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Tampa's asylum-seekers: Amnesty International's role in the case before the Australian Federal Court

Amnesty International has made an intervention in the case relating to the asylum-seekers currently being heard before the Federal Court in Melbourne, Australia.

"Applying to the court to intervene in this case is consistent with our organization's mandate to promote respect for human rights recognized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, particularly the right to seek asylum and related rights," .

Amnesty International has maintained that the asylum seekers ought to be given the opportunity to make their asylum claims in Australia. The organization believes that Australia has an obligation to protect refugees in accordance with the 1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees. This remains the organization's view even though the asylum-seekers have now been transferred from the *Tampa* to an Australian carrier ship.

Since Amnesty International's intervention there have been further developments in the situation for the asylum-seekers as a political agreement was reached to send about 150 people to New Zealand and the remaining people to Nauru . Amnesty International believes the asylum-seekers should be fully informed about their rights under relevant national and international law by independent lawyers with expertise in these areas, before being asked to consent to solutions which will mean that their asylum applications will be processed in countries other than Australia.

Amnesty International has in the past provided its views of relevant international human rights law to national courts in several countries. Amnesty International has also participated in this way in proceedings pending before international human rights courts, such as the European Court of Human Rights , the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights.

Amnesty International's lawyers, Mr Woinarski, QC, Mr Pagone, QC and Mr Lang, instructed by Slater and Gordon, who are acting for the organization on a *pro bono* basis, will continue to represent Amnesty International in the proceedings before Judge North in the Federal Court in Melbourne Australia until their conclusion.

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