



Refugee Council  
of Australia

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## **FOUR CORNERS REPORT HIGHLIGHTS NEED FOR MORE EFFECTIVE REGIONAL RESPONSE TO REFUGEES**

Last night's ABC-TV Four Corners report exposing corruption in the Indonesian immigration system highlights the need for an overhaul of the approach to asylum seekers in our region.

“Yesterday, we released a joint statement on the need for a more effective regional protection framework,” Refugee Council of Australia (RCOA) chief executive officer Paul Power said. “The Four Corners program illustrates that people smugglers will exist as long as there is a need for their services. Increased opportunities for resettlement are vital to changing the situation.”

According to UNHCR statistics, an average of only 80 refugees have been resettled from Indonesia each year over the past five years, just 3% of the number of refugees and asylum seekers officially acknowledged as currently being in the country. “We welcome the confirmation from UNHCR that resettlement from Indonesia has been increased to 500 places in the current year,” Mr Power said.

The Four Corners program made much of the fact that two alleged people smugglers are being considered for resettlement by the Australian Government. “It is important to note that, after receiving resettlement referrals from UNHCR and the Australian Government conducts its own assessment of each application, including of any character and security issues associated with the applicants,” Mr Power said. “Anyone failing the character or security checks is not resettled to Australia.

“The program failed to cast much light on the difficulties which prompt asylum seekers and refugees in Indonesia to move on to Australia and elsewhere. While Four Corners showed some footage of asylum seekers looking out through the bars of detention centres, it offered little insight into what life is like for those detained and why people in such situations would do anything they could to get to a place of safety, freedom and permanency.

“Any Australian policy which seeks to change the current situation must focus on providing genuine protection to those who need it, ensuring that vulnerable people are given prompt access to a fair refugee status determination system and provided with options which meet their needs to live safely in a place where they can work and educate their children.”

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The Refugee Council of Australia represents  
non-government organisations and  
individuals working with and for refugees  
in Australia and around the world