

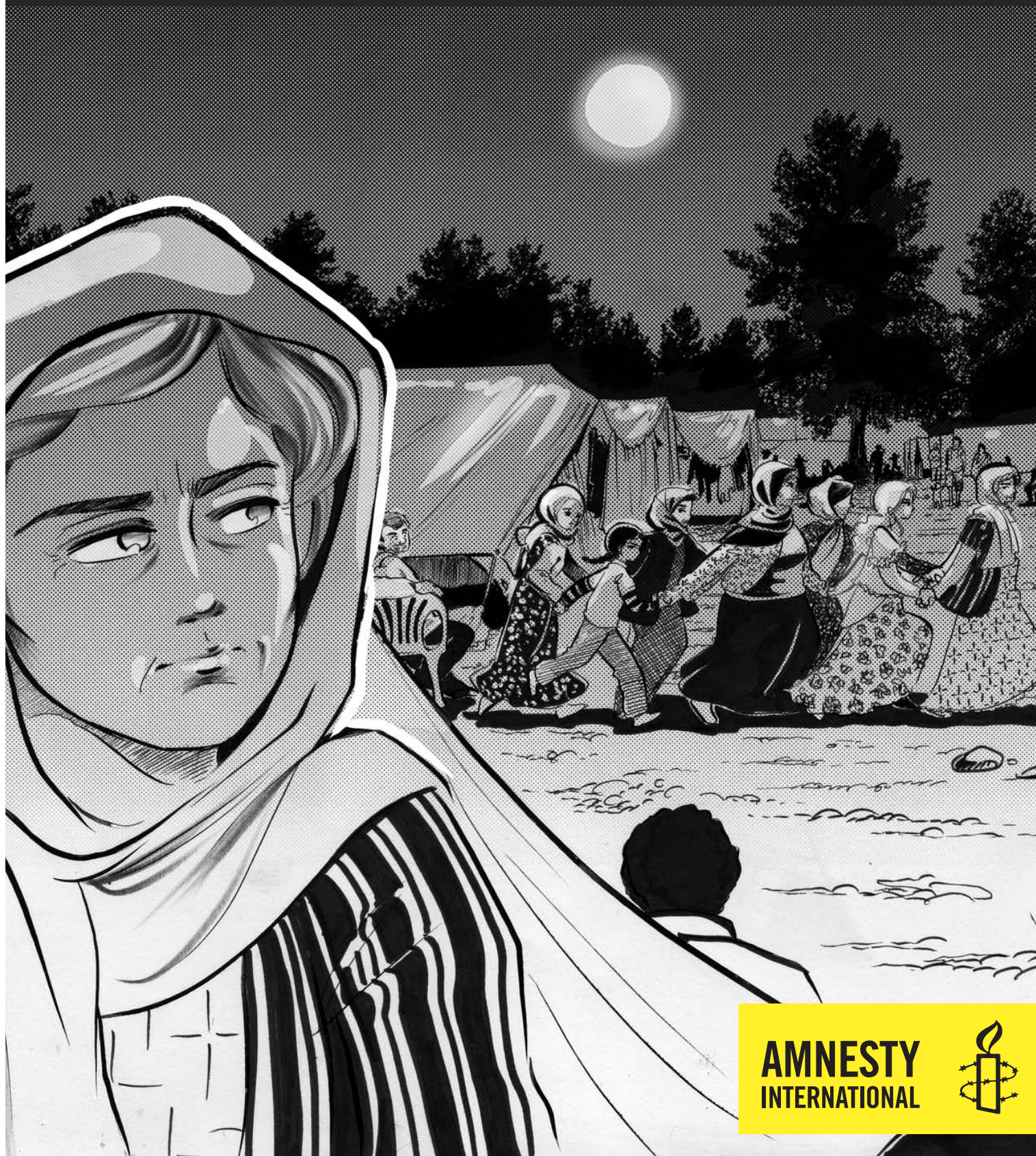
ESSENTIAL KIT
FOR CHANGEMAKERS

TERM 2, 2017

Amnesty International Australia
www.amnesty.org.au

Start Something

THE REFUGEE RIGHTS ISSUE



AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL



TERM 2 2017: REFUGEE RIGHTS

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Coming up in 2017:

TERM 3: Global youth

The struggle for human rights happens every day, and youth are often at the forefront of leading change. Learn about the ways young people are standing up for their rights across the world.

TERM 4: Write for rights

Learn about the people unfairly imprisoned around the world, Amnesty's roots as a global letter-writing campaign, and how a well-written letter can change a life.

Never miss an issue

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Cover: Illustration of Yezidi women in Nea Kavala refugee camp, Greece. Last year Amnesty interviewed Yezidi women at the camp, who had fled IS (Islamic State) attacks in Iraq.
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PositiveNegatives/AI

Amnesty International is an independent, global movement that campaigns courageously for human rights for everyone. We use our passion and commitment to bring torturers to justice, change oppressive laws and free people imprisoned just for voicing their opinion. We campaign, conduct research and raise money for our work. Our active members, such as school action groups, play a vital role in achieving our aims through writing letters, sending online actions, organising creative awareness-raising activities and fundraising in their communities.

Amnesty International acknowledges the traditional owners of the land on which our offices are situated. We thank the elders past and present for their continued custodianship. This always has been and always will be Aboriginal land.

Note from Naomi

Hi everyone,

Did you know that by the end of 2015, more than 65 million people worldwide had been forced to leave their homes as a result of conflict, persecution, violence and human rights violations? 65 million people – that's enough to fill 650 MCGs, it's almost three times the population of Australia, and easily enough for 5.9 million soccer teams!

65 million people. Each of them part of a family, somebody's friend, people with careers, with future plans – each of them with the same human rights as you and I.

This term we're going to focus on the rights of people seeking asylum, and on refugee communities at home and around the world. We'll be exploring what we can do to ensure the world's governments do their fair share to protect and assist people who are simply seeking somewhere safe to live.

There's lots of background information and articles on this global issue, some tips on how to have conversations with your community about refugees and asylum seekers, and a workshop to run with your group or class. And of course – we need you to take action!

There are always updates and campaign developments in this area of Amnesty's work, so head to www.amnesty.org.au for the latest news.

Have a great Term 2, I can't wait to hear what you get up to.

Thank you for defending human rights!

Naomi

Youth Coordinator
Amnesty International Australia



Refugee rights: conversation notes

1. REFUGEE RIGHTS GLOSSARY

First things first: do you know the difference between a refugee and an asylum seeker? Here we explain the most common refugee terminology.

Asylum seeker

An asylum seeker is a person who has fled their country and is seeking protection in another country. The difference between a refugee and an asylum seeker is that asylum seekers have not yet been assessed as needing protection by the country they have fled to. Not every asylum seeker will ultimately be recognised as a refugee, but every refugee is initially an asylum seeker. However, in Australia we know that almost all people who arrive by boat seeking asylum are then found to be genuine refugees.

Refugee

A refugee is a person who has fled their country of origin and is unable to return because of a well-founded fear of being persecuted because of their race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion.

The Refugee Convention

The Refugee Convention (also known as 'the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees') is an international treaty that sets out the definition of a refugee, their rights and how world governments should protect them. The Convention promotes the principle of 'non-refoulement' – which forbids a country receiving asylum seekers from returning them to a country in which they would be in likely danger of persecution. Australia signed the Refugee Convention in 1954.

Resettlement

Resettlement is the transfer of refugees from the country in which they have sought refuge to another country that has agreed to admit them. The refugees will usually be granted some form of long-term resident rights and, in many cases, will have the opportunity to become citizens. However, despite the larger number of refugees in the world today, the number of resettlement places offered by countries has not significantly increased.

Stateless person

A stateless person is someone whose own government won't recognise them as a citizen. Stateless people are often denied access to education, healthcare, or the right to participate in political processes in their country of birth.

Internal displacement

Internal displacement is the involuntary movement of people inside their own country. This may be due to natural or human-made disasters, armed conflict or generalised violence.

Refugee camp

A refugee camp is a place where people fleeing from an armed conflict live in temporary homes. UN Agencies, particularly UNHCR, and other humanitarian organisations provide essential services in refugee camps including food, sanitation, health, medicine and education. These camps are ideally located at least 50 km away from the nearest international border to deter camp raids and other attacks on the people living there.



Amnesty youth activists in France support refugees, Paris, October 2016. © Pierre-Yves Brunaud/Picturertank

2. LET'S CHANGE THE CONVERSATION!

Want to change the status quo for refugees but not sure where to start? Like everything, a conversation is a great starting point. To help you get the message across, recently refugee and asylum seeker rights organisations teamed up to research how best we can persuade people that there is a better way to help refugees.

Whenever you're talking to friends, family and other people about refugees, build your conversation using these 4 steps:

1. **There's a real and serious problem:** the current refugee policy is bad because it is abusive to people who need protection and/or the government is hiding its deliberately abusive policy.
2. **Build empathy and human connection:** humanise people who are seeking safety by telling their stories and sharing the success they've found in their new lives in Australia.
3. **There is a better plan:** present another way that is fair, protects people seeking safety and enriches our country (see the next section for ways governments can help refugees).
4. **Everyone has a role to play:** together we can make a change by signing petitions, talking to family and friends, attending events and contacting our politicians. Remind people that politicians will only change if more everyday Australians speak up and stand up for compassion and a fair-go for people seeking safety.

“ ”



Here are some basic words and phrases to use, based on communications research led by the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre (ASRC):

REPLACE	EMBRACE
Asylum Seekers	People seeking asylum
Australia(ns) should/must/can	We should/must/can
Fix our broken system, tackle the problem	Create a fair and efficient process, fairly examine each person's case
Comply with international human rights law, humanitarian and legal obligations	Treat others the way we want to be treated, do the right thing
Physical and sexual abuse, torture, inhumane, shunt people to remote prison camps	Turn back to harm, denied basic rights
Security, survival	Live in peace, care for children, live free from danger, safety
Be settled in Australia, be placed onshore	Integrate into our communities
Fleeing persecution, violence and torture	Seeking safety, rebuilding their lives where it's safe, looking to set up a safe home
It is not illegal to seek asylum, not a security issue, not a threat, no need to fear, myth busting	It is legal to seek asylum, it is an issue of basic rights, foundation of human dignity
Survive, not seeking a better life	Flourish, prosper, thrive
Injustices being perpetrated, harm being inflicted, conditions worsened	Government choosing to detain, [name] decided to deny these people's rights

Who are the world's refugees?

At this moment, there are more people seeking asylum than at any point since World War II. Amnesty is asking the world's governments to do their fair share to protect and assist people who are simply seeking somewhere safe to live.

WHO ARE REFUGEES?

In 2015 and the first half of 2016, millions of people had to flee countries due to war, violence and persecution, including from Syria, Afghanistan, Myanmar, Somalia, Iraq and El Salvador. By the end of 2015, 65.3 million people worldwide had been forced to leave their homes as a result of conflict, persecution, violence and human rights violations.

Of these:

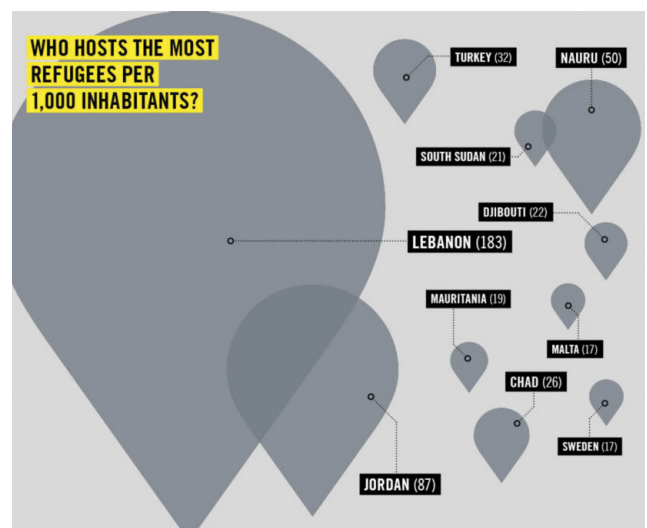
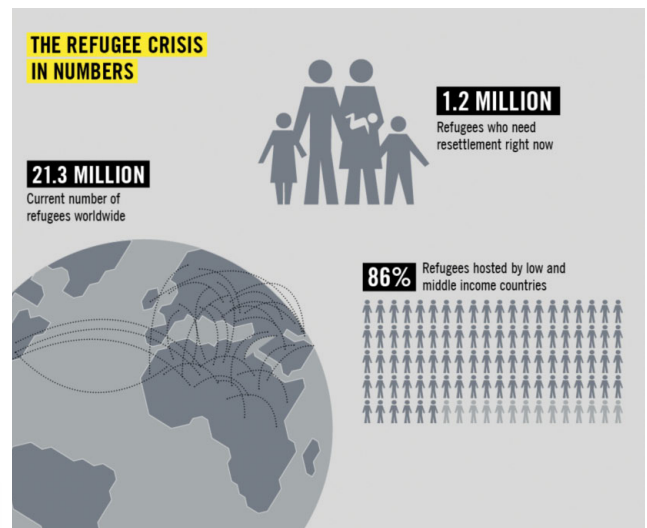
- **21.3 million people** had to escape to another country. These people are referred to as refugees. More than 99 per cent of these people will never be able to return safely to their country of origin.
- **3.2 million people** have sought safety in another country but have not yet been assessed as refugees. These people are asylum seekers.
- **40.8 million people** were forced to move within their own country to escape conflict. These people are described as internally displaced persons.

SEEKING SAFETY

There are very few paths to safety for these refugees. On their journey these women, men and children can face border closures, boat pushbacks and violence. Even when these people get to another country, there is no guarantee that they will be safe there or treated humanely. Some people languish in refugee camps – with very limited shelter, health services, and sometimes limited food and water. Some might arrive in a country where asylum seekers can be arrested, or others are sent to refugee 'processing' centres for years. Gender, ethnic and religious stereotypes often make it even more difficult for certain groups to find safety.



Refugees on the island of Chios, Greece, November 2016. © Giorgos Moutafis/AI



Rajeed's journey

As you can see, seeking asylum is not a simple move from one country to another. It's long, dangerous and uncertain.

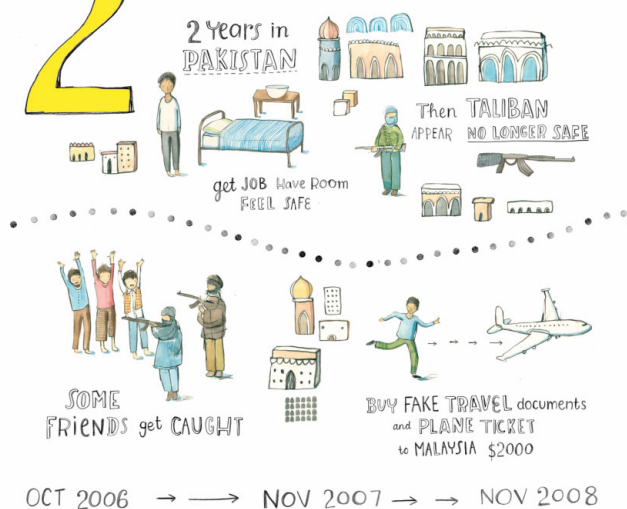
This is Rajeed's story. He's 14 and fleeing Afghanistan.

'Rajeed's journey' can be run as a school workshop to highlight the realities and the dangers for people forced to flee their homes. Get in touch if you would like an Amnesty team member to visit your school and run this workshop – youth@amnesty.org.au

1 AFGHANISTAN



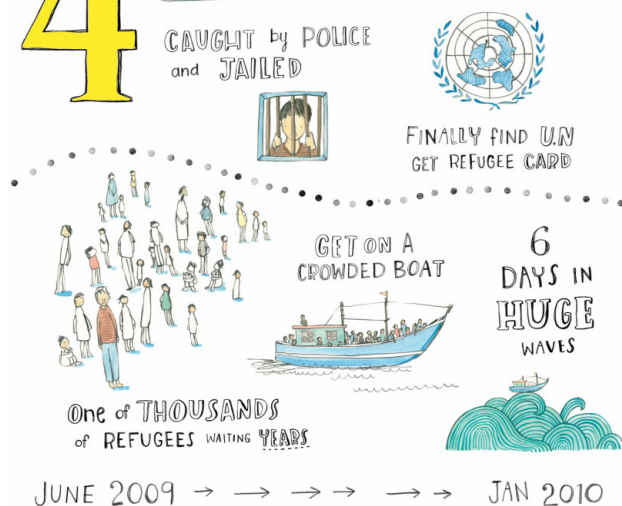
2 PAKISTAN



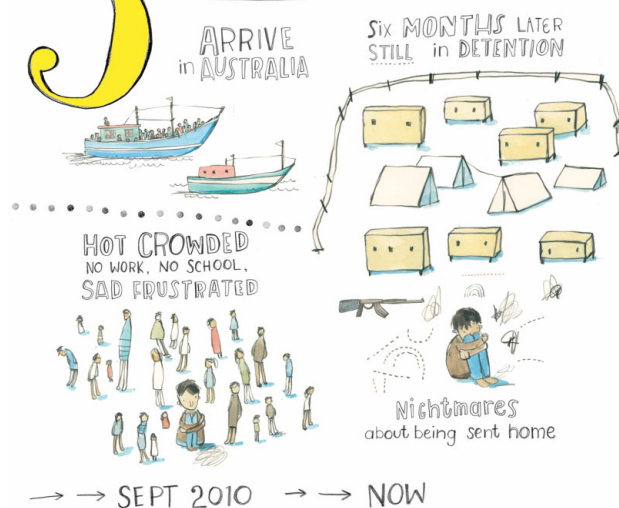
3 MALAYSIA



4 INDONESIA



5 AUSTRALIA



ACT NOW >>

WHAT HAPPENS TO PEOPLE SEEKING ASYLUM IN AUSTRALIA?

- For people who do not arrive by boat, the Australian Government currently resettles 13,750 refugees per year. To put that in perspective, Canada, a similar country with a similar population and economy, resettled 25,000 Syrian refugees between November 2015 and February 2016 alone. Australia has the capacity to welcome at least 30,000 refugees per year.
- For those who do arrive by boat, the Australian Government has chosen to punish them despite Australia being legally obliged to help them under international refugee law. For over three years our government has forcibly transferred people who arrive by boat to the remote islands of Nauru and Manus (Papua New Guinea). Around 1,200 men, women and children are indefinitely detained on Nauru and over 800 men on Manus Island.

WHAT CAN GOVERNMENTS DO?

Governments around the world, including here in Australia, must work together to provide safety for people seeking asylum. This includes by humanely hosting more refugees, providing legal and safe routes for refugee and asylum seekers to get to their country and increasing resettlement places.

In the face of one of the worst humanitarian crises of our time, shared global solutions are needed to provide refugees with the protection and rights due to them. These are not special rights; they are simply human rights such as safe shelter, food and water, the opportunity to work, access to education and legal assistance.

Amnesty International is calling on the Australian Government to adopt a better plan for refugees, which could include:

- **Boosting Australia's aid program** to help neighbouring countries better protect and support refugees. When people are legally recognised, have safe accommodation, can send their kids to school, and can work and access health services, they won't be forced to make dangerous journeys to Australia.
- **Making sure the most vulnerable people are resettled.** This includes Australia working closely with New Zealand, Japan, the US and Canada to ensure that all countries do their fair share, and it also includes Australia welcoming a minimum of 30,000 refugees per year through its resettlement program.
- **Including refugees in existing visa programs.** Australia should also include refugees when allocating student, work and family reunion visas, in recognition of the valuable skills and qualifications of many. This intake would be on top of Australia's core resettlement program.
- **Assessing refugee applications within a defined time period.** When people know they will be assessed in an efficient and orderly way, they are less likely to make a dangerous boat journey.
- **Undertaking timely search and rescue operations.** Instead of hazardous push-backs of boats at sea, Australia should run search and rescue operations that save lives.

Call on the Australian Government to offer safety to more people by increasing our annual refugee intake to a minimum of 30,000 people.

Write a letter, create a poster, or pen a short story to share why you think Australia should increase our annual refugee intake to a minimum of 30,000 people.

Send it off to:

The Hon Malcolm Turnbull MP
Prime Minister
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

It's also important to share your concerns with your local MP – the more people in Parliament that hear from you the better! Head to aph.gov.au to grab the contact details for the local MP for your school.

TERM 2 WORKSHOP: WHERE ARE THE WORLD'S REFUGEES?

Teachers: Our term 2 workshop sees students exploring the current situation of global humanitarian crisis and the possible solutions for aiding those at risk. This workshop can be run as an activity for your Amnesty School Group, or as part of your classroom work. Download the lesson plan at: www.amnesty.org.au/student-resources

Students: Check in with your teacher about making a time to share this workshop with your class.



'Indefinite' means that there is no set end date. For refugees and asylum seekers, that means they are locked up with no knowledge as to when – or if – they will ever be let out.



Rohingya refugees Bangladesh, November 2016. © AI



Kakuma Refugee camp, Kenya. © Michael Christopher Brown

Islands of despair:

Australia's offshore detention centres

What is happening to refugees and asylum seekers in Australia's offshore detention centres? We ask Anna Neistat, a human rights researcher who visited Nauru, and Imran, a young man currently trapped on Manus.

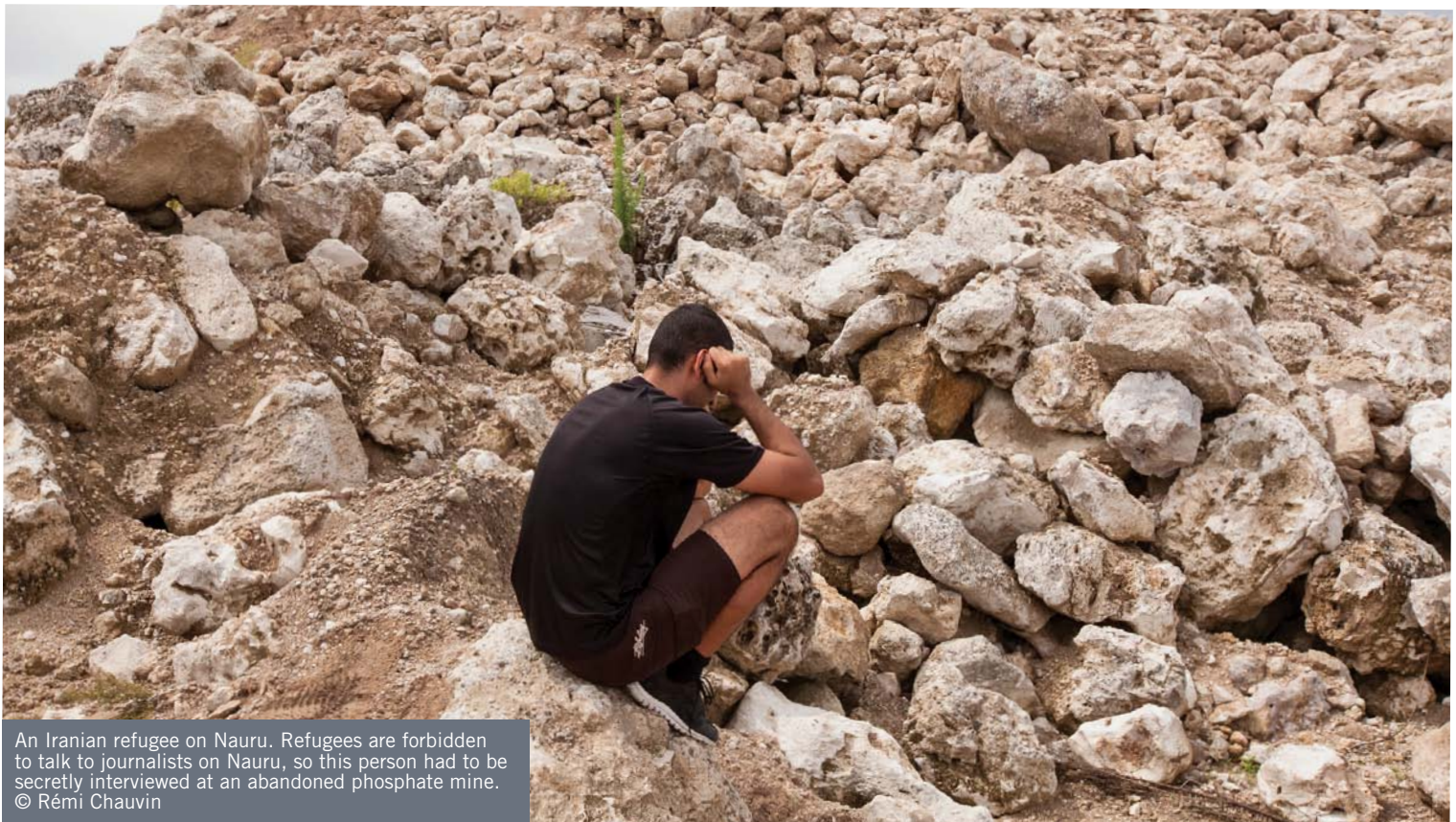


KEY THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT NAURU

- Since August 2012 Australia has been sending people who arrive by boat seeking asylum to an Australian-run detention centre on the tiny Pacific island of Nauru.
- When people arrive by boat to Australian waters, they are sent to Nauru and detained in the Australian-run facilities until recognised as refugees, at which point they move into accommodation outside of the detention centre.
- Currently there are 1,159 asylum seekers and refugees on Nauru: 410 people reside in the detention centre and 749 refugees live outside of the centre.
- Of the entire refugee and asylum seeker population on the island, 173 are children. 134 of these children have been recognised as refugees and 39 are still waiting for their asylum claims to be assessed.
- The majority of asylum seekers and refugees on Nauru are from Iran. Many are stateless, meaning their country does not recognise them as a citizen and may not let them return. Others come from Afghanistan, Iraq, Myanmar, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.



Amnesty Canada demonstrates in front of the Australian embassy in Ottawa, Canada, November 2016. © AI



An Iranian refugee on Nauru. Refugees are forbidden to talk to journalists on Nauru, so this person had to be secretly interviewed at an abandoned phosphate mine. © Rémi Chauvin

ACT NOW >>

FROM THE EXPERT

In July last year Anna Neistat, Amnesty's Senior Director for Research, went to Nauru where she reported on Australia's shameful treatment of the refugees and asylum seekers it has sent there.

"Behind a fortress of secrecy, the Australian Government is isolating over a thousand people – adults and children – in a remote place which they cannot leave, where many in the local population do not want them, and the local police do not protect them, with the specific goal that these people should suffer. And suffer they have – it has been devastating and, in some cases, irreparable."

"What we are seeing is the Australian Government going to extraordinary lengths to hide the daily despair of the people on Nauru. In doing so, they have misled the Australian public and the world by failing to admit that their border control policy depends on the deliberate and systematic abuse of thousands of people. Abuse is never a solution." Anna said.

Nearly all of the people whom Amnesty International spoke to – including young children – on Nauru in July 2016 reported mental health issues of some kind. Almost all said that these problems began when they were transferred to Nauru. "People are driven to the absolute brink, largely because they're trapped on Nauru and are facing debilitating uncertainty about their future," said Anna Neistat.

The combination of refugees' severe mental anguish, the intentional nature of the system, and the fact that the goal of offshore processing is to intimidate other refugees and asylum seekers to achieve a specific outcome, means that Australia's offshore processing regime fits the definition of torture under international law.

The people on Nauru cannot wait a moment longer for a humane solution. Amnesty International is calling on the Australian Government to immediately close down the Nauru and Manus processing operations and recognise that every person seeking asylum and all refugees on Nauru and Manus have the right to come to Australia immediately.

Write a letter to Immigration Minister Peter Dutton and demand an end to the secret abuse of men, women and children in Nauru now.

Address your letters to:

The Hon Peter Dutton MP
Parliament Office
PO Box 6022
House of Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Asks to include in your letter:

- Close the Regional Processing Centres on Nauru and Papua New Guinea.
- Bring all asylum seekers and refugees on Nauru and Manus Island to Australia immediately.
- Assess, in a fair and timely manner, those whose international protection applications have not been finalised by the authorities in Nauru and Papua New Guinea.
- Ensure that all those who were granted refugee status on Nauru and Manus have the right to settle in Australia.

Once you've written your letter, ask two friends to do the same. Check out the conversation guide earlier in this edition to help you shape your conversation.

Please share a copy of your letter with us, as well as any responses you receive:
youth@amnesty.org.au.



Amnesty researcher Anna Neistat. © AI

ACT NOW >>**FROM A REFUGEE**

Imran, now 22, fled Myanmar at age 16 and taught himself to read and write English while being held on Manus Island. He wrote this blog for Amnesty International Australia in December last year.

"I'm a passionate young writer incarcerated by the Australian Government for over three years on Manus Island, Papua New Guinea. This indefinite offshore processing centre has ensured the loss of the rights of refugees in a world of power, greed and cruelty. Compassion, love and equality have died, along with human rights. I search my mind for the crimes that I committed; I come up with nothing.

I question what has happened to this world where refugees – among the most vulnerable people in the world – are treated like animals.

For the Rohingya ethnic group, creating a sense of identity is a difficult task. My ancestors have lived in Rakhine, Myanmar for generations. However, our country won't acknowledge our existence. We're known as illegal migrants in our own land, stateless people. Many people in this world take for granted that they can get a passport, but we are denied this right.

We are not even given a birth certificate or any other documentation to prove our citizenship. Rohingya people are denied freedom of movement, access to social services and more importantly, education. Tragically we are victims of unprovoked violence, spread by fear, ignorance and hate. When a government doesn't allow media or international visitors, the world should question this. They would be horrified; women and girls are raped, brothers buried alive and young boys killed.

Everything was snatched from me

Everything was snatched from me one dark night. I was threatened with death and fled my country. I lost everything precious to me; I couldn't hug my mother for the last time.

I embarked on a journey in search of a place to rest my head in peace. There was no other way to leave Myanmar except by boat in the middle of the night. I crossed the ocean for 15 days from Bangladesh to Malaysia. I left Malaysia after experiencing so much cruelty in a few months. I arrived in Indonesia in 2012 and devastatingly, I was imprisoned for two years.

I was recognised as a genuine refugee by UNHCR. I waited for so long but I was stuck in limbo with no hope of a visa, no way to support myself. I was sure I would die if I stayed. In October 2013, I boarded a boat to Australia. I was detained on Christmas Island until, against my will, I was moved to Manus Island Detention Centre which was clearly built for intentional torture.

Imran wrote about his experience as a refugee as part of Amnesty International Australia's 2016 blogging competition. Now students have the chance to see their own blog published on Amnesty International Australia's website!

Simply write 600 words or less on refugees and asylum seekers by 5pm Friday 9 June – for further details and to submit your entry, please visit www.amnesty.org.au/schools-competition. We'll announce the winner in next term's school pack!

I've lived in great fear

The Australian Government never had a plan to resettle refugees in Papua New Guinea and the PNG Supreme Court found this camp illegal under its constitution. Again I was given refugee status by PNG, yet I am still imprisoned behind high fences. My friends who came with me on the same boat are free in Australia. We are not welcome in this country. I've lived in great fear since I arrived and as proof we are unsafe, I was beaten inside the detention centre during the 2014 riot.

There is no end date and my future remains unclear. All I receive from the Australian Government is constant, endless torture.

I'm a refugee who refuses to surrender my hope. I hold on to my belief in humanity and freedom. I never got the chance to attend school or university; these words in English are my own – painstakingly studied with limited resources.

I have the power to give a voice for those who are voiceless. I survived the worst of life on the gift of love, the key to human survival. All I need is a chance to raise my voice on behalf of the millions of refugees to advocate for their right to live the life they deserve.



Imran © Human Rights Law Centre/GetUp!

Get watching:

3 must-see films about asylum seekers and refugees

Winter is coming ... which means it's a perfect time to stay indoors. Make sure you check out these amazing films. Your local Amnesty Action Centre has copies you can borrow.

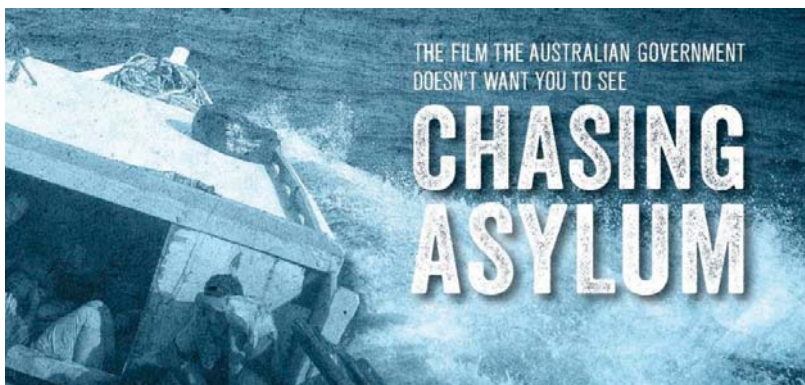
CAST FROM THE STORM

A Feature Documentary



Cast from the Storm tells the tender story of a group of teenage refugees who share their extraordinary stories when they join Treehouse Theatre, an after-school theatre group.

A coming of age story, this uplifting documentary shares the reality of what it means to be a teenager and a displaced person. This is the story of what comes after, and what it means to remake your home.



Chasing Asylum exposes the real impact of Australia's offshore detention policies and explores how 'The Lucky Country' became a country where leaders choose detention over compassion and governments deprive the desperate of their basic human rights.

The film features never before seen footage from inside Australia's offshore detention camps, revealing the personal impact of sending those in search of a safe home to languish in limbo.



Freedom Stories, a documentary project from Flying Carpet Films, brings together a collection of personal stories of former asylum seekers who arrived in Australia at a time of great political turmoil, but who have long since dropped out of the media spotlight.

Given the ongoing controversies over 'boat people' it is timely that their stories be heard.

ACT NOW >>

Get creative:

using art for activism

Check out Hesam's poster called "Shared Australia" on the next page – make some copies and get them up in classrooms and common areas around your school.

Inspired? Make your own poster/artwork to share a message of welcome for asylum seekers and refugees.

Campaigning for human rights involves many different approaches – sometimes we need a show of force such as thousands of people signing petitions or hitting the streets. Other times we lobby decision makers, write letter and speak to the media. And sometimes we need to think outside the box. Creative activism is a powerful and fun way to create change!

Adding a touch of art to your activism is a powerful platform for change because:

- it presents your issue in a new light, inspires new people to get involved and allows you to bring your personal experiences, talents and ideas to your cause.
- it works well with social media platforms such as Instagram and Facebook as the activism has a human element, feeds the imagination, can entertain and highlights artistic talent.

You don't need to have any artistic ability to be a creative activist! You can, for example, reach out to local art communities and collaborate with them – with your skills as an activist and theirs as an artist, you have everything you need to take action. Creative activism really only requires you to be a good coordinator.

Creative activism can also amplify the voices of those whose rights are denied. For example, the Australian government does not allow photos inside offshore detention centres. So instead refugee advocates shared drawings made by the detained children. The drawings depicted their situation in a way that was both telling and emotional. It had the same impact as actual photos, didn't break the law and brought attention to the deplorable conditions.

CREATIVE ACTIVIST PROFILE:

HESAM FETRATI

Hesam is a visual artist who often portrays political issues in his work. He also goes by his street art alter-ego, Oilik.

Hesam began his career as a cartoonist for newspapers in Iran.

"My development as a visual satirist was formed in Iran as a graphic artist, then newspaper columnist. I then migrated to Australia and worked with refugees and immigrants to help them express their story," Hesam says.

Hesam now lives in Brisbane. He has a Doctorate in Visual Arts from Griffith University and has exhibited his work in galleries and libraries across Australia.

"All my gallery work is very detailed, using a 0.1mm pen, so it is refreshing to make street art using a spray can – it is the equivalent of shouting."

"Hope inspires humans. Humans inspire my art. I hope my art inspires you to cherish the hope of all humans."

In 2016, Hesam stenciled his work "Shared Australia" onto the walls of the Amnesty International Action Centre in Brisbane. Thank you, Hesam!



Check out more of Hesam's amazing work: [instagram.com/hesam_fetrati](https://www.instagram.com/hesam_fetrati)

CLASSROOM QUESTIONS

Over the page is Hesam's piece 'Shared Australia'.

- What do you think the piece is trying to say? What is the message of this image?
- How does this make you feel?
- Do you think a creative approach for this message is effective?

