

Date: 26th September 2011

CARAD's Regional Case Manager received the following email from a person detained at the North West Point Detention Centre on Christmas Island. Content written in Italics are additions made by the CARAD Regional Case Manager.

Dear Mr/Madam

I'm writing from Christmas Island North West Point IDC. I've been here almost a year.

We are not living in a good situation in this detention centre; we have so many problems which the smallest one is the food. People keep washing the food and separate eatable parts of that and then re invite the food. Surprisingly despite our complaints quality of the food is getting worst and worst. Every day I witness lots of wasted food and energy which no one cares about, while People are dying from starvation in Africa! I think whoever is in charge needs to reorganise the food system in Christmas Island detention centre.

People detained at North west Point complain that they are not permitted to make their own food. As the email above notes, the quality of the food is the smallest of their concerns, however as people have very little to do during their time in detention the meal times often represent the most eventful part of their day. Often meal times are the only occasion on which people will leave their rooms. In this context, where people are often depressed, sitting in their rooms all day waiting anxiously for months to receive news about their refugee case the meals can highlight the powerless situation they are in and become a focal point of their emotions. Therefore receiving poor quality food and being denied the control over their lives to cook their own meals exacerbates the frustrations with their general treatment in detention.

I'm tired, tired of waiting, waiting for unpredictable things. I should have waited for my IMR interview which didn't have any order, then for its outcome which again I couldn't predict any thing about it. Some of my friends were waiting 7 months for their results! Now I'm waiting for my IMR interview which we've been told it'd happen in order but there is not any order , I'm going to have my IMR after clients that have arrived Christmas Island and have been rejected 2 months after me , but I still can not be sure about that , because they've changed my IMR date one time already ! Then again I have to wait for IMR outcome which you never can say how long it'd take , and again after receiving the outcome I have to wait for visa or for third interview , as a matter of fact I don't know how much more i should wait .

As you can see it's not a line, it's like a gambling machine which you'd never can predict the result! Besides hand if you were lucky you will have your interview with good

reviewers which review you with this attitude that you need help , they'll give you your result as soon as possible which mostly is positive . But if you were not lucky you'll have your interview with a tight up reviewer which his or her presumption is that you are a lie and you don't need help at all, and it'd be much harder to convince this reviewer! They give you your result after months which mostly are negative.

People in detention have expressed frustration that there appears to be no order or consistency in the refugee determination process. People have reported that the dates for RSAs and IMRs do not occur in order of arrival. Many people are confused as to why some people who arrived in Australia after them have received their RSA and IMR hearings and results before they do. People have expressed their frustration at being unable to understand or predict the refugee determination process. Those who wait for long periods for their interviews and results while seeing others who arrived at similar or later dates get their results before them have expressed their fear that they have been forgotten.

The general population in detention have informally kept an account of the results handed down by the various reviewers. People in detention will tell you the names of reviewers who have a high rate of approval or a high rate of rejection. People within detention therefore believe that the success of their refugee claim is based not on the merits of their case but on the personal views of each reviewer. People with cases before the refugee determination process feel that this is not an orderly and fair process but simply a lottery depending on who is appointed as your migration agent or reviewer.

This generally leads to heightened anxiety and a sense of urgency to act in order to bring their situation to the attention of DIAC.

You need to be lucky with your migration agent as well because they can be really helpful if they do their job properly! Some of them don't care about their clients and when their clients are struggling for seeking help against reviewer they are day dreaming. Some of them even make things more complicated, how? They criticise and argue you in your interview whereas they suppose to be on your side and help you. I strongly believe that if I had a better migration agent I've could argue my case far better than this , then I didn't need to wait here for another year or more , as a matter of fact I have no idea that how long I should wait , and what's going to happen to me ! Please consider that it causes you much more pain when your families are struggling to survive in your country.

And what tear at my heart, even more than not being able to go back to my country, is the frustration of not being able to control my life!

We are not living in a good situation, every day people try to kill themselves here, I'm sure that you know the statistics better than me. But I know some clients that don't do that, not because they don't think about suicide, because they have families and their families need them, in fact some of them had left their countries to help their families at first place.

Yours Faithfully
[Name removed]