

Press Release: [Refugee Action Coalition](#)

Palm Sunday Refugee Rallies; Morrison Out, Refugees in
End Offshore Detention, Bring Them Here

The national refugee rallies on Palm Sunday, 14 April, will be the change for refugee supporters to hit the streets and march to end offshore detention and the years of refugee-bashing, and call for an end to offshore detention and to bring all refugees and asylum seekers from Nauru and Manus Island to Australia.

The Coalition has already launched anti-refugee election attacks ads claiming "Australia can't afford refugees." But there are almost a thousand refugees on Manus and Nauru, and thousands of other asylum seekers in detention or left waiting destitute in the Australian community who can't afford another Coalition government.

"Scott Morrison is guilty of the most expensive election stunt in history - \$185 million to re-open Christmas Island, only to announce its closure a few weeks later," said Ian Rintoul, spokesperson for the Refugee Action Coalition, "Like other Australian detention contracts, re-opening Christmas Island has put tens of millions of dollars into the pockets of multinational detention companies Serco and IHMS," said Ian Rintoul, spokesperson for the Refugee Action Coalition.

"But six years after being imprisoned on Manus and Nauru, the victims of offshore detention are still waiting for badly needed medical treatment, but most of all they are still waiting for justice and freedom."

A highlight of the rallies will be the support of medical students through Australian Medical Students' Association (AMSA). In Sydney, a contingent of medical students who will help lead the march from Belmore Park to Victoria Park.

"Australian medical students are calling for an end to offshore detention of refugees and asylum seekers, pushing to change the policy that jeopardises asylum seekers' health," said Australian Medical Students' Association (AMSA) President, Ms Jessica Yang.

"People fleeing hardship and war are vulnerable; subjecting them to offshore detention has a devastating impact on their mental and physical wellbeing," Ms Yang stated.

Craig Foster, the former Soccerroo who played a central role freeing Bahraini refugee, Hakeem al Araiby from detention in Thailand will also address the rally. "I'll be there to speak about our treatment of asylum seekers, about Australia recovering its humanity and compassion and depoliticising the plight of vulnerable people. We need to stop harming people to deter others," said Craig.

The Sydney rally will assemble 2pm, Belmore Park (near Central Station, stage near the Hay St entrance of the park), for opening by the Solidarity choir and speaker (list below.) The rally will march around 3pm to Victoria Park.

Speakers include:

Acknowledgement of country: Wiradjuri woman, Bronwym Penrith

Craig Foster – former Soccerroo, outspoken advocate for Bahraini refugee and footballer, Hakeem Al Araiby, who was detained in Thailand

Judith Wright, NSW state secretary Australian Services Union

Dr Vince Scappatura (anti-war speaker, International Campaign To Abolish Nuclear Weapons)

Rev John Barr, Uniting Church

Shukufa Tahiri – Human rights advocate, Hazara and former refugee

<http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/WO1904/S00098/palm-sunday-refugee-rallies.htm>