

Give PNG a Break:

Bring the Refugees Back



In 2013, the Australian Government announced it would establish offshore processing centres in PNG and Nauru for anyone who came to Australia by boat and claimed protection as a refugee.

After more than 8 years, there are still over 120 refugees and people seeking asylum waiting for resettlement.

Some may want to settle in PNG. Some are likely to be resettled in the USA or Canada. Between 50 and 100 have no realistic prospect of being resettled or returned home.

The care of these men and their future is Australia's responsibility, not Papua New Guinea's!

The PNG Government has many pressing issues to deal with including improving the country's standard of health and education.

The Church in PNG has devoted much of its time providing support to the refugees sent there by Australia, but they have other local concerns to which they would like to give more attention including:

1. About 10,000 West Papuans who crossed over to PNG at different times in the past few decades
2. About 15 people from different countries who crossed over to PNG and are now under the primary care of the international Organisation for Migration (IOM)
3. A handful of people who entered PNG illegally, who are now detained, and seeking the Church's humanitarian assistance with the knowledge and in coordination with PNG authorities
4. People displaced due to tribal fights
5. Women displaced who are victims of Sorcery Accusation Related Violence (SARV)
6. Communities displaced by natural calamities
7. Communities displaced by man-made calamities.

PM Scott Morrison often speaks of the special relationship Australia has with our Pacific neighbours including Papua New Guinea. It's high time we stopped taking advantage of their generous help and brought the refugees still in PNG back to Australia immediately.

Please Pray for PNG and the Refugees

September 29 is the Feast of the Archangels. The Archangel Michael is the patron saint of Papua New Guinea. Mary, Help of Christians, is the patron saint of Australia.

Please seek the intercession of St. Michael and of Mary, Help of Christians, for an end to the burdens faced both by the PNG Government and people and by the refugees themselves. Throughout the month of October, we ask particularly for you, individually and in your parishes, schools, offices and groups, for the Australian Government to end this situation by bringing the refugees back to Australia so they can be supported here and so their resettlement can be managed.

An intercessory prayer you could use at Mass or at other times is:

We pray for the people of Papua New Guinea and for the refugees who are still there after 8 long years. May the refugees be brought back to Australia immediately so that the Australian Government can assume direct responsibility for their support and resettlement. May the Government, Church and people of Papua New Guinea be able to, once again, give their full attention to their own priorities and needs.

St. Michael the Archangel, pray for Papua New Guinea and the refugees.

Mary, Help of Christians, pray for Australia and the refugees.

Please Act to Support PNG and the Refugees

Read the open letter from the Catholic Bishops Conference of PNG and Solomon Islands and the response from Bishop Vincent Long ofm conv, Chair of the ACBC Commission for Social Justice, Mission and Service.

Use these and the information provided on this sheet to send an e-mail or letter to the Australian Minister for Immigration, Mr Alex Hawke MP. Please tell him that Papua New Guinea and the 120+ refugees there have waited long enough. Please tell him that Australia should be a good neighbour to our Pacific friends by taking the refugees in PNG back to Australia.

Mr. Hawke's contact details are:

Alex.Hawke.MP@aph.gov.au

the Hon. Alex Hawke MP
Minister for Immigration
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Further Action During October

More information sheets like this will be issued during October with more suggestions for action.

Let's keep building the pressure on the Australian Government to Give PNG a break and to bring the refugees back!

If you have any questions or need more information or want to let us know what you have been doing to support PNG and the refugees, please e-mail cjpc@bne.catholic.net.au or ring the Commission's Executive Officer on +61 7 3324 3441 or +61 409 265 476.

This is an initiative of the Catholic Justice & Peace Commission of the Archdiocese of Brisbane.