



AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE

Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office



Expanding Australia's excision policy is not a solution **17 May 2013** **Media Release**

The excision policy has been in place since 2001 and since that time we have still had thousands of people turn up on our shores asking for help.

The decision yesterday by the government to expand the excision policy to cover asylum seekers arriving by boat at any part of the Australian coastline will do nothing to help the underlying situation of war and poverty which compel asylum flows around the world.

“The majority of people seeking asylum in Australia by boat come from Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, and Sri Lanka, these four countries all feature in the top 10 countries at risk of serious human rights violations and mass killings” said Bishop Gerard Hanna, Australian Catholic Bishops Delegate for Migrants and Refugees.

“These people are compelled to leave their homeland and have no option but to seek asylum in a third country” he said.

"It is tragic to think our response is to bypass their legal protections under the refugee convention and send them to remote indefinite mandatory detention on Manus Island or Nauru” said Bishop Hanna.

"Australia is part of the international community, we have a moral obligation to ensure that our decisions and policies contribute to, or at the very least do not subtract from, the common good of all humanity" said Bishop Hanna.

“Australia has the right to regulate migration across its borders but this must be carried out with justice and mercy” he said.

"When people are suffering from persecution their need to enter Australian territory takes precedence over our preference to maintain the sovereignty of our national borders" said Bishop Hanna.

"The territory of Australia has been entrusted to us as stewards, to care for this land and to ensure it is there at the service of all humanity and especially those in most need" said Fr Pettenà National Director of ACMRO.

"For as long as conflict and violence continue to press upon our brothers and sisters we can expect to see more asylum seekers arrive at our shores by boat” said Fr Pettenà.

"Providing welcome and hospitality is for everyone and imperative gesture of human solidarity.”

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