



youth affairs network qld

MEDIA RELEASE

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Government on notice about impending UN complaint

Youth Affairs Network of Queensland's (YANQ) Director Siyavash Doostkhah, has issued a warning to Queensland Government that unless they instigate immediate action to genuinely and openly improve the youth justice system, YANQ will ask the United Nations (UN) to intervene to protect Queensland's children.

The recent media exposure of the inhumane treatment of children in the youth justice and adult prisons and the promise of external reviews by government have parallels to Guantanamo Bay and how, despite public uproar, that facility continues to operate. "For 25 years both sides of politics in Queensland have made utterly lame excuses and hidden the reality of what goes on in our juvenile detention centres and adult prison. Putting a kid in shackles and head cover is the least harm some of these kids are exposed to, for God's sake we have innocent children being raped in adult prisons" Mr Doostkhah said.

YANQ will use its Special Consultative Status with the UN to lodge a formal complaint and ask the international body to intervene in order to protect Queensland children from harm. Mr Doostkhah said, "Clearly if the Government continues the 'business as usual' approach and pretends there is no problem we are left with no other choice but to ask for international help".

The least YANQ demands is that the Government cease the over-reliance on remand, end detaining children aged below 13 years of age in juvenile detention, and that they meet their international legal obligations by ending the incarceration of 17 year olds in adult prisons and include them in the youth justice system.

YANQ also want to see the Queensland Government shift the responsibility for management of youth justice from the Attorney General's portfolio back to the Community and Youth portfolio. "Many of the children in the youth justice system also have a history involving the child protection system and it would be much better for these children to have their protection and rehabilitation integrated, and their rights upheld by the Minister responsible for children and youth".

CONTACT: Siyavash Doostkhah, Director, Youth Affairs Network of Queensland

Phone: 0407 655 785

Email: director@yanq.org.au