

Unsafe offshore detention facilities mean asylum seekers must be processed in Australia

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Amnesty International Australia urges the federal government to heed the lessons of Australia's previous scandal-ridden, inhumane offshore processing regime and allow the 40 people who recently sought asylum in WA to be processed in Australia.

Asylum seekers held in offshore detention were subjected to a decade of medical neglect, inhumane treatment and human rights abuses. Hundreds of people held in offshore detention became so sick they had to be medically evacuated to Australia.

As far back as 2015, the the United Nations special rapporteur on torture found that Australia's detention of people seeking asylum on Manus Island and Nauru constituted systematic violations of the International Convention Against Torture.

The centres were emptied following years of scandal, court challenges and public outcry against the policy.

Amnesty International Australia holds concern for the health and well-being of these individuals, and highlights the uncertainty surrounding the conditions of the offshore processing facilities in Nauru.

Dr Graham Thom, Amnesty International Australia Refugee Rights Advisor says:

"For ten years, the Australian community watched in horror as people who came to us seeking safety were indefinitely detained in appalling, cruel conditions. Sending a new cohort of people seeking asylum back to these offshore processing centres is outrageous given the recent revelations of corruption and mismanagement, not to mention the human suffering it caused."

"The federal government must listen to human rights experts, medical professionals, legal advocates and the majority of the Australian public who denounce offshore detention as being unsafe, inhumane and unacceptable."

Dr Graham Thom, Amnesty International Australia Refugee Rights Advisor

"Detaining asylum seekers offshore is a dead-end policy of cruelty. After 10 years, hundreds of people who sought asylum in Australia suffer irreparable damage from their time on Nauru and Manus Island. There are still 55 people who remain in PNG without permanent resettlement. The federal government must not condemn a new cohort of people to a policy that's long been disgraced and discarded."

Amnesty International Australia reiterates its opposition to offshore detention policies and urges the Australian government to prioritise the humane treatment and fair processing of asylum seekers.