



AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE

Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office



Catholic Church calls for review of Manus Island detention policy **27 May 2014** **Media Release**

The Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office (ACMRO) is calling on the Australian Government to reconsider its policy of resettling refugees on Manus Island.

The independent report, by Robert Cornall, into events leading to the brutal death of Reza Barati reveals a serious failure on our part to accept full responsibility to protect those who seek refuge on our shores.

Australian Catholic Bishops Delegate for Migrants and Refugees Bishop Gerard Hanna said: "The independent review highlighted that Australia's current policy of moving responsibility for migrants and refugees to offshore authorities leads to tragic consequences."

"Australia's offshore policy and punitive approach to managing refugees seeking protection is putting people's lives at risk and the evidence continues to build in favour of a thorough review of current policy," Bishop Hanna added.

"The proposal to resettle refugees in Cambodia highlights once again the futility of this course of action. We can expect continuing unrest as migrants and refugees are given no hope that the situation is changing," Bishop Hanna said.

Australia, in our determination to adopt deterrent measures, is turning away many genuine refugees. Failure to recognise fundamental human rights and persisting with this policy constitutes a disregard for the plight of those who rightfully come to our shores seeking protection.

Our Government continues to turn a blind eye to this humanitarian situation. Due to violence and persecution, migrants and refugees are leaving their homeland in the hope that civilised nations can offer something better.

The treatment of migrants and refugees is a growing global phenomenon. Therefore developed countries are called upon to accept and care for refugees without punishing measures that inflict harm and suffering.

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