

Helen Clark

1 SEPTEMBER, 2001

New Zealand to admit up to 150

Prime Minister Helen Clark confirmed today that New Zealand has offered to admit up to 150 asylum seekers from the Norwegian vessel the Tampa for processing and eventual resettlement as part of its annual refugee quota. The remainder of those on the Tampa will be processed in Nauru and resettled in third countries including Australia.

Helen Clark said that New Zealand has been closely involved in discussions in Geneva with Australia, Norway, Indonesia and the United Nations High Commission for Refugees in order to provide an effective international response to this worsening humanitarian situation.

"New Zealand's and Nauru's offers have broken the impasse which had developed about where the refugees could be initially landed and processed.

"New Zealand's Mangere reception facility for refugees provides managed accommodation for 150 people. It can be ready almost immediately. New Zealand has offered to take the women, children, and family groups who are suffering the most from their time on the Tampa. After processing, those refugees will be able to settle in New Zealand as part of our normal refugee quota of 750.

"New Zealand will be working closely with Australia and the UNHCR to arrange transshipment of the refugees to New Zealand."

Helen Clark said that asylum seekers from Afghanistan flee from one of the world's most repressive regimes.

"Human rights abuses are common, one quarter of children die by the age of five, and 3.6 million Afghans have become refugees.

"The next planned refugee arrivals in New Zealand under its quota arrangements with the UNHCR are also Afghans."

Helen Clark said that New Zealand had been moved to make its offer to help out of humanitarian concern for those on the Tampa and because it wished to support Australia in its efforts to stem the spontaneous flow of refugees.

"Mr Howard has expressed personally his sincere thanks to New Zealand for the support we have offered to Australia at this time," Helen Clark said.

Helen Clark Prime Minister

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