



Community of Christ

Statement on Manus Regional Processing Centre Humanitarian Emergency

14 November 2017

At 5pm on 31 October 2017, the Australian Government officially closed the Manus Island detention facility (Manus Regional Processing Centre). The closure is a result of a decision held by the Papua New Guinea Supreme Court in April 2017, which ruled the facility unconstitutional in so far as it breached fundamental human rights under international and PNG law. The closure left approximately 600 men - many of whom have been granted refugee status - languishing without access to food, water, electricity or healthcare. They have been instructed to transfer to alternative processing facilities – some only partially built - however are fearing for their safety after having experienced brutality at the hands of PNG police and local community members. Because of this fear, they are unwilling to transfer to other centres. The lack of access to essential food and water, coupled with temperatures rising above 30 degrees Celsius daily are placing the safety and wellbeing of the men at immediate and serious danger. To date, some 400 men still remain in the centre.

There is no room in God's Peaceable Kingdom for discussion on who is or is not worthy of safety, security, dignity, opportunity and hope. All human beings, by virtue of their birth, are deserving of protection, compassion and the blessings of community.

Community of Christ Australia supports the recent opinion of the United Nations Human Rights Council that;

- the Australian Government continues to breach its responsibilities under the 1951 Refugee Convention,
- the Australian Government continues to be legally responsible for the safety and security of the individuals detained on Manus Island.

Community of Christ Australia urges the Australian Government to immediately and without delay evacuate the facility, bringing the men to safety in Australia or another safe country. We condemn the abandonment of these individuals and the abandoning of principles that underpin a just, humane and compassionate society that Community of Christ seeks to restore in loving community where peace, justice, reconciliation and healing of the spirit are central tenets to peaceful life together.

We are tasked in Doctrine and Covenants 161:6b to *"heed the urgent call to become a global family united in the name of the Christ, committed in love to one another, seeking the kingdom for which you yearn and to which you have always been summoned."* The call is indeed urgent. Future generations will look back to this time and wonder how it was possible that the Australian government could not provide better for the most vulnerable in our world-wide community.

- Australia Mission Centre Leadership Team