

Portland OR
USA

4/21/02

Senator the Hon. Chris Ellison
Acting Minister for Immigration
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Senator Ellison,

It is not surprising that the penalcolony conditions of the asylum seekers in the Curtin Detention Centre have sparked riots among the detainees.

These conditions contravene all International Conventions on the treatment of refugees - the 1951 *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees*, the 1954 *Convention on Stateless Persons*, the 1961 *Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness* and the 1967 *Protocol on Refugees* - to which the Commonwealth of Australia is signatory.

The use of violence to deal with the detainees' demands for justice under these Conventions is unconscionable and as indefensible as your government's treatment of them so far.

Once again your government has rendered me ashamed to be Australian.

The vast and arbitrary suffering your government continues to inflict on these people is a cruelty so egregious that it compromises the very future of the country. Just as the United States refuses to connect its foreign policies with the rising number of American terrorist targets, so your government refuses to examine the long-term effects of its own lack of humanity.

This policy must be changed before there is an entire second issue for which Australia must admit national guilt and seek reconciliation both within its borders and among its neighbours.

Faithfully,

M. F. McAuliffe

cc The Hon. Philip Ruddock, Minister for Immigration
The Rt. Hon. John Howard, Prime Minister of Australia