

18 July 2018

## **ACADEMICS FOR REFUGEES join National Day of Action on the 5<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Resettlement Ban and Reopening of offshore detention centres EVACUATE NOW - BRING THE REFUGEES TO SAFETY**

[Academics for Refugees](#) will join a national day of action in capital cities across Australia calling for an end to offshore processing and the immediate evacuation of all refugees and asylum seekers being held on Manus Island and Nauru.

Formed in 2013 in response to the increasingly harsh policies in Australia towards people seeking asylum, the Academics for Refugee Network fosters cooperation among academic scholars aimed at achieving human rights for asylum seekers and refugees. The Network membership spans all Australian states and over 3000 academics across disciplines.

This Thursday, 19 July, marks the fifth anniversary of the announcement by then Prime Minister Kevin Rudd that “As of today, asylum seekers who come here by boat without a visa will never be settled in Australia” and the recommencement of offshore detention. The National Day of Action will call on all political parties to end the detention of men, women and children in the offshore camps, and ensure their resettlement in places of safety.

Five years on: **939** people, including 137 children, are still in limbo on Nauru and **698** men remain in PNG. Some of these people, including 22 children, are still living in the mouldy tents on Nauru. (*Senate estimates 21 May 2018*).

**Eleven people** have died as a result of medical neglect and desperation. Hundreds of others have been damaged mentally and physically by the deliberately cruel and demoralising conditions in indefinite detention.

There is no clear path to ensure safe resettlement being provided for these people, most of whom are have been recognised as bona fide refugees. As PM Turnbull admitted to President Trump, “the only reason we cannot let them into Australia is because of our commitment to not allow people who come by boat. Otherwise we would have let them in.”

In the almost two years since the USA/Australia transfer deal was signed, only 268 people have been resettled from Nauru and Manus to the United States. Neither PNG nor Nauru can offer viable resettlement options. Following a \$55 million payment, 7 people went to Cambodia and only 3 remain there. This failed program will formally cease at the end of 2018.(AAP May31)

Under the original “Pacific Solution” between 2001 and 2008, 1153 refugees were resettled from Manus Island and Nauru. Of these, 35% went to New Zealand, 5% to other developed countries and 70% to Australia.

***Academics for Refugees call on all Australian political parties to urgently deal with this shameful Australian-sponsored human rights catastrophe by offering all people who have been subject to Australia’s offshore processing and detention regime with a permanent visa to come to and live in Australia, and to ensure that anyone who has not accepted an offer to be resettled in the USA or New Zealand has the option of being resettled here in Australia instead.***

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**Academics for Refugees:** <https://academicsforrefugees.wordpress.com/>