

# Tamil Solidarity:

## For the rights of workers & all oppressed people in Sri Lanka

இலங்கையில் ஒடுக்கப்படும் அனைவரது உரிமைகளுக்கும் போராடும் -தமிழ் ஒருங்கமைப்பு

[www.tamilsolidarity.org](http://www.tamilsolidarity.org)

Wednesday 10 March - international day of action

# REFUGEES FACE 150TH DAY GRANT ASYLUM NOW!



## JOIN THE PROTEST

Wednesday 10

March, 4-7pm,

The Australian High  
Commission,

Strand,

London WC2B 4LA

Come for an hour to give support

**254 Sri Lankan Tamil-speaking refugees have been trapped on a tiny boat in the port of Merak in Indonesia for almost 150 days.**

**T**HEY HAVE been detained as a direct result of a request by the Australian prime minister Kevin Rudd to the Indonesian president Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono.

The refugees are threatened with being incarcerated in a horrific detention centre or sent back to Sri Lanka to face torture and death.

These refugees are demanding respect for their right to have a decent life, freedom of movement and education for their kids - very basic rights that everyone on the planet deserves.

Crammed into the boat, in the rain, they fear storms and other disasters and are under constant threat of the Indonesian navy.

Activists who travelled to Merak to help the refugees have been deported. Journalists and humanitarian activists have been denied access.

Currently:

- No humanitarian agencies apart from the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) are allowed to visit the boat.
- The IOM, which gets \$12 million a year from the Australian government (as part of Australia's 'Indonesian Solution') to provide humanitarian assistance to asylum seekers warehoused in Indonesia, is refusing to visit this boat.
- No independent monitors, including the Indonesian Human Rights Commissioner himself, have been given access to the boat. (He visited the boat twice, in October and November 2009, and has applied for access to the boat again, but has still not received authorisation from the Indonesian Department of Foreign Affairs.)
- The media is not allowed access.

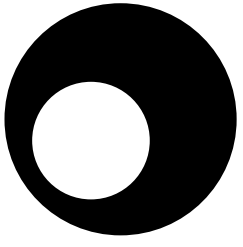
## People on the boat:

- There are 35 children on the boat including a baby, born in the conflict area during the last stages of war in Sri Lanka.
- Children cannot get sleep as they suffer from an extremely irritable rash and other skin conditions.
- There are 27 women on the boat including one woman who is eight months pregnant.
- Over 100 people on the boat already have UNHCR cards issued in Malaysia. Regardless the Australian and Indonesian governments refuse to accept them as refugees.

## Conditions on the boat:

- The boat is designed to hold 40 people and there is only one toilet.
- The food supplied is unhygienic and lacks nutritional value.
  - Fuel for the boat is not supplied. The refugees buy a little fuel from the locals. Each person can only have a shower every two days, since the water has to be pumped onto the boat by motor.
  - The lack of medical facilities has already resulted in one death
  - Many are suffering from illness on this boat. Already 29 year-old George Jacob Samuel Christin died due to severe food poisoning and lack of proper medical attention. The authorities constantly refuse to take suffering patients to hospital.

**See over for campaign demands**



# Tamil Solidarity:

**For the rights of workers & all oppressed people in Sri Lanka**

இலங்கையில் ஒடுக்கப்படும் அனைவரது உரிமைகளுக்கும் போராடும் -தமிழ் ஒருங்கமைப்பு

**www.tamilsolidarity.org**

## WE CANNOT LET THEIR SUFFERING GO ON

### **We are calling on the Indonesian government to immediately:**

- (i) Open access to human rights, welfare, and other groups to provide humanitarian support to the people on the boat at Merak;
- (ii) Undertake immigration verification and UNHCR processing while people are on the boat.
- (iii) Guarantee legal assistance for immigration verification and processing for these asylum seekers
- (iv) Provide independent supervision of disembarkation and on-shore accommodation conditions, if the asylum seekers decide they will leave the boat
- (v) Release those people who left the boat from the locked detention facility in Jakarta and allow them to return to the boat, and guarantee them the same rights as those on the boat
- (vi) Guarantee that if people leave the boat that they will be housed together in open, not locked accommodation
- (vii) Restore access to their mobile phones and the laptops that have been lines of communication with the outside world for the people on the boat
- (viii) Guarantee that they will not be refouled - not returned to danger in Sri Lanka

### **We are calling on the Australian Government to immediately:**

- (i) Instruct the IOM to provide medical and humanitarian assistance to the asylum seekers on the boat.
- (ii) Offer immediate resettlement to those people who have refugee status
- (iii) Commit to processing claims and resettling the remaining people within clearly stated and reasonable timelines and conditions
- (iv) Transfer the asylum seekers from the boat to Australia

## REJECT THE INDONESIAN SOLUTION

I would like to join Tamil Solidarity  I would like to find out more

Name

Address

Postcode

Tel no

Email

join@tamilsolidarity.org • Call 07 90 80 50 217

## WHAT WE STAND FOR

### Tamil Solidarity

#### **1. No to detention camps! Let the IDP control the aid!**

For the immediate shutdown of militarised detention camps. For the provision of food, housing and health facilities to Tamil people and refugees, administered under the control of their own elected and accountable representatives.

#### **2. Withdraw the troops!**

For an immediate end to military operations in Sri Lanka. Withdraw the army from all Tamil areas. Stop the disappearances.

#### **3. Not a rupee, not a bullet for the Rajapakse regime!**

For an immediate end to military and commercial support for Sri Lanka by governments around the world. Support action such as workers' boycotts of arms shipments.

#### **4. Democratic rights for all!**

For the freedom of speech and the media, freedom of association and the right to free and fair elections. Reject bogus/rigged elections. Freedom to stand in elections for parties which accept equal rights for all, regardless of nationality, religion, caste and sex. Support the work of bodies like the Civil Monitoring Committee investigating kidnappings and extra-judicial murders.

#### **5. Support independent trade unions!**

For full trade union rights, free from intimidation and state interference. Support campaigns by independent trade unions on workers' rights, pay and conditions to organise all working-class people, regardless of ethnic, religious or other differences. Unity is strength.

#### **6. Defend the right to self-determination!**

Support a mass movement of Tamil workers and poor for the right to determine their own future. Full and equal rights of any minorities to be guaranteed in all areas.