

RESEARCHERS AGAINST PACIFIC BLACK SITES

CALL TO ACCOUNT

Updated Charge Sheet 24/6/2016

These charges are read by members of the Australian polity who call our government to account, under the terms of its international human rights obligations such as the Convention against Torture, the Refugee Convention and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, for human rights abuses in the camps it funds on Nauru and Manus Island.

In order to highlight the structural connections of these places with other extra-legal or illegal places of confinement in the war on terror, we refer to these as black sites. These are sites that operate at arm's length from the state, in territories where ultimate responsibility and sovereign authority is obfuscated or endlessly deferred, and where there is no legal or public scrutiny.

Black Sites are mostly located on formerly colonised and racialised territories. These sites are characterised by secrecy and lack of accountability. They are often run as commercial operations by private contractors who again operate between domestic and foreign places of confinement and between zones of peace and war. The name of the group, Researchers Against Pacific Black Sites highlights these links.

All of the charges here are drawn from material available in the public domain.

CHARGES

(These can be printed out and cut into individual slips, with each charge being read by one of the participants).

1. I ----- call you to account for the continued illegal imprisonment of refugees and asylum seekers who have not been found guilty of any crime. On Manus Island, despite the ruling by PNG's Supreme Court, you continue to disown responsibility for the people you illegally transported there. On Nauru, despite the fiction that they are no longer locked up, children, women and men are not free. They are encaged in an environment in which they have no real hope of a future and in which they are often at risk of violence.

2. I ----- call you to account for maintaining black sites on Manus Island on Nauru, where refugees are held without recourse to public scrutiny and without accountability on the part of any government or on the part of contractors whose primary motive is profit.

3. I ----- call you to account for the death of Omid by fire on Nauru. Omid was a 23 year-old Iranian refugee. Moments prior to setting his body alight in front of UN representatives, he reportedly stated, "This is how tired we are, this action will prove how exhausted we are. I cannot take it anymore."

4.1 ----- call you to account for the unconscionable delay in providing for Omid's emergency medical evacuation, as in the case of the delay in evacuating Hamid Kezahei. Without this delay their lives may have been saved.

5.1 ----- call you to account for the wellbeing being of Omid's wife, aged 21, who witnessed his death and was left without support or access to translators or friends during the harrowing days and weeks following his death.

6.1 ----- call you to account for the burning of Hodan, a 19 year old Somali woman, who set herself alight on Nauru. Hodan had previously been in Australia for medical treatment. Just a week before she self-immolated, she had been carried out of BITA by Border Force Guards by her arms and legs, and forcibly returned to Nauru; this was the same day Omid fatally set himself on fire. Hodan was flown from Nauru to Australia and remains in critical condition in the Royal Brisbane Hospital burns unit.

7. I ----- call you to account for sending Hodan, a minor, to your black site on Nauru. You judged her to be over 18 because she did not speak like a child. Yet, as one of her friends said “ *We Somalis do not grow up like western people. We were never children.*”
8. I ----- call you to account for six suicide attempts in the 24-hour period after Hodan’s suicide attempt. Adults swallowed razor blades, children ingested washing powder.
9. I ----- call you to account for the arresting and jailing of refugees on Nauru who have attempted to take their lives as a consequence of the unlivable circumstances you have placed them in.
10. I ----- call you to account for the death of Rakib, a Bangladeshi man, who was exiled to Nauru. The immigration Department was quick to medicalise his death, reporting a suspected heart attack; however, friends have provided conflicting reports. While his cause of his death remains unknown, he can be remembered as a victim of the offshore processing regime.

11. I ----- call you to account for the death in custody of Robert Peihopa who died in the Villawood Immigration Detention Centre under suspicious circumstances.

12. I ----- call you to account for the unspeakable damage inflicted on S99, an African refugee who was raped on Nauru while she was unconscious during an epileptic attack. She became pregnant and was flown to PNG where abortion is illegal.

13. I ----- call you to account for the death of a young Hazara man in June 2016, who sought asylum in Australia and took his life in Sydney while living in the indefinite limbo imposed by a bridging visa.

14. I ----- call you to account for the death of a young Hazara man in April 2016, who sought asylum in Australia and was subject to the unlivable conditions of a bridging visa. He took his life in Sydney due to fear of re-detainment or deportation.

15. I ----- call you to account for the race baiting comments of Immigration Minister, Peter Dutton, that incite xenophobia, hatred and further endanger the lives of refugees. As RISE has highlighted, it is appalling that refugees are referred to as commodities to serve the political and economic interests of the privileged.

16. I ----- call you to account for your accusations against human rights defenders who stand in solidarity with the prisoners you intern for political gain. The rapes, deaths and abuses permitted by the immigration detention regime should be condemned, not those who speak out against them.

17. I ----- call you to account for forcibly severing the ties that men in the Manus camp have formed over three years of incarceration. The physical division of men into different compounds based on their refugee status determinations caused undue distress and anxiety for many who had found substitute families in their compound-mates.

18. I ----- call you to account for allocating refugee status determinations to prisoners on Manus Island despite the fact that they have refused to participate in the questionable refugee determination process that Australia has set up in PNG.

19. I ----- call you to account for the assaults on teenagers in the Nauru family camp by Wilson security guards.

20. I ----- call you to account for placing Kurdish refugee, Sardar, in the unbearable circumstances of indefinite detention that compelled him to starve his body.

21. I ----- call you to account for the vicious machete attack on a 34 year-old Iranian refugee who you exiled to Nauru.

22. I ----- call you to account for forcing people seeking asylum to participate in a system designed to fail them. People trying to appeal negative decisions are often forced to do so without legal representation; essentially negotiating life and death matters in a foreign country, foreign language and foreign legal system without the provision of any support.

23. I ----- call you to account for failing to meet the basic needs of those you imprison, such as the 31-year Iranian old actor Mehdi Savari, who is approximately 1 metre tall and weighs 30 kilos. Mr Saveri faces daily impediments even to access a toilet seat and has to wear oversize clothes that impede his movement. Despite this you have not broken his spirit.

24. I ----- call you to account for the young man held on Manus Island who is at risk following threats of sexual violence. He suffers from Obsessive Compulsive Disorder and has been told by guards that he is possessed by demons.

25. I ----- call you to account for the women, men and children in your black sites who are at risk of sexual violence. You have designed a system calculated to cause them maximum damage in the name of "deterrence."