

## Media Release

# Asylum Seeker Documentary Provokes Overwhelming Response

**“Australians urgently need to encourage the Government to  
continue with immigration reforms” *ERC's Glendenning***

Sydney, Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> November 2008

**Edmund Rice Centre director, Phil Glendenning today called for Australians to make known to the Federal Government, their support for the process of reform of the Howard Government's immigration regime and it's inhuman treatment of asylum seekers.**

Mr Glendenning was responding this afternoon to enquiries to the Edmund Rice Centre following last-night's national screening on SBS-TV of the documentary *A Well-Founded Fear*.

"Centre staff have today taken literally hundreds of phone calls, emails and web responses from members of the public calling for justice to be afforded to the refugees and rejected asylum seekers who were deported to danger". he said.

"We're getting some calls just asking what they can do to help - and others are calling because they really need to vent their outrage at how our nation has treated these people." he added.

The documentary portrays the human stories behind the research work the Centre has conducted following up on Australia's treatment of rejected asylum seekers.

"Over the past six years, Centre staff have conducted interviews in 22 countries - making contact with over 250 rejected asylum seekers." Mr Glendenning stated.

"We have published the formal reports - *Deported to Danger I & II* - but even though this hard data has been available for some time, too often it is not until you have seen the faces and heard the stories that you can really understand the human impact that these Howard government policies had on the real lives of real people! This is what came through in the documentary and this is why our phone lines and website are so overwhelmed today!"

"Such a strong response is an indication of the emerging movement towards a more decent and humane approach in our treatment of refugees, asylum seekers and other vulnerable people." Mr Glendenning said.

Responding to the calls for action Mr Glendenning said: "There are three ways people can help. The first and simplest thing is to sign the online petition on the Edmund Rice Centre's website [www.erc.org.au](http://www.erc.org.au) ."

"Secondly, you need to write to your Federal MP and to Senator Evans, calling for an urgent reopening of the cases of the asylum seekers removed to danger from Nauru. Australians urgently need to encourage the Government to continue with immigration reforms."

"Finally, this work is desperately difficult to resource and yet urgently needs to continue. If you are able to support this work, please donate via the Edmund Rice Centre website [www.erc.org.au/donate](http://www.erc.org.au/donate) or mail a cheque to the Centre."

[Ed: see address below!]

"Any and all donations will ensure that this process of identifying, naming and advocating for those removed to danger will continue."

"Quite frankly, we need your help and we need it now." he concluded.

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For further information, or to arrange an interview contact:-

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