



October 2 2007

Press release

Public meeting called to discuss draconian Immigration Bill

The Human Rights Foundation, Amnesty International and the Federation of Islamic Associations of New Zealand are holding a public meeting to discuss the Immigration Bill on Wednesday 3 October.

The Human Rights Foundation says that the Immigration Bill, 375 pages long, includes positive aspects, but also raises many concerns. The Foundation's Executive Director Peter Hosking says that the Bill overrides the decisions of the Courts in New Zealand. The definition of "security" reverses the clear standards set by the Supreme Court, and effectively removes the right of individuals to challenge allegations made against them. Also, it is not only "security" information that will be able to be classified by the SIS. Any government agency is being given the power to classify information and prevent access to it.

"The Bill also undermines the fulfillment of New Zealand's domestic and international human rights obligations," says Peter Hosking. Also, the cumulative approaches proposed by the Bill undermine the very institution of asylum, to which New Zealand has made strong international commitments.

The Human Rights Foundation accepts that there must be a balance between the need to ensure security and respect for the rights of individuals - this is a key challenge for immigration systems globally. Peter Hosking says the Bill contains many measures which are out of step with international best practice, even in countries which are facing more serious security threats than our Pacific nation.

The Human Rights Foundation and Amnesty International also consider that the time allowed for response to this piece of legislation is grossly insufficient, given its length, complexity, and importance. The date submissions to the Select Committee are due by 12 October, less than two months from when the date was announced. A request has been made to the Chairperson of the Committee to extend the deadline for submissions.

Immigration lawyers and community representatives will present and discuss concerns with the Bill at the meeting. Dr Rodney Harrison, QC, Deborah Manning, and Margaret Taylor (Amnesty International) will speak.

The meeting will be held in:

The Fickling Centre, Lynfield Room, 546 Mt. Albert Rd, Three Kings

5:00pm, October 3 2007

ENDS

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