

-Humanitarian Law RULES!

Center for the Study of Humanitarian Law
Newsletter

Issue

Australia-Cambodia Refugee Deal

In September 2014, Australia signed a refugee agreement with Cambodia. Under that agreement, those who are found to be refugees at the Nauru Regional Processing Center (RPC) can voluntarily resettle in Cambodia. The agreement does not specify how many refugees Cambodia must take but provides that the agreement will last for “an initial period of four years.” To compensate Cambodia for taking refugees, Australia agreed to provide \$A55 millions to the Cambodian government.

To assist refugees decide whether to come to Cambodia, officers at Nauru RPC provided a “fact sheet” on Cambodia to refugees. This described Cambodia as a country with a good economy, security, healthcare and education. This contradicts what Australia tells its citizens who plan to travel to Cambodia. Australia organised for the International Organization for Migration and Connect Settlement Agency to assist refugees to integrate into Cambodian society. Such assistance includes the provision of temporary accommodation in Phnom Penh, help to find private accommodation, health insurance, language and employment support. This appears to be better support than other refugees, such as Uighurs and Montagnard, are provided in Cambodia. Implementation of the deal has not been smooth, however. For example, a Rohingya man said that he felt very frustrated and despaired about life in Cambodia.

In the past two years, six refugees resettled in Cambodia under the deal. Four have already left Cambodia, prompting suggestions from an Australian official that those who had returned to their countries of origin might have been economic migrants, not genuine refugees. The deal has two years remaining. Given how few refugees have come to Cambodia under it, it is hard to see more refugees taking up the offer, indicating that the agreement has failed.

Last year, the Obama administration agreed to take refugees from Nauru. While Donald Trump has said he will honor this agreement. To get into the United States, however, refugees will have to pass a thorough “vetting” process.

Given this, and the lack of success of the Cambodia deal, it remains to be seen what the Australian government will do next to remove refugees from the Nauru RPC.

LIBRARY HOURS

February 2017

Mon to Fri: 8.45am – 5.30pm

UPCOMING EVENTS

Westlaw training sessions will take place at 2pm on the following dates: Wednesday 1 February, Friday 3 February, Monday 6 February, Wednesday 8 February, Friday 10 February. If you want to come to session, please register by emailing jane@elbbl-cshl.org

RESEARCH AT THE LIBRARY

Did you know that you can access online databases, Westlaw International and Westlaw UK, at the library? These databases give you access to 1000s of documents that will help you with your research. And if you need help using them, we’re more than happy to assist!

