



AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE

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Govt release of some detainees a small but welcome step – Catholic Bishop

The federal government's decision to release some long term immigration detainees was a small but welcome step towards a more compassionate detention policy, a Catholic Bishop said today.

Chairman of the Bishops' Committee for Migrants and Refugees, Bishop Joseph Grech, said while the release of a small number of people from immigration was a positive move, their long term future remained up in the air.

"Some immigration detainees have been in detention for more than five years, many without any hope of release," Bishop Grech said.

"Many cannot go back to their homeland without real risk of persecution and death. They are caught in the no-mans-land of the immigration detention system.

"The government is to be applauded for showing some compassion to these fellow human beings at Easter time.

"It has moved some way towards a reasonable solution to a very difficult problem, but there is still a long way to go."

Bishop Grech said a long term alternative had to be found to the current policy of locking people up for indefinite periods.

"The Government's initiative is very welcome. But much more needs to be done."

Contacts:

Fr John Murphy, Director, Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office
(02) 6201-9848 or 0418 224 524.

Debra Vermeer, Communications Officer,
Australian Catholic Bishops Conference
(02) 6201-9859 or 0414 880 475.