community on Nauru have pleaded with doctors, departmental case managers and welfare organisations for him to be moved for treatment.

"He's very unwell, very unwell," a Hazara community member told the Guardian from Nauru. "The doctor told me he has only months left in his life, because of cancer in the last stage.

FULL STORY AT <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2018/may/24/doctors-beg-australian-border-force-to-move-terminally-ill-refugee-off-nauru>

## 25. In pain and in limbo: the Nauru refugee denied an interview for US resettlement

The only single woman denied an interview has a litany of health problems and alleges sexual harassment by officers

The Guardian  
Helen Davidson and Saba Vasefi  
Thu 31 May 2018 04.00 AEST

Ellie\* is in limbo. One of just a few single female refugees on Nauru, she is the only one who has not been granted an interview for US resettlement. She is also in pain, suffering a litany of health complaints including urinary incontinence that has lasted more than four years.

She is among a significant number of women on Nauru with gynaecological issues and other female-specific illnesses which doctors say the health providers are particularly ill-equipped to treat.

"I have many medical issues," Ellie says. "I'm suffering from incontinence, kidney stone, haemorrhoids, herpes, back and knee pain.

She also alleges sexual harassment by unnamed officers.

Dr Barri Phatarfod, a GP and president of Doctors4Refugees, says Ellie's case is indicative of the "traumatising" extra health issues faced by female detainees on Nauru, on top of widespread physical and mental illnesses.

"The main concern with gynaecological issues on Nauru is a recommendation by [International Health and Medical Services] that no gynaecological surgeries be done on Nauru," Phatarfod tells Guardian Australia.

FULL STORY AT <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2018/may/30/in-pain-and-in-limbo-the-nauru-refugee-denied-an-interview-for-us-resettlement>

## 26. Catherine Stubberfield: Facing the hardest separation

Sydney Morning Herald  
By Catherine Stubberfield  
15 May 2018 — 12:00am

Sitting in suburban Sydney, 68-year-old Hana is desperate for anyone to understand the pain of her family's separation. An Australian citizen, she has never met her youngest grandchild. "It's indecent," Hana sobs. "My daughters have been in Nauru for almost five years. It's too long."

In Nauru, 4000 kilometres away, Marwa bears the most striking resemblance to her mother. So too does her anguished expression. She and her daughters have all been recognised as refugees. But like too many others, they have nowhere to go.

“My mum talks to the ocean,” Marwa says, “asking for her children and grandchildren.” For one awful moment, I imagine my own mother being kept apart from the one-year-old grandson who is the light of our lives. The thought alone is harrowing.

Since January 2014, Australia has afforded the lowest processing priority to family visa applicants sponsored by permanent residents who arrived to Australia by sea. This has left hundreds of people living in the Australian community, indefinitely kept apart from loved ones. The challenge of rebuilding their lives is almost impossible with close family remaining in danger in countries including Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iraq. The uncertainty and stress are crippling.

FULL STORY AT <https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/facing-the-hardest-separation-20180514-p4zf7g.html>

## **27. Behrouz Boochani: The gay, transgender and bisexual men on Manus are forced into silence**

Alex was one of those men, experiencing even greater torment than other refugees because of his sexual orientation

The Guardian  
Behrouz Boochani  
Wed 16 May 2018 04.00 AEST

It was five years ago in Fox prison camp. A group of immigration officers accompanied by a number of interpreters burst in. All of a sudden, one of the officers stood on a chair precisely like a king’s representative in ancient times, like one of those men reading the king’s announcement for convicts. The officer took a piece of paper, and surrounded by dozens of refugees he started to read. The announcement was serious, decisive, to the point and threatening, like his voice. “Homosexuality is illegal in Papua New Guiana and considered as a crime. If anyone in the immigration detention engages in this behaviour, he will be sentenced to 14 years in prison”. It was a dire warning from the prison’s officials and directly targeted homosexual prisoners.

A few months later, Alex, an Iranian gay refugee, stood on the same chair, trembling with rage, and shouted with courage: “I am gay, and this is my sexual identity, I am gay and that’s why I left my country, I announce it loudly and clearly: I am gay.”

Many people gathered to listen to him. What was the story behind this? What made him speak out? Due to the lack of a private place, Alex and his boyfriend had made love in one of the toilets. When they had left the toilet, they ran into some people who started teasing them. It was the trigger for Alex to get up on the chair and give his short speech.

FULL STORY AT <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/may/16/the-gay-transgender-and-bisexual-men-on-manus-are-forced-into-silence>

## **28. 'A race to the bottom': how Australia imported its asylum seeker policies from the US**

At the height of the Tampa crisis, Australia turned to a US bureaucrat and asked for advice

The Guardian  
Ben Doherty  
Sun 6 May 2018 11.45 AEST

In August 2001, at the height of the Tampa crisis – 433 rescued asylum seekers on board a freight ship seeking landfall in Australia – the Australian government made a call to an American bureaucrat, then in Geneva, and asked him to the embassy.

Years earlier, the bureaucrat had been a key architect of America’s policies towards boat-borne asylum seekers seeking protection in the US, and it was this experience Australia wished to mine.

“This particular US policymaker was summoned to the Australian embassy in Geneva,” Dr Daniel Ghezelbash, senior lecturer at Macquarie law school, told a Sydney audience last month, “and was basically in crisis talks for two days providing detailed policy advice, which was the blueprint for the ‘Pacific solution’ and, by extension, the current Operation Sovereign Borders.”

Over several days of talks, a new Australian policy was born: the “Pacific solution”.

“It appears this advice was very influential in shaping the response of the Australian government,” Ghezelbash said. “There is no public record of exactly what was said.”

But the outcomes were apparent: offshore processing centres were established in PNG and Nauru, and asylum seekers entering Australian waters now – as a matter of public policy – found themselves removed from the country.

FULL STORY AT <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2018/may/06/a-race-to-the-bottom-how-australia-imported-its-asylum-seeker-policies-from-the-us>

## **29. Australia's refugee deal 'a farce' after US rejects all Iranian and Somali asylum seekers**

Donald Trump's travel ban influencing offshore processing system as 150 refugees wait for final assessment on Nauru

The Guardian  
Ben Doherty  
Tue 8 May 2018 16.54 AEST

Donald Trump's Muslim travel ban is influencing Australia's offshore processing system – with all Iranian and Somali refugees rejected for resettlement in the US.

The third version of Donald Trump's travel ban bars or limits entry to citizens of five Muslim-majority countries – Iran, Libya, Somalia, Syria and Yemen – as well as North Korea. The ban's constitutionality is currently being considered by the supreme court but is currently in effect.

About 150 refugees held in offshore processing on the island of Nauru have appointments with US officials this week, where they will discover final assessments of whether they have been accepted by America. So far, every Iranian and Somali applicant has been rejected.

At least one refugee has attempted suicide after being rejected. An Iranian woman had to be rescued from the sea near Ijuw late on Monday night after being told she could not go to the US.

"Everyone is just thinking they have no hope," one refugee told the Guardian by phone. "I have seen small children so distressed, a 12-year-old girl crying she is a like widow, asking what will happen to her life."

FULL STORY AT <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2018/may/08/australias-refugee-deal-a-farce-after-us-rejects-all-iranian-and-somali-asylum-seekers>

## **30. Comcare to appeal decision on Immigration worker sacked over tweets**

Canberra Times  
By Doug Dingwall  
16 May 2018 — 12:26pm

The federal government is appealing a ruling that found an Immigration Department worker was unlawfully sacked for tweets critical of asylum seeker policies.

Federal workplace insurer Comcare lodged the appeal on Monday, setting the scene for a fight in the Federal Court over the appeals tribunal's decision for Michaela Banerji to receive compensation.

The Administrative Appeals Tribunal decision redirected scrutiny to the Immigration Department's dismissal of Ms Banerji for tweeting criticisms of detention policies, and challenged Australian Public Service rules stopping public servants from expressing their political views on social media.

Ms Banerji took the government to the tribunal after federal workplace insurer Comcare refused to compensate her for the psychological condition that developed after she was sacked in 2013 over tweets from a pseudonymous Twitter account.

The tribunal overturned Comcare's decision and found she suffered depression and anxiety that could be classed an injury under federal compensation laws.

FULL STORY AT <https://www.canberratimes.com.au/politics/federal/comcare-to-appeal-decision-on-immigration-worker-sacked-over-tweets-20180516-p4zflp.html>

## **31. Almost 200 Commonwealth Games athletes and officials seek asylum in Australia**

Senate estimates hears 205 people have bridging visas and 190 of them have applied for protection

The Guardian  
Australian Associated Press  
Mon 21 May 2018 16.46 AEST

More than 200 Commonwealth Games athletes and officials remain in Australia after applying for various visas, with another 50 people staying on illegally.

There were 13,600 visas issued to athletes, team officials and others for the Gold Coast event.

A Senate committee has heard 8,103 people arrived on the visas and 7,848 have since left the country.

It has been revealed 205 people are now legally in the community on bridging visas while their applications for other categories of visas are considered.

"Most of those have applied for protection visas," Department of Home Affairs deputy secretary Malisa Golightly told senators in Canberra on Monday.

Golightly estimated about 190 had applied for protection, and 10 or 15 had applied for other visas.

Another 50 people remain unlawfully in the country, with one taken into immigration detention.

"We have had no contact with them," Golightly said. "We know they haven't left."

FULL STORY AT <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2018/may/21/almost-200-commonwealth-games-athletes-and-officials-seek-asylum-in-australia>

## **32. Authorities 'fast-tracking' some African athlete asylum applications: lawyer**

ABC Radio - RN Drive  
By Josh Robertson  
Thursday May 17, 2018

Australian immigration authorities appear to be "fast-tracking" bids for asylum by overseas athletes and sports officials after the Commonwealth Games, a leading refugee lawyer says.

David Manne, the executive director of Melbourne-based Refugee Legal, said his agency was acting for "quite a number of people" and it was possible there were 100 people nationally seeking refugee status.

Athletes who disappeared from the Commonwealth Games village on the Gold Coast last month, including from a number of African national teams, had until midnight on Tuesday to apply for asylum.

Mr Manne said a number of these asylum seekers had already received calls from the Department of Home Affairs and suggested the rapid response stood in contrast to the drawn-out handling of many other clients' applications.

"It does appear that people are being fast-tracked, that their claims are being looked at very quickly," he told the ABC.

"That's actually in and of itself not a bad thing at all because what we'd all expect, I think, and certainly our clients would hope for is a fair, but also an efficient and quick process.

"We act for thousands of people and for so many of them seeking asylum, it takes sometimes up to two years even get an interview about their case after they've applied.

FULL STORY AT <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-05-17/athletes-may-be-getting-fast-tracked-for-asylum-lawyer-says/9773210>

### **33. Peter Dutton says third country resettlement for Manus Island refugees 'a myth'**

ABC News

By political reporter Henry Belot

Posted May 07, 2018 13:16:15

Refugees on Manus Island who are not resettled in the United States will remain in Papua New Guinea, with Home Affairs Minister Peter Dutton saying it is a "myth" that other countries will be willing to take them.

The Federal Government has struck a deal with the Trump administration to resettle up to 1,200 refugees from offshore detention, but it is not clear whether all owed protection will be accepted.

Those who are not will remain permanently based in Papua New Guinea under a deal struck by the former Rudd Labor government in 2013, unless another nation is willing to accept them.

FULL STORY AT <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-05-07/peter-dutton-says-third-country-resettlement-option-a-myth/9734744>

### **34. Dutton looks at taking up New Zealand offer to resettle 150 refugees**

Home affairs minister says it will happen only if asylum seekers are banned from ever coming to Australia

The Guardian

Australian Associated Press

Fri 25 May 2018 17.56 AEST

Peter Dutton says he is willing to consider a New Zealand offer to resettle some refugees held in offshore detention, but only if they are banned from ever coming to Australia.

The home affairs minister has floated the prospect in a bid to pressure the opposition into supporting stalled legislation which would stop anybody who arrived by boat from ever reaching Australia's shores.

"We would have a look at ways in which we would utilise the offer of 150 places," Dutton told Sky News on Friday.

However, he raised the recent interception of a boat carrying 131 asylum seekers from Malaysia to New Zealand to highlight the ongoing threat of people-smuggling.

FULL STORY AT <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2018/may/25/dutton-looks-at-taking-up-new-zealand-offer-to-resettle-150-refugees>

### **35. Australia's cut to healthcare on Manus Island 'inexplicable', Amnesty says**

Group criticises counselling services cut when Manus refugees have one of highest mental illness rates in world

The Guardian

Helen Davidson

Fri 18 May 2018 04.00 AEST

The Australian government is trying to walk away from the human rights crisis it created on Manus Island, winding back health services while refugees and asylum seekers are still in its care, Amnesty International has said.

A report by the organisation, released on Friday, criticised the termination of mental health services despite the 700-strong refugee population on Manus having one of the highest rates of mental illness in the world, according to the UN.

"Last year two refugees committed suicide in Manus Island, illustrating the terrible price of confining vulnerable people to remote detention centres," said Graham Thom, refugee coordinator at Amnesty International Australia.

"In the wake of these tragedies Australia has inexplicably cut counselling and trauma services, just one of a raft of changes which will make it even harder for refugees and asylum seekers in Papua New Guinea to access healthcare."

The report is based on an Amnesty investigation conducted in November last year, one month after detainees were moved out of the processing centre and into other accommodation centres in Lorengau.

FULL STORY AT <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2018/may/18/australias-cut-to-healthcare-on-manus-island-inexplicable-amnesty-says>



## 36. Asylum seekers 'face destitution' as income support and housing cut off

Refugee advocates describe cuts, which will affect up to 100 people, as 'calculated cruelty to vulnerable people'

The Guardian  
Helen Davidson  
Thu 17 May 2018 13.33 AEST

The federal government is taking away income support and housing from up to 100 refugees and asylum seekers from Manus Island and Nauru who are currently in Australia for medical treatment.

The group, which includes families, elderly people and pregnant women, are among the more than 400 known as the "Let Them Stay" group, and the more than 260 that were party to a high court challenge in 2016.

They now face being forced into destitution, support services have said.

According to a number of refugee support sources, up to 100 people have been given appointments with the Department of Home Affairs, beginning on Thursday morning, in order to sign on to a "final departure bridging visa E" (BVE).

The BVEs have a six-month validity and can include the right to work, but will see the financial assistance and accommodation support for the people – who are in community detention – withdrawn.

FULL STORY AT <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2018/may/17/asylum-seekers-face-destitution-as-income-support-and-housing-cut-off>

## 37. Vinnies blasts 'cruel' cut in benefits to asylum seekers on medical treatment

John Falzon says move is part of a pattern to outsource government responsibility to charities and community groups

The Guardian  
Helen Davidson  
Sat 19 May 2018 09.59 AEST

The federal government's decision to strip income support and housing from asylum seekers transferred to Australia for medical treatment "beggars belief as an unprincipled act of cruelty", the head of one of Australia's largest charities has said.

The comments from the chief executive of the St Vincent de Paul Society, Dr John Falzon, came in response to the Department of Home Affairs targeting a cohort of up to 100 people on Thursday, transferring them to six-month bridging visas, which come with work rights, and withdrawing housing assistance and income support of about \$200 a fortnight.

A group of single adults who were moved on to bridging E visas (BVEs) last year had their visas rolled over for another six months.

FULL STORY AT <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2018/may/19/vinnies-blasts-cruel-cut-in-benefits-to-asylum-seekers-on-medical-treatment>

## 38. Suicidal refugee child should not be sent back to Nauru, psychiatrist says

Boy's long-running detention in Australia's offshore detention system is causing his depression, psychiatrist treating him in Taiwan says

The Guardian  
Ben Doherty and Saba Vasefi  
Sat 5 May 2018 06.00 AEST

A psychiatrist has said an acutely unwell child held within Australia's offshore detention regime should not be returned to Nauru because his long-running detention there is causing his mental illness.

The 17-year-old boy, who Guardian Australia will refer to as Hamid, is currently on the island of Taiwan, where he was taken, along with his mother, for health treatment.

Guardian Australia has reported on the treatment of his mother, Fatemeh, who was flown from Nauru after a delay of 18 months, for a heart operation. She has been treated on Taiwan.

Hamid, who had been held on Nauru since he was 11, was suffering from acute and worsening depression on the island. Since being taken to Taiwan with his mother he has had a number of meetings with a psychiatrist at the Taiwan Adventist hospital.

The psychiatrist has said he should not be sent back to Nauru.

“The depressive symptoms were not improved, moreover, he had persistent suicide ideation and some organised plans,” the latest psychiatrist’s report says. “I have already prescribed antidepressant for him and told his mother, who is also a patient with major depression, to accompany him.

FULL STORY AT <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/may/05/suicidal-refugee-child-should-not-be-sent-back-to-nauru-psychiatrist-says>

## **39. Iranian refugee and son at risk of suicide returned to Nauru against medical advice**

Fatemah and son, 17, taken from Taiwan in pre-dawn transfer to Australian-run centre

The Guardian  
Helen Davidson and Saba Vasefi  
Mon 14 May 2018 15.05 AEST

An Iranian refugee and her son have been returned to Nauru from Taiwan in a pre-dawn transfer which went against psychiatric advice that the son not be returned because his severe mental illness is caused by his detention.

Fatemah and her 17-year-old son, who Guardian Australia will refer to as Hamid, had been in Taiwan for two months after they were medically transferred from the Australian-run immigration centre.

Fatemah had been waiting 18 months for critical heart surgery but refused to be separated from Hamid, who was suicidal after more than five years on Nauru.

Psychiatric reports said Hamid’s mental illness was caused and exacerbated by his detention, and he should not be returned, but early on Thursday morning officers from the Australian Border Force took him and his mother from their Taipei accommodation and put them on a plane.

FULL STORY AT <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2018/may/14/iranian-refugee-and-son-at-risk-of-suicide-returned-to-nauru-against-medical-advice>

## **40. ‘They are our people’: Queensland town begs Dutton not to deport asylum seeker family**

Residents of Biloela picket federal court, which has delayed decision on forced removal of Tamil family who were taken in a dawn raid

The Guardian  
Helen Davidson  
Wed 2 May 2018 18.33 AEST

Residents of a small Queensland town and their supporters have picketed the federal court in Melbourne asking for an asylum seeker family forcibly removed in a dawn raid to be allowed to return home.

The family are facing deportation to Sri Lanka but on Wednesday the federal court judge delayed her decision on their appeal.

The family of four had overstayed their bridging visa by one day when officers from the Australian Border Force, as well as police officers and Serco guards, arrived at their home at 5am in early March, taking them to immigration detention in Melbourne.

Priya and Nadesalingam were give 10 minutes to pack for themselves and their two Australian-born daughters – nine-month-old Dharuniga and two-year-old Kopika.

On Wednesday the judge adjourned to review the arguments before making her decision, and requested the federal home affairs department not to deport the family in the meantime, said a friend of the family, Angela Fredericks.

FULL STORY AT <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2018/may/02/they-are-our-people-queensland-town-beg-dutton-not-to-deport-asylum-seeker-family>

## 41. Biloela residents bring fight to return 'loved' asylum seeker family home to Q&A panel

ABC News

By Rebeka Powell

Updated May 28, 2018

At dawn on March 5, Nadesalingam and Priya and their two Australian born daughters were taken from their home in Biloela and placed into custody by Border Force officials.

Almost three months later, the family remains in a detention centre in Melbourne.

Now Biloela locals Marie and Margot have made a public plea on Q&A to the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection, Peter Dutton, to allow the family to stay in Australia.

"Our town loved this little family and we want them to come home," Marie said.

"I personally have travelled, along with other people from Biloela, the 1,800 kilometres to Melbourne to visit and support this family in whatever way we can."

The Biloela community has refused to give up its fight to bring the family back to the Central Queensland township, while an online petition has garnered more than 100,000 signatures to date.

FULL STORY AT <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-05-28/biloela-asylum-seeker-family-discussed-on-qanda/9809344>

## 42. Filipino woman begs Peter Dutton not to deport her away from her son

Bernadette Romulo's son can't leave due to partial custody arrangement with his father

The Guardian

Australian Associated Press

Tue 8 May 2018 15.24 AEST

A Filipino woman has begged the minister for home affairs, Peter Dutton, to save her from deportation, saying she'll be torn away from her young son Giro, who cannot go with her.

Brisbane-based Bernadette Romulo was due to find out on Tuesday afternoon whether she and her overseas-born daughters – half-sisters to Giro – would be deported after 11 years in Australia.

Eight-year-old Giro was born in Australia and cannot leave due to partial custody arrangements with his Filipino-Australian father.

Romulo has been waging a social media campaign in a desperate bid to remain in Australia, including a change.org petition that's generated more than 22,000 signatures of support.

FULL STORY AT <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2018/may/08/filipino-woman-begs-peter-dutton-not-to-deport-her-away-from-her-son>

## 43. MEDIA RELEASE: Grave fears for Iranian hunger striker from Nauru

Refugee Action Coalition

May 7, 2018

Ian Rintoul - mobile 0417 275 713

Refugee advocates have serious fears for the welfare of Omid, a 24-year-old Iranian refugee from Nauru, who has been on hunger strike for over 30 days.

His condition has significantly deteriorated since he was hospitalised a couple of weeks ago. He has reached a critical stage in the hunger strike with growing concerns that he may have already suffered some long-term damage to his health.

"Omid's hunger strike is an absolute tragedy," said Ian Rintoul, spokesperson for the Refugee Action Coalition, "and the responsibility lies with Peter Dutton.

"Omid and his family are the victims of three years of abuse and mistreatment – first on Nauru, now in Australia. There is simply no excuse for the way Omid and his family have been treated. There is an urgent need for the Minister to intervene to release Omid."

Omid is the brother of 26 year-old Iranian refugee Nazanin (photo attached), who was raped on Nauru in May 2015.

Despite the advice of doctors and psychiatrists at the time, it took over three months, until August 2015, for the Immigration Department to bring Nazanin to Australia.

FULL STORY AT <http://www.refugeeaction.org.au/?p=6779>

## **44. Iranian refugee on Nauru attempts suicide after US resettlement application rejected, advocate says**

ABC News  
Pacific Beat  
Posted 8 May 2018, 3:39pm

The Refugee Action Coalition says an Iranian woman on Nauru has attempted to take her own life after having her application for resettlement in the United States rejected.

The reported suicide attempt last night (local time) came after the first day of appointments with US officials who are telling refugees if they have been accepted or rejected for resettlement in the United States.

About 150 refugees were given appointments, but almost half of them had already been rejected.

One of the refugees on the island — who did not want to be identified — said those who had been turned down for resettlement were deeply distressed.

"They informed [the refugee who attempted suicide] that her case has been rejected from USA," he said.

"The case manager called the police ... and some of her mates who've been living with her in the camp tried to save her."

He said refugees being rejected had been very frustrated because they had been waiting for positive news for a long time.

FULL STORY AT <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-05-08/nauru-refugee-attempts-suicide-after-rejected-us-settlement/9739626>

## **45. Malaysian police intercept tanker carrying Sri Lankans believed bound for Australia, New Zealand**

ABC News  
Updated May 06, 2018 14:37:24

Malaysian police have intercepted a tanker with 131 Sri Lankans believed bound for Australia and New Zealand, smashing a large people smuggling ring that has been operating for a year, authorities say.

Authorities halted the modified tanker on Tuesday (local time) off the coast of southern Johor state, national police chief Mohamad Fuzi Harun said in a statement.

He said the group included 98 men, 24 women, four boys and five girls.

Police also raided a fishing boat used to transport the Sri Lankans to the vessel and detained three Indonesians and four Malaysians on board, he said.

FULL STORY AT <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-05-06/malaysian-police-intercept-tanker-smuggling-sri-lankans/9732724>