

Statement of Intent to Stop Forced Deportations

We, a national alliance of refugee and asylum seeker advocates, community supporters, legal advisors and activists declare our intent to fight deportations.

The Federal Government is currently proposing to deport 277 Iranian asylum seekers in detention centres, in the full knowledge that they will face imprisonment, persecution, if not death upon their return. The Iranian government has a human rights record which has attracted condemnation from the United Nations and the European Parliament. This regime has a documented record of public executions, stonings, public whipping of children as young as 12 years, amputation of arms and feet, and eye-gouging for its citizens who do not obey religious, political or sexual laws. Past deportations have seen asylum seekers – some with claims still pending in Australian courts – injected with sedatives, bound, gagged and flown back to the regime from which they fled. There are documented international cases of people dying during their transport. Iranians deported from Australia in the last year have disappeared upon their arrival.

Thousands of Afghani and Iraqi Temporary Protection Visa (TPV) holders living in the community are also facing removal to their countries – even though our government advises Australians it's not safe to travel to Afghanistan or Iraq. In Afghanistan, Taliban forces have regrouped in many areas and government ministers have been assassinated. Most of the country is suffering severe drought, famine and civil violence. Iraq's infrastructure, already devastated by eleven years of economic sanctions, has been further pummelled by US bombs and is now under military occupation. 1600 refugees from East Timor, some of whom have lived in Australia for more than a decade, are also threatened with deportation.

As people who want a society that is based on justice, equality and peace, we cannot allow this to happen. The time has come to say enough. We will fight the forced removal of asylum seekers through campaigning, lobbying and direct action wherever and whenever they occur. We will be at airports, detention centres, schools and homes preventing these inhuman acts from occurring. We will make the Australian government accountable for its deeds in and out of detention centres. These callous crimes will not be committed in our name.

We call on all those who share a similar vision for the world to do whatever is within their means to join us in this struggle.