



AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE
Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office



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Media Release

Papua New Guinea Supreme Court's decision a welcome sign of hope for Manus Island detainees

The Supreme Court of Papua New Guinea's decision ruling that the detention of asylum seekers on Manus Island is illegal is a welcome sign of hope for those currently in detention on Manus Island, says Fr Maurizio Pettenà, Director of the Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office.

"This ruling is important because it highlights the fact that governments have human rights obligations under domestic and international laws," said Fr Maurizio.

"We also welcome the decision of the Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea, Peter O'Neill, to close the Manus Island detention centre as a result of the ruling."

"The Australian Government's response to people seeking asylum should first and foremost focus on respecting their human dignity."

"I urge the Minister for Immigration, Peter Dutton, to use this opportunity to show leadership and act to bring an end to indefinite mandatory offshore detention."

"It is imperative that if the Australian Government insists on returning people to their country of origin or moving people to other countries as a result of this decision, to ensure no one is sent where they may face further persecution or violence."

"The Catholic Church opposes mandatory indefinite detention and offshore detention as these policy responses do not respect the dignity of people seeking our refuge."

"Whilst Governments have a responsibility to manage migration flows into countries, the Australian Government's approach is harsh and needs to change; the dignity of the human person must always come first."

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