

An Obvious and Official Hostage Taking

To the Australian people,

In the heart of the dark night, I yell out through the mass of metallic and hard fences. Surrounded by agony and torture, I yell out right next to the tropical birds, thousands of kilometres away from the people's world, in the heart of a remote island located in the corner of the vastest ocean in the world. In the name of humanity and freedom, I yell out. In the name of all the values, values which connect human's dignity with peace I yell out. I yell from the hell where people are tortured and humiliated in a systematic form. A yell with the quality of flower-like ambitions when their petals are being plucked cruelly. A yell with the quality of a heart that has been crushed under the steel boots of politicians.

Here is the hellhole Manus island.

The excuses for this brutal policy are to protect borders and save lives from dangerous boat journeys. After 27 months of implementing this policy, now it is time to impartially evaluate how this policy has been applied. During this long period, the Australian government has been accused of human rights violations by most of the credible international organisations which are active in human rights realm.

So far two people have lost their lives in the Manus prison that is called a detention centre. Those who are supposedly 'settled' on Nauru live in makeshift camps, are threatened daily, often assaulted and have no future prospects for work or study. Further, dozens of cases of rapes and violent harassment against women and children have been recorded. With the continuance of this policy, new cases are being added to the list of rapes and other assaults every day.

Unfortunately, the government still insists on pursuing this policy. After 27 months, no one has been settled on Manus island. It has become clear that there is no planning for refugee resettlement on the island. We could say that an obvious and official hostage-taking is occurring. No one has been resettled and no one has been released from the prison.

It is an apparent reality that saving people's lives at sea is being used as a cover to implement the inhuman and immoral policy of deterrence. Unfortunately, this policy has not had any achievement. It has, instead, caused intense suffering and extreme agony for detainee asylum seekers as well as damages to the reputation and the credibility of Australia in the worldwide public opinion.

It seems that it is time for Australian people to yell loudly at the government to urge it to confess that the policy of Nauru and Manus resettlement has reached a dead end. It is time to urge the government to bring an end to this harsh and degrading policy as soon as possible.

Behrouz Boochani
Journalist and human rights defender
Manus Prison
5 October 2015