



# A Just Australia

25 January 2012

## **For the term of their natural life – refugees and ASIO assessments**

Right now, more than 50 recognised refugees face spending the rest of their lives in immigration detention because ASIO considers them a security risk.

These are people who the Australian Government believes are entitled to our protection under the Refugee Convention.

Yet their freedom is denied because they have received an adverse security assessment.

Refugees with adverse ASIO findings have no legal recourse and ASIO is under no obligation to explain the reasons behind their assessments.

They don't know why their freedom has been denied. They don't know if or when they will be released from detention.

Many have been detained for years, remaining in political limbo and are suffering from acute mental health problems.

Some have young families and are separated from wives and young children.

RCOA has written to Federal Attorney-General Nicola Roxon, urging the new Minister to explore changes to:

- Advise refugees of the reasons for security refusals;
- Provide a mechanism to challenge findings;
- Pursue alternatives to detention.

## **How you can help**

Write to your local MP to lobby the Attorney-General for a policy change that meets both the human rights of recognised refugees and national security needs. Tell them:

- Keeping recognised refugees detained indefinitely is in conflict with Australia's obligations under the Refugee Convention;
- Refugees are entitled to know why they have been given a negative security assessment and avenues to challenge the assessment;

- An independent review mechanism is needed to oversee the decisions made by ASIO;
- The mental health of refugees and their families will continue to deteriorate unless the Government can find a solution;
- Alternatives to indefinite mandatory detention work throughout the world including in Canada, New Zealand, the UK and the USA.

### **How to contact your local MP**

<http://www.aph.gov.au/house/members/index.htm>

<http://www.aph.gov.au/Senate/senators/index.htm>

<http://www.ajustaustralia.com/action/mps.php>

### **Essential reading**

RCOA letter to Attorney-General Nicola Roxon

[http://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/resources/statements/120119\\_NRoxon\\_adverse\\_security.pdf](http://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/resources/statements/120119_NRoxon_adverse_security.pdf)

Federal Labor MP and chair of the Joint Select committee on Australia's Immigration Detention Network Daryl Melham has called for the release of refugees with adverse security assessments, subject to control orders

<http://bit.ly/AqVXJX>

ASIO Director-General David Irvine told the Joint Select Committee on Australia's Immigration Detention Network that ASIO could work within a review mechanism (page 29 of this document) [www.aph.gov.au/hansard/joint/commtee/j461.pdf](http://www.aph.gov.au/hansard/joint/commtee/j461.pdf)

An account of the impact adverse ASIO assessments are having on refugees and their families

<http://www.smh.com.au/national/without-hope-without-reason-20120113-1pzei.html>

The International Detention Coalition has studied models of alternatives to detention in a range of international jurisdictions

<http://idcoalition.org/cap/handbook/>

### **Feedback is encouraged**

Please share any responses you receive through your advocacy work. Send any feedback to [media@refugeecouncil.org.au](mailto:media@refugeecouncil.org.au)