

### **Senate enquiry submission.**

I am former staff member of the Salvation Army, from the period of September 17<sup>th</sup> 2012, February 2<sup>nd</sup> 2014. I was not present on the night of the attacks on February 16<sup>th</sup> or 17<sup>th</sup>, however have information regarding the night from phone calls and Facebook messages, I also have provided background information regarding the mistreatment, abuse, and degrading treatment that asylum seekers transferred to Manus Island endure on a daily basis.

I believe that such an attack was inevitable, and was well known that something of this matter could occur at the Manus Island facility at any time. Staff often discussed the prospect of an attack from the outside, and the prospect of violence towards asylum seekers and staff. It was well known that local Papua New Guinean nationals were unhappy about the arrangements within the centre, including employment opportunities, land usage, staff salary differences, expatriate staff accommodation. Protests were often held outside the centre by Papua New Guinean nationals, and at times put staff at risk travelling to and from the centre from the Bibby Progress accommodation barge, and also to and from Lorengua town. A previous gun fight outside the facility between the Papua New Guinean nationals outside the centre put asylum seekers on constant alert for an invasion. There was no cross cultural awareness of either group, albeit asylum seekers or Papua New Guinean nationals, asylum seekers were often told that Papua New Guinean nationals were cannibals and would easily come inside and kill asylum seekers. Excessive force was often used by both expatriate and local G4S staff members towards asylum seekers, and asylum seekers are regularly subject to humiliating and degrading treatment from service provider staff. There has previously been an attempted invasion into Delta compound during my period of employment. Locals armed with machetes cut water pipes and attempted to climb over the fence into Delta compound, causing fear and chaos in both Delta and the opposing Oscar compound.

Asylum seekers very often express their fear for their safety and lives inside the Manus Island facility, during the previous above mentioned gun fight, asylum seekers were left to fend for themselves as all staff had evacuated the centre. Asylum seekers often asked what would happen to them if local people invaded the centre, it was a very real prospect that such an invasion could occur, potentially resulting in significant injuries. The attacks that occurred during February were not something that could not have been foreseen, it was something that was known. The attacks whilst brutal and utterly devastating, did not surprise myself or my colleagues, due to the nature of the environment, and previous serious disturbances from the outside. During my time working at the Manus Island facility, I did not once feel unsafe with the asylum seekers inside

the compound, I did however, feel unsafe and scared for my safety when outside the facility, such as walking to and from the accommodation to the centre, and in town. I was told that I could be attacked or raped repeatedly by Papua New Guinean national people, and that I should always be on high alert when outside the centre. Papua New Guinean guards and expatriate guards often made sexual alluding comments to me within and outside the facility, and I did not feel safe to be alone outside the centre at any time.

I have also personally witnessed expatriate guards beat transferees. Guards often display anger and lack of sensitivity towards asylum seekers. Many guards often abused their power and did not allow asylum seekers to attend medical services if required, or deny food if they arrive late to the compound from medical services. Asylum seekers do not have enough clothing, or hygiene products. The facilities are grossly inadequate and unsanitary. Mental health conditions are rife, all attributing to peaceful protests being held in early January. Local PNG staff often expressed their discontent towards asylum seekers during protesting, by insulting them or verbally berating them.

When I arrived in Manus Island, I had previously worked in Nauru for over one year, and conditions there were also deplorable, however I had not witnessed such mistreatment of asylum seekers to this degree from stakeholders. Whilst Nauru also posed grossly inadequate conditions, I was shocked and distressed to see human beings being held in the manner they are in Manus Island. I had not seen such callous treatment towards asylum seekers before, and on top of that, the threat to their personal safety added another dimension. I do not believe asylum seekers to be safe in PNG. I believe that there is a constant threat to their safety, no matter how many Wilsons guards are controlling the centre, or no matter what service provider is in control. There is a direct and constant threat of attack from the outside, regardless of whether asylum seekers are protesting inside the centre or not. I believe whilst the centre remains open more deaths and serious injuries are inevitable, and that both asylum seekers and staffs lives are not safe in Papua New Guinea.

- **Employment with the Salvation Army**
- I was hired by the Salvation Army without interview or job training in September of 2012, I initially worked in Nauru RPC as a general support worker and stand in case manager until July 21<sup>st</sup> 2013.

- I was flown to Australia on July 21<sup>st</sup> 2013 after the riot on Nauru. I was told I could not return to Nauru due to operational staffing requirements and was tasked to work at Manus Island Processing centre at the beginning of September 2013.
- I worked as a general support worker in Manus Island Processing centre from September to December 21<sup>st</sup> 2013.
- I have been repeatedly informed of consequences of informing the Australian public of any operations performed at either centre. I have been threatened with the prospect of facing jail time and investigation by the Australian Federal Police if I speak about incidents, events, handlings, of any relation that has occurred during my employment, threats have been directly made to me by Salvation Army management Human Resources department and G4S officers.
- I have attempted to report mistreatment of asylum seekers and staff to Salvation Army management. On one occasion I was interviewed by PNG police for attempting to report an assault by G4S on a Transferee in Oscar compound, Manus Island. I was indirectly threatened by four members of PNG police force, The Salvation Army, and G4S staff for speaking against other staff members at the Manus Island RPC.

- **Treatment of Asylum Seekers in Manus Island**

- The conditions for asylum seekers held on Manus Island are unsanitary, and grossly inadequate for holding human beings.
- Access to medical services is very limited, transferees must fill out request forms to access medical treatment, regardless of severity. Transferee request forms often go unanswered. Transferees must fill out several forms and still may not receive an appointment. I have witnessed men suffering from gastroenteritis, scabies, typhoid, influenza, heavily bleeding noses, and bodily infections on regular occasions.
- Transferees and staff suffer regularly from foot infections. I have seen small cuts turn into large infections over the matter of days before access to medical services is approved. Very often medical provisions is panadol and water. Transferees may have to wait several days to receive panadol for an ailment, prompting staff to hide medicinal products such as panadol in their pockets to treat transferees headaches and pain. Staff are threatened that they will lose their job for offering transferees panadol or hydralyte

medication for dehydration.

- The weather is extremely hot, often there is torrential rain which floods many parts of all compounds, in particular Oscar Compound, water can remain stagnant for days around the toilet blocks where sewerage often leaks into the surrounding area around the toilet block, combined with hot weather there is often an unbearable stench and transferees are forced to walk through this water to access toilet and shower facilities.
- The toilet and shower facilities are not cleaned adequately. There is not enough toilet paper for transferees to use. Transferees in Oscar compound must take toilet paper from near the G4S guard station for use in the toilets and this toilet paper is limited and often not available. Transferees express embarrassment to take toilet paper in front of staff and other transferees for use. There is no soap or sanitizer for transferees to use after using the toilets or before eating meals. Transferees often don't have enough soap for personal use or laundry powder for cleaning their clothes. All access to personal grooming and hygiene products such as toothpaste and toothbrushes, is in limited supply. There is not enough working toilets and showers for transferees to be able to use. There is no privacy in many of the facilities.
- Staff and transferees suffer from mosquito borne disease. Transferees are not offered repellent. Transferees do not usually have long pants or clothing for use at night when malaria borne mosquito diseases are more prevalent. I have personally witnessed IHMS disguising panadol as anti malarial medication when handing out anti malarial medication to transferees. Often transferees are not offered any form of anti malarial drugs and if they are, transferees do not understand side effects or effects from long term usage.
- Food for transferees is of poor quality, I have personally found small worms and flies baked into bread and also in meat being offered to staff and transferees. I have found small dead flies in my bread on a daily basis, this was such a regular occurrence it was to be expected. I have heard staff joke that if a chef or cook cuts themselves while preparing food they allow their blood to enter the food they are preparing for transferees. I have heard a staff member claim to me that a chef told him he doesn't care if his blood contaminates food, and state 'fuck them'.
- There is not enough access to drinking water. Drinking water is in limited supply. Transferees often wait prolonged periods for water. In particular in Oscar compound.
- Transferees do not have enough clothing, many transferees during the period I worked in

Manus Island only had one pair of underwear, one T shirt, and one pair of shorts.

Transferees often wore their clothes wet after washing them as there is no access to drying facilities. If a transferees clothes are stolen by another transferee or lost, they are not replaced. I have personally taken pairs of underpants and socks from the shipping container where there is ample supply to take to a transferees who are denied underpants. We are threatened with job loss for this behavior.

- It is very crowded in all parts of all compounds, Transferees are not offered privacy, transferees often hang bed sheets around lower bunks for privacy which are removed by G4S guards. I have heard P1 block in foxtrot being referred to by G4S guards as a 'rape dungeon' I have been told never to enter this building due to heightened sexual activity in this particular building.
- A transferee alerted me to sexual activity occurring in Oscar compound toilet facilities, I witnessed a very young Myanmar man enter a toilet to be followed by another Myanmar client, The particular transferee who alerted me to this behavior informed that the young Myanmar transferee regularly went inside this toilet with different men on a daily basis. Upon seeing this I informed a male G4S guard at the Oscar guardhouse what was currently occurring inside the toilet block. The G4S guard said that the transferees are homosexuals, and if I had a problem to file an incident report. I saw the young Myanmar transferee walk out of the toilet block looking to be in pain. I spoke to 'Psycare services' the Salvation Army's employee assistance provider and documented this occurrence, I reported this to the Salvation Army Case Management team leader, I pointed out both transferees to this team leader, this particular team leader stated to me that because these transferees were Muslim and actively engaging in prayer that any sexual activity would have been consensual. No follow up occurred.
- I have been in Oscar compound when an attempted invasion occurred by PNG locals who were armed with machetes. The locals attempted to climb into Delta compound from the beach side of the centre. I attempted to evacuate Oscar compound during this time, to be informed by G4S that I was unable to leave the compound due to my personal safety being in jeopardy. I was informed that I was safer inside the compound with 500 asylum seekers on my own, rather than leave the facility. I was scared for my safety and my life at this time. I was told I needed to calm scared transferees down at this time whilst preparing for an invasion.
- During my time working at Manus Island detention I asked my team leader what I should do in the event of a sudden need to evacuate, due to all gates being padlocked at this

time, I asked how I could leave quickly without waiting for a guard to unlock the gates, I was told to enter and search each compound for a low point in the fence that I could easily climb, and then to run from there.

- Mental health problems are widespread, transferees often speak of ending their life, and how they would like to end their life. I regularly engage with transferees to convince them that their life is still worth living. Transferees often self harm and attempt suicide. I personally saw a Iranian transferee cut his wrists in Delta compound, his injuries looked significant and there was a great deal of blood loss. Mentally ill transferees are held in ‘Delta 9’ where they are monitored by security guards. This area has no recreational facilities, poor lighting, it is cramped, and their rooms have no windows. The gate is boarded up so transferees can not see outside this area. I have heard transferees screaming inside this area, and shaking the fence as I walked past. I have been informed that security guards who are not trained in welfare services monitor this area.

- **Movement of asylum seekers**

- Transferees are not allowed to leave the camp.
- All compounds are internally fenced, and there is also an external fence. The fences are mostly covered by thick green mesh shade cloth. It is difficult to see outside. Transferees are not allowed to send messages or talk to other transferees in other compounds for ‘security purposes’
- Expatriate and National PNG guards control the camp. There are guards stationed at areas all around the camps.
- During my time of employment transferees were padlocked inside their compound. Keys were controlled by G4S guards, who often took significant time to open gates,
- G4S guards take transferees to medical services via car no matter the distance. Transferees are not allowed to walk outside the compounds.
- Guards regularly conduct searches on transferees. I have witnessed three full compound searches. On one occasion I was informed that G4S and PNG police were searching for a

handgun in Oscar compound. This was not found.

- Staff are not allowed to walk outside the centre after dark, due to safety reasons. Often staff are not allowed to walk outside the centre during the day either, for the same reasons, and staff are often told not to enter Lorengau town. Often protests are held by PNG nationals outside the bibby accommodation barge for various reasons, and staff must be in 'lockdown' mode. I was regularly told to fear the PNG people, and told that I could be raped or killed if I walked home at night. On one occasion I walked home in the evening with a male friend, and heard a group of PNG nationals call out to us, we ran back to the accommodation barge without stopping out of fear, showing how we felt we were also in constant danger also. PNG nationals walk outside the perimeter fence armed with machetes.

- **Treatment of Asylum seekers by Service Providers**

- I have seen two expatriate guards beat an Iranian transferee in Oscar compound, room 3. The transferee attempted to enter his room in a quick manner when it had begun to rain after waiting outside for several hours during a room change. The expatriate guards beat him with force and knocked him unconscious. The transferee was not behaving aggressively. The guards ran over to him and beat him several times against a wall and a metal bed frame. I saw the G4S guard twist his back around the metal bed frame. Two other Salvation Army management members were also present at this time. I reported this incident, I was informed that I was 'stupid' and told 'good luck' by Salvation Army management. I was asked by Salvation Army repeatedly who was in the room at the time of assault by G4S if I was sure that what I saw was correct. The Salvation Army member who also witnessed this assault stated that she saw this differently. I have witnesses who heard her state this to me. I did not hear any more of this matter until I asked another Salvation Army member what happened to my incident report. I was then interviewed by PNG police in E block, there was four PNG police and I was on my own. The four PNG police locked the door behind me in a very small room and asked to me rewrite my statement after reading other witnesses statements, I believe all other witnesses

statements to this assault to be a lie. PNG police asked me if I would like to change anything. PNG police officers suggested I was lying to them. I felt very scared and isolated at this time. I didn't believe anyone outside the room knew where I was. I rewrote my statement and amended it to say that I could not be sure if expatriate G4S guards punched or pushed the transferee. This was not true, I am sure that the expatriate guards punched him in a brutal matter multiple times, however at this time I felt that my safety was in jeopardy.

- I have repeatedly heard both expatriate and National PNG guards talk to transferees in a derogatory and racist manner. Expatriate guards have made comments to me such as 'The Cronulla riots was the best thing to happen to Australia' and made numerous anti Islamic comments to me personally. I have heard expatriate guards tell transferees to 'fuck off' and threaten beatings. I have also heard guards tell transferees they should return to where they came from, and insult their homeland and culture. G4S guards regularly told me that I would 'most likely be raped by these dogs' when working inside the compounds. I was told to always carry a 'rape whistle' (duress alarm) whilst in the compounds.
- G4S expatriate guards often spoke to me in a sexual manner, often suggesting that I should be engaging in sexual activity with them on the accommodation barge. I reported this to my HR supervisor regularly however this behavior only increased. I was often referred to as a number by expat G4S guards on a scale of attractiveness whilst working at the centre. PNG National guards regularly inappropriately touched me when I was being metal detected into Oscar and Foxtrot compound, I also reported this to my team leaders, however the behavior continued. I have a witness on one occasion who saw PNG national guards inappropriately metal detect and touch me at the entry of the Oscar compound. PNG guards often asked me to meet them for dinner, and asked if I would like a 'Manus boyfriend'. I reported this to management and Psycare services. I felt scared for my safety around PNG National guards and also some members of G4S expatriate guards.
- PNG national guards once joked during meal time to me and colleagues that they would 'shoot them' referring to transferees if any riotous behavior occurred. It was well known fact and often discussed outside of work on the accommodation barge, that there was potential for transferees to be killed by angry PNG nationals.
- Staff were informed that if an transferee swears at a PNG national woman or insults one of the female staff that under PNG law, their husband or male relative can legally come



inside and beat or potentially kill that particular transferee. PNG national and expatriate guards often taught transferees inappropriate pigeon language and inform them that the meaning was in fact polite, however upon using such language angered PNG national staff immensely and caused tension between to the two groups.

- I heard G4S guards informing children in the Under Age Minor section of the camp to go and ‘fuck themselves’ and ‘return to their fucking country’ and threaten beatings if they didn’t stop complaining about their situation.
- PNG guards and expatriate guards often joked that they would urinate in the transferee’s drinking water. The water was often yellow and brown and had a pungent smell. This was reported, however no reply was given.
- Both PNG and expatriate guards often acted sexually inappropriate to transferees, mocking masturbation and sexual gestures to them if they complained. Often when transferees who requested medical access and did not have an appointment were told to fuck off and gestured too inappropriately.
- On several occasions when transferees were at medical appointments during their lunch period, they missed lunch or dinner and were denied that meal by G4S guards if they arrived back to the compound late.
- G4S expatriate guards often told transferees that PNG nationals were cannibals and murderous people. I personally witnessed expatriate G4S guards jokingly and also seriously inform transferees that if they complained the local people would come inside, kill the transferee and eat their body. I witnessed an expatriate G4S guard mock the eating of a transferee’s body.
- PNG police/naval police force wait outside the perimeter fence at the main entry and exit gate in the event of an arrest needing to be made, these guards wear blue and brown uniform. I have regularly seen them standing in large groups outside chewing the stimulant betel nut. On one occasion a small fight broke out inside Oscar compound between two transferees, and over 25 PNG police entered the compound for this small matter. Their presence at this time was overwhelming for what was required of them, if they were required at all.
- I arrived in Manus Island on the same day as the ‘shoot out’ outside the facility. I arrived about one hour after this had occurred. The Salvation Army informed me on my arrival to call my family to inform them that I had not been injured as the news of the ‘shoot out’

would have reached Australian media. Transferees called out to me for help as I entered the centre. They stated they were left by themselves, as all guards and staff had ‘run for the lives’. They repeatedly asked me ‘who is in control of the centre?’ and who would help them if they were to be invaded and shot at. Transferees were becoming aware at this time that their lives were in danger inside the PNG Manus Island facility. They reported me to regularly these feelings.

- **The Incident**

- I was not present on Manus Island at the time of the incident.
- I received a phone call on February 16<sup>th</sup> stating that there was a ‘big problem here’ and that the PNG nationals had attacked and injured transferees in Oscar compound. The particular transferee said that he was now going to hide in his room in Mike compound out of fear.
- I received two phone calls on February 17<sup>th</sup> from two different transferees informing me of the previous nights events. Both transferees stated they feared for their safety and for their life. Both transferees on separate phone calls stated that they thought people would die that night. Both transferees stated that all rocks had been cleaned up inside their compound and stated they knew something ‘terrible’ would happen to them on this evening.
- I received a Facebook message at 11:25pm on the evening of February 17<sup>th</sup>, from a transferee in MIKE compound, it stated that ‘we are in danger here’ ‘they cut off the power and attacked us’. I told the transferees to hide. I have copies of these messages. The conversation ended at 11:36pm. Very shortly after I received a phone call stating that that they were ‘being killed’ and so far ‘50 transferees had been injured in Mike compound’ I could hear screaming in the background. The transferee informed me that the PNG nationals including guards were attacking them with knives, machetes, and automatic weapons. They pleaded for help on the phone. Transferees asked me to call for help. The transferees asked me if they should hide, and where to hide. The transferees expressed that they believed this would be the end of their life. They were screaming on the phone to me. They begged me to help them. I did not know how to help them.
- On the evening of incident I messaged my friend and colleague of TSA on Facebook at

12:32am, asking what was going on Manus Island as he was currently on island. He replied “send me your number asap” to which I sent my number. He rang me immediately after and stated “they are being killed” and also told me “They are shooting them” I asked him “who is shooting them?”, he said “PNG people are shooting them”. “They are running for their lives, everyone is screaming” he said “people are dying, I think people are dead”. The call ceased at this time.

- I later spoke to my colleague at around 2:30am, he said multiple injured were brought the Bibby accommodation barge, he informed me that the injured were all suffering serious head injuries, he told me again he believes many people to be deceased. He was panicking. I asked him what I could do to help, he replied “nothing, they are killing them” he was yelling into the phone. He said “they won’t stop shooting them”.
- The following morning I was informed by this particular colleague that one transferee was deceased. He stated that he believed after witnessing head injuries and gun shot wounds that many more transferees would also be deceased or die in hospital. He reported to me that transferees would not let any PNG nationals near them, and if one came near them they would begin screaming and crying. He stated that some had lost control of themselves on the accommodation barge.
- I am still in regular contact with transferees on Manus Island who fear for their lives in PNG. They state they feel that they could be killed at any time, and state that PNG nationals stand outside their compounds making gestures that they will come inside and slit their throats. Transferees report to me that they cannot sleep, and have a rotational watch system in case of another invasion. Transferees believe they will be killed inside the Manus Island facility or in PNG if they are resettled there due to persecution. From my experiences in PNG I believe transferees lives are in constant danger.
- I am in contact with transferees who witnessed the death of Reza Berati, and have identified his attackers. They state they fear for their life due to these reasons.

#### • **Operations**

- Any decisions are passed through Australian Immigration officials. Answers to questions or requests are given to staff from Australian Immigration officials. Questions that staff ask management about facilities or requests are handed over to Australian Immigration officials. I did not once see a Papua New Guinea Immigration Official inside the centre.

- Scott Morrison the Australian Minister for Immigration attended the camp whilst I was present. He informed transferees that the Australian Governments policy on asylum seekers had now changed, and that no one would be settled in Australia. He informed transferees they did not have any chance to ever come to Australia. This greatly upset transferees and an impromptu peaceful protest including chanting was held.
- G4S controlled all security aspects of the centre; check points, gates, perimeter and internal fences.
- All Staff were told to inform transferees that they would never reach Australian shores as the Australian government had changed their policy. Staff were instructed not to give any hope to transferees regarding the matter. Staff were told not to even express sympathy of messages of goodwill regarding the matter. I was personally told not to offer condolences or give any hope to transferees by The Salvation Army management, as told to them by the Australian department of Immigration.
- During my time of employment I was under the impression that the Australian government controlled the entire centre for the above reasons.