

**Speech at the Close Broadmeadows detention  
centre/Children out of detention Rally**  
**1pm, Saturday 2 April 2011**



Salaams – A blessing of peace upon you all.

Let the facts speak for themselves:

- There was no mandatory detention until 1992.
- There are currently 5,360 people locked in detention, of which more than 1,000 are children.
- These children are deprived of education and often left without toys or means of recreation.
- Villawood Detention Centre denied entry of a soccer ball because it was a 'security risk.'
- All 140-150 asylum seekers in the Melbourne Immigration Transit Accommodation (MITA) at Broadmeadows are unaccompanied minors.

The typical story is that a father, brother or uncle was killed in Afghanistan or elsewhere and the family borrowing money to save their sons.

It is an indictment on Australian Governments that we lock up innocent people for fleeing persecution.

We shouldn't lock any asylum seekers, but to lock up children, despite the hollow promises of many an Australian Prime Minister, is particularly unjust.

Whilst local children go to school around the area, these children in MITA are denied access to basic education.

The fact that the Australian government doesn't just detain people in far off islands but manages to hide them in our very suburbs is evidence of the need to further expose one of Australia's greatest injustices.

As Muslims we recall how our esteemed Prophet also escaped persecution and was granted safety away from his hometown of Mecca, and for his people in other countries.

Instead of living like ordinary children, children in detention, like all detainees, are driven to self-harm and mental illness. The Islamic Council of Victoria thinks they deserve to live like any other child.

What sort of country treats innocent people like this?

We are sick of Government and media doublespeak, which hides the fate of these children. Shame of the Australian Government and the media for not defending the rights of children and refugees.

The ICV is of the firm view that:

- Detainees of all kinds and ages must be brought under the protection of the law.
- Children must be released into the community as promised by successive governments since 2005.
- It is not only morally wrong, but also against the conscience of humanity for ordinary human beings to be detained for months, even years.
- Detention results in despair, depression, self-harm, suicides. This is a monstrous way to treat vulnerable children.
- Long-term damage includes permanent disability for some children.

The ICV says: End mandatory detention now.