



Media Release

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Violence and forced deportations threaten the safety of asylum seekers and refugees on Manus Island

The St Vincent de Paul Society is calling on the Government to end forced deportations and relocate asylum seekers and refugees from Manus Island to safety, in the wake of last week's shocking shooting incident at its detention centre.

"Both the conditions on Manus Island and the threat of deportation to persecution and harm is placing lives at risk and adding to the fear and suffering of asylum seekers and refugees," the Society's National Policy Advisor, Corinne Dobson, said.

The UNHCR have stated that the process used to assess asylum claims in PNG is flawed, and that no deportations should occur before an appropriate review of each case is undertaken.

"The flawed refugee determination process has left many men without a valid assessment of their refugee claims," Ms Dobson said.

"These men are now facing the prospect of being deported to persecution and harm or, for those who cannot be returned to their country of origin, the prospect of languishing on Manus Island indefinitely.

"People who seek asylum have a right to have their claims properly processed and in a safe and timely way."

Following the news of PNG soldiers firing shots into the Manus Island detention centre, the Society believes the only safe thing to do is to close the centre and immediately bring detainees to Australia.

"The incident confirms PNG is not a safe place for them, and that those who are not resettled in a deal between the US and Australia should have options other than remaining in PNG, or returning to the place from which they have fled.

"The Manus Island detention centre remains unsafe, and the US process is going too slowly and will not cover everyone. The latest incident shows just how urgent the situation is. The only safe thing to do is to immediately close the Manus Island detention centre, and bring those detained there to Australia."

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