



MEDIA RELEASE

14 May, 2004

Rally Inspection of Terror Unit, the HRMU

On Saturday, 15 May 2004 at 1p.m., concerned citizens including families and friends will rally at the High Risk Management Unit, Goulburn Jail to demand entry and inspection of the unit where several people charged with terrorist offences are imprisoned.

Following the exposure of the torture of such prisoners in Iraq and Guantanamo Bay by Australia's coalition partners, the inference is clear that breaches of UN Standards are happening here too. The government has refused to permit an independent community inspection in the past, despite numerous reports of prisoners suffering from abuse in the unit.

Letters from prisoners describe abuse which is part of the system. Prisoners report that they are kept in isolation without cause, they are deprived of air to the point of near asphyxiation, they are kept in freezing temperatures, gassed with unknown substances, and deprived of natural light. There is medical evidence that they are self-harming due to the conditions.

The Ombudsman's Office, which has taken over the duties of the Inspector General of Prisons, is taking the same position in this scandal as the Red Cross did in Iraq. They have carried out inspections and written reports, but aren't prepared to expose the abuse and by their omission, they become party to it.

Greens Senator Kerry Nettle has given her support to this action because, "As Baghdad shows secrecy allows abuse to flourish. The Carr government must ensure prisoners in the HRMU are afforded their fundamental rights."

Our demands:

- 1) All transfers to the HRMU past and future, be justified by a segregation order.
- 2) UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners be applied to the HRMU.
- 3) Control of medical treatment of prisoners be held by to Corrections Health Service.
- 4) An inspection that will verify the following statement from the Justice Minister:
"I have been advised by the Commissioner of Corrective Services that the (HRMU) is a purpose built facility providing state of the art accommodation to securely house and manage high risk inmates in a humane environment that will eventually help them re-enter the correctional system. It is not an isolation or segregation unit. I am further advised that all inmates are given access to a walking track and a half-sized tennis court and can gain access from the Unit to rear cell yards."
- 5) Donated, stand-alone computers be allowed in prisoners' cells to help them with legal cases and study.

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