

Palm Sunday Rally for Refugees 2017

April 04, 2017

For many people facing violence and oppression in their home countries, fleeing to another country in search of refuge is their only hope for keeping themselves and their families alive.

As public school teachers, we see the effect that such traumatic experiences have on the families and children who have so far made it into our classrooms and communities. Federation believes that mandatory detention is not only an unfair and unjust way to treat refugees, but is cruel to those who legally seek our protection. Federation has long been proud advocates for refugee's rights in society. It is why we endorse and support the Palm Sunday Rally for Refugees.

In the 12 months since last year's Palm Sunday rally, however, the political climate towards refugees - and indeed immigration in general - has taken on an increasingly hard edge. This has been highlighted in the anti-refugee and anti-immigration sentiment that surrounded Brexit in the UK, and the election of Donald Trump in the USA, as well as in the rise of many hard-right nationalist political parties around Europe and the resurgence of One Nation here in Australia.

For the hundreds of people still locked in Australia's off shore detention centres this creates greater uncertainty, as the deal to settle 1250 refugees in the United States is now jeopardised by the blatantly anti-refugee, anti-Muslim and anti-immigration policies being pursued by the new President. While Malcolm Turnbull claims that the United States will still honour the deal, Trump's belligerent behaviour makes this seem ever more doubtful.

Even if the deal to resettle those found to be illegally detained on Manus and Nauru is honoured, it includes a cap of 1250, leaving over one thousand more in detention with uncertain futures. While they wait in uncertainty, we hear more stories of abuse, lack of suitable medical care, mental health concerns and even deaths as the result of the harsh conditions these refugees and asylum seekers are subjected to.

Community action on refugees can be powerful and can influence political outcomes. This was evidenced by the recent #LetThemStay protests across Australia, halting the proposed return of 267 refugees to the Manus and Nauru camps. Community support rallying behind doctors and hospital workers in Brisbane, who refused to discharge baby Asha to be returned to Nauru, also resulted in a more positive outcome for Asha. Mojgan's story, along with many other examples, have highlighted the community's growing support for the fair and decent treatment for those seeking our protection.



This year's Palm Sunday Rally continues the strong and growing community action, calling for those people being held in offshore detention to be brought to Australia and treated with the humanity and compassion that all people deserve.

On April 9, join with other Unions, community groups and concerned citizens to call for the just and fair treatment of people in detention.

Rally for Refugees on Palm Sunday

JUSTICE. PEACE. UNITY.

We can do better! [#BringThemHere](#)

Sunday 9 April, 2pm
Rally at Hyde Park North
March to Circular Quay

Speakers include

Mark Morey (Secretary, Unions NSW)

Samuel Pho (Vietnamese refugee and Salvation Army National Secretary)

Sue Wareham (Medical Association for the Prevention of War)

Safy Hareer (Sudanese refugee)

Joumana Harris (Representatives from the Muslim Women's Association)

Performances by:

Mahdia Rahman (Slam poet)

Sydney Trade Union Choir and Solidarity Choir

Meet on the Macquarie St side of the Archibald Fountain from 1pm. Look for the yellow Unions for Refugees banner and other union flags and banners.

Rally starts at 2pm, Hyde Park North
March to Circular Quay

Post-rally social organised by Unions for Refugees: from 345pm at the Ship Inn, 1 Pitt Street. Children welcome, food available.