



Josephite Justice Office

PO Box 1508 North Sydney NSW 2059

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Josephites join call for justice for asylum seekers

The Sisters of St Joseph continue to join with thousands across Australia who are calling for justice and the rights of those suffering grim conditions on Manus Island. Church, community, and the UN have condemned the situation as morally reprehensible and a breach of our national and international responsibilities.

“I am deeply dismayed by the current situation,” said Sr Monica Cavanagh, Congregational Leader, ‘where we have condemned to uncertainty, fear, abuse and hopelessness those who have legally fled to our country for safety. The foundational principle that people have the right to seek asylum has not been honoured, and hence coherent and humane policy is impossible. The result is appalling: innocent people have become pawns of Australia’s decision to use cruelty as a deterrent. We thus victimise some of the most vulnerable people in the world.’

The evidence is clear. Irreparable harm is being perpetrated in our name. Reports on conditions in detention centres indicate the depths to which we have slipped as a country. Australia’s present policy regarding the global issue of people seeking safety is unsustainable, unsafe and unjust, and does not offer protection to people in desperate need. In the absence of alternatives being promulgated by either Government or the Opposition, or by relevant government departments, a new approach is imperative.

We strongly believe that there are credible and innovative international law-compliant alternatives to current policy.

Josephites are urging the Government and the Opposition therefore to reconsider their position and to allow these detainees to come to Australia until a viable and sustainable resolution can be reached.

“I believe we are better than our present policy indicates,” said Sr Monica. “We know there are viable alternatives, which are compliant with international law and human rights. Let’s work together to search for the best of which we are capable, both for those seeking asylum, and for us as Australians.”

Contact: Jan Barnett rsj
Josephite Justice Coordinator
0403 634 534

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