



2 November 2017

Hon Peter Dutton
Minister for Immigration and
Border Security
PO Box 6022
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Minister Dutton

I write as leader of a Catholic Religious Congregation of women. We are proud to be called Sisters of the Good Samaritan and, as our name suggests, we wish to be a good neighbour and reach out to the marginalised.

We are deeply concerned about the decision of your Government to close the Manus Island Detention Centre, a decision that is causing the detainees incredible distress. You would be aware of the 2015 United Nations Report which stated that nearly all the men on Manus Island were suffering from mental health issues. The current punitive actions of your Government are only adding to the detainees' anguish and suffering.

My Sisters and I urge you to act with integrity and simple humanity to protect vulnerable people in our region now and into the future. We have an obligation to be a good neighbour to those seeking asylum and also to the Government of Papua New Guinea. You are asking a poor country to do what we in Australia are not prepared to do.

Therefore, I urge you to stand up and protect vulnerable people in our region now and into the future. We have a responsibility to each other to uphold human dignity.

Under our international obligations, we, as a country, should ensure that all persons enjoy human rights. Australia's obligations under international human rights law are threefold:

- to respect – requiring government not to interfere with or limit human rights;
- to protect – requiring government to take measures to prevent others (for example individuals or corporations) from interfering with human rights; and
- to fulfil – requiring government to take positive measures to fully realise human rights.

Therefore you, as our elected representative, are obliged not only to prohibit poor treatment of individuals but also to take positive steps to prevent such treatment.

Please, for the sake of common decency, make the necessary decisions to protect the detainees on Manus. We cannot blithely nor callously abrogate our international and humanitarian obligations.

Yours sincerely

Sister Patty Fawkner
Congregational Leader