

Australian Churches Refugee Taskforce



Media Release: Churches appeal to Government to show compassion in the face of violence on Manus Island over Easter.

April 15th 2017: The Australian Churches' Refugee Taskforce has condemned the violence that erupted on Manus Island on the evening of Good Friday, and calls for the camp to be evacuated.

Taskforce Chair, the Very Rev'd Dr Peter Catt:

"It is with deep sadness that on the evening of Good Friday, marking the Cross of Christ, we hear of the violence and fear that has erupted on Manus Island, PNG including gun shots being fired into the centre. We pause on this day, between the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ in the Christian tradition, to mourn the fear of those attacked and to hold the anger and hatred that came from the violence itself.

The darkness of betrayal and abandonment that we are familiar with, in the Jesus story, is being felt keenly by those on Manus Island this weekend. As the Australian churches turn towards the theme of resurrection on Sunday, the context of our offshore processing can be ignored no more".

The Australian Churches' Refugee Taskforce has worked collaboratively with other agencies across Australia for four years to call for the closure of offshore detention. For the latest outbreak of violence to occur on Good Friday, an important part of the Christian calendar, there can be no ignoring the synergy of suffering.

Stuart McMillan President of Uniting Church in Australia stated in his Easter message this week that *"Easter is a time for new beginnings... It is also an opportunity for our nation to compassionately reframe and renew policy approaches for those in need."*

The Australian Refugee Churches Taskforce calls on the Government this Easter, to act with compassion. To lift the veil of re-traumatisation and fear for refugees and asylum seekers, and to evacuate the camps on Manus and Nauru.

The Very Rev'd Dr Peter Catt:

"Even if the arrangement with the United States continues, we must act to create safety and security for those who have languished in offshore detention for too long. By bringing people to Australia, the US deal may continue. More importantly, the healing of those who have been damaged by our nation's policy can begin".

Media inquiries may be directed to:

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