



**Uniting Church calls for changes to ASIO assessments**

In light of today's decision of the High Court of Australia, the Uniting Church in Australia has called on the Government to urgently address the issue of negative ASIO assessments of refugees.

The indefinite detention of refugees who receive a negative security assessment has left 59 men, women and children in legal limbo, a situation the Uniting Church President Rev. Professor Andrew Dutney has described as 'unacceptable'.

'We are concerned that all people have access to fair legal proceedings, including the right to know the charges that have been laid against them,' said Rev. Professor Dutney.

'The Joint Select Committee on Australia's Immigration Detention Network recommended that an independent review of the cases of these refugees be permitted.'

'Despite this, we still see vulnerable people, who have been determined to be refugees, given a potential life sentence in detention facilities that are known to cause serious negative physical and mental health issues.

'It is almost inconceivable that a civilised country like Australia would indefinitely detain six children and their parents.'

National Director of UnitingJustice Australia, Rev. Elenie Poulos, urged the Australian Government to responsibly address national security concerns.

'But what we see under current legislation is simply an abrogation of responsibility for people whom Australia has a moral duty to protect,' said Rev. Poulos.

'We have witnessed a disappointing lack of compassion and tolerance from both sides of Parliament over recent months in particular in this area.'

'We hope and pray that refugees in Australia are soon to be afforded the rights that they deserve.'

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