



On Monday 8 April 2013, 30 refugees began a hunger strike at MITA (Melbourne Immigration Transit Accommodation)

Who are the hunger strikers?

- Currently 25 Tamils and 2 Burmese Rohingyas are on hunger strike
- All have been found to be refugees in need of Australia's protection
- All have received 'negative' security assessments from ASIO
- All do not know why they have been deemed a security risk
- All have been in detention for 3-4 years or longer

"The act of indefinite detention is soul-crushing. It squeezes out any hope of a normal life and leads to severe mental health issues. It is utterly inhumane and many of these men, women and children who have already experienced trauma in their home countries do not deserve to be mentally tortured even further."

— Mr Bala Vigneswaran, Australian Tamil Congress, April 2013

What are they asking?

The Hunger Strikers are asking to be released from indefinite detention into the community.

"We ask Prime Minister Gillard, Immigration Minister O'Connor, Attorney-General Mark Dreyfus Opposition leader Abbott and ASIO director David Irvine to stop this torture of all of us..... of men, women and children, who have done nothing to warrant this cruel treatment that is destroying our minds.

We ask the authorities: You say we are a threat to this nation. So if we are such people why have they now put women and children and families in here with us? We are willing to be released into the community under strict orders if they think we are threats, which we aren't. But whatever they want we will do."

— Statement from ASIO Refugees, 8 April 2013

Why are they deemed a 'security risk'?

Under current legislation, refugees are **not entitled to know** the reasons why they have been deemed a 'security risk' by ASIO. This means that refugees are **unable to respond** to the allegations in the assessment. The Government has appointed a retired Federal Court judge to review the assessments, but this process has been frustrating slow, and the Immigration Minister is not obliged to follow the judge's recommendations.

The human cost of this 'legal black hole'?

There are nearly 60 recognised refugees in Australia detained indefinitely following adverse security assessments by ASIO. Most of them are Tamils. There are four women and seven children among these long-term detainees. Two women have delivered children while in detention, and two women lost their husbands who were killed in the final stages of the war in the island of Sri Lanka. All their children, who are also in detention with them, are less than 10 years of age.

How can this situation be changed?

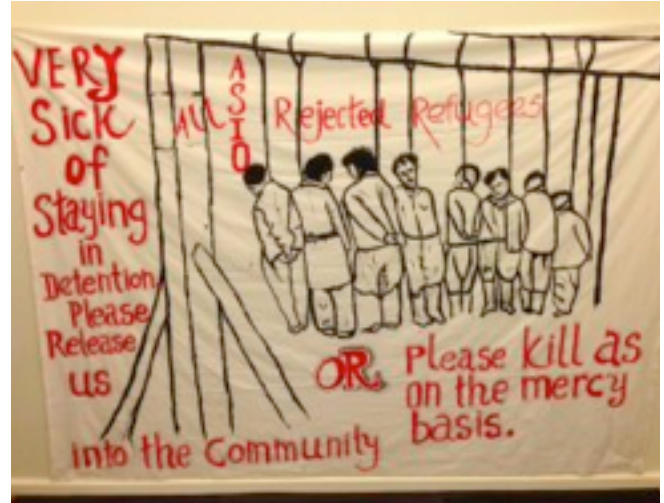
The Immigration Minister, Brendan O'Connor, **has the power to release them into the community**, and give them a Protection Visa.

They have already been found to be refugees in need of Australia's protection.

We call on the Minister to immediately release these refugees

What you can do to support

“We plead with you, the Australian people, to help us. We are on the edge of life and don’t know how much longer we can stand it.”



1. Attend or Support the Ongoing Solidarity Vigil

There is a nightly candle vigil in solidarity with the refugees on hunger strike in the Broadmeadows detention centre.

When: 6:30pm nightly

Where: Maygar Army Barracks, 150 Camp Road, Broadmeadows.

To get there with public transport, catch a train to Broadmeadows station (Craigieburn line) and then a bus (902) along Camp Road.

The Vigil is not currently overnight, but may again be in the future.

2. Make a donation to support the vigil

The [Refugee Action Collective](#) (RAC) is collecting donations to be used to facilitate the Solidarity Vigils outside of Broadmeadows MITA.

Their bank account details are:

Commonwealth Bank BSB: 063 262
Account 1025 2396
Reference: MITA Vigil

Donations can also be made via cheque to: PO Box 578 Carlton South, Vic 3053.

3. Write to the Immigration Minister

Contact Australian Immigration minister, Mr. Brendan O’Connor, and ask him to release these refugees from indefinite and arbitrary detention.

Email action at
mitahungerstrike.com

Contact details:
Minister for Immigration: Mr. Brendan O’Connor:
Email:
brendan.oconnor.mp@aph.gov.au

Shadow Minister for Immigration: Mr. Scott Morrison
Email:
scott.morrison.mp@aph.gov.au

Find out more and spread the word:
<http://mitahungerstrike.wordpress.com/>
www.rac-vic.org

Facebook event: [‘Nightly vigils in solidarity with MITA hunger strike’](#)