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## Abbott boats Asylum seekers PM to review UN refugee treaty obligations Rudd's new bid to stop boats

### Indonesia on boats

A TOBY Abbott-led government will make its own decisions on turning back asylum seeker boats and will not be bound by policy decisions in Indonesia, the federal opposition leader said.

Indonesia's Foreign Minister Marty Natalegawa has said his country would not support the opposition's plan to revoke the flow and return policy of turning boats back to Indonesia, when it returns to the country.

Michael Gordon Political Editor

Kevin Rudd has for the first time flagged a review of Australia's obligations under the United Nations refugee convention as part of a new policy aimed at stemming the flow of asylum seeker boats.

The Prime Minister signalled the review as part of a three-pronged policy shift to address the issue globally, promote regional cooperation and lighten the refugee assessment process in Australia.

The government has already directed the Refugee Review Tribunal to consider new assessments of conditions in source countries - such as Afghanistan, Sri Lanka and Iran - that are being prepared by the Department of Foreign Affairs.

A new directive, issued five days before Mr Rudd toppled Julia Gillard, also says asylum seekers with genuine identity documents must be given priority over those who either have fraudulent documents or do not co-operate.

Mr Rudd revealed on Wednesday that "the effectiveness of the refugee convention" was being examined, after Opposition Leader Tony Abbott declared that boat arrivals were now "a national emergency".

"I say to Mr Rudd, face the fact that you got it wrong. Be man enough to admit that you got it wrong," Mr Abbott told reporters in Mackay as he called for the recall of Parliament to debate an asylum seeker policy.

The Coalition has previously called for a rethink on the refugee convention, saying its operations

### Third asylum seeker boat in need of help

Bianca Hall Immigration Correspondent

last Friday, during which asylum seekers drowned. In both cases, rescue efforts were under way when the boats sank. But Home Affairs Minister Tony Abbott said the government would not support the opposition's plan to revoke the flow and return policy of turning boats back to Indonesia, when it returns to the country.



### Baby dead, eight lost after boat made to wait for help

Natalie O'Brien

The Customs and Border Protection Service waited hours before directing its ship to go to the rescue of a foundering asylum seeker boat that killed a baby boy and leaving eight other people missing, it was revealed.

Home Affairs Minister Jason Clare revealed at a press conference in Sydney on Saturday that the first distress calls were received by the Australian Federal Police at 8.15pm on Friday from a Melbourne man aboard, believed to be from Iran, Afghanistan and Sri Lanka, was in the boat. The boat was not about 4.50pm. When it reached the boat five hours later, it was found stationary and taking on water.

Three customs officers boarded the boat, but at 10.27pm, while the Triton was still alongside with searchlights on, a baby boy was found dead in the water.

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whether I will live to see the morning. I've had opportunities for education and employment, as will my children.

*Like you, I want to be an integral part of a family and my community.*

Unlike you, I've not been deprived that opportunity. I've not been separated from my family, worrying that we will never again be reunited. I've been lucky enough to be part of a community who care and support each other, who treat me with respect and dignity.

*Like you, I want the best for my children. I would fight for them until my knuckles were bare and bloody.*

Unlike you, I've never been smuggled into a country where I was unsure if I would be accepted, despite Refugee Conventions and International Human Rights telling me in black and white that I am a legitimate person fleeing from danger. I've never had to combine our entire family life savings to board an unseaworthy boat with my children, as the only option for survival. I've never had to endure weeks at sea, waves towering over a frail vessel packed with desperate people. My life has never involved that level of courage, resilience, and risk in order to keep my family safe.

*Like you, I deserve to love and be loved. To be accepted and accepting.*

Unlike you, I've not had to fight a government to prove my legitimacy. To have people doubt or fear me, to be suspicious of my intentions. I've not had people question the very core of my being, judge my innocence and hardship, to completely ignore my plight, which is driven by an innate love of my family. I've not been viewed as a security threat, rather than as a human being.

*Like you, I am a citizen of the world.*

Unlike you, in the lottery of life, I was lucky enough to be born into a democratic country where I've been afforded rights and support. I have avenues to turn should I be robbed of these options. There is justice; there is aid. My life has not become a political pawn, tossed from one party to another as they try to win votes, catering to the xenophobic, fearful and inhumane minority of this country. I've never had to uproot my life and everything I know, inviting danger as a more viable option, to finally arrive safely in a country only to be treated with utter disdain. I've never become a statistic, someone at the centre of a toughened government stance. I've never been stopped. I have never been sent back.

*Like you, my world would collapse if I lost a child.*

Unlike you, I've never had to risk everything only to watch my baby drown. To then be brought ashore and locked into a detention centre, like a criminal, instead of embraced and counselled like any other parent who has lost a child. I've never lived indefinitely behind bars, uncertain of my future, in a country I thought would offer open arms. I've never felt complete desolation and anguish.

*Like you, I cry at the injustice, the tragedy and trauma, the desperation you feel to bring hope and opportunity to your family.*

Unlike you, I can close my laptop, I can turn off the TV, I can ignore the painful news of global tragedy and hardship and choose to continue on my day.

*I am like you.*

I am a parent. I am part of a family and a community. I am a citizen of the world.

Dear asylum seeker,

*Like you, I am a parent.*

Unlike you, I've never had to risk my life for the sake of my family. My family has not lived in constant intimidation, uncertainty or despair. We've never been forcibly recruited to an army, or persecuted if we rebelled. We've never been tortured in front of loved ones nor had to watch relatives die at the hands of bombs. I've never, as a parent, had to make the decision to flee a violent homeland, because there was simply no other option.

*Like you, I am a provider for my family.*

Unlike you, I've never had to fret about where our next meal will come from, or wonder

And once upon a moment in history, it was my ancestors arriving on a boat to Australia. The difference was that we were not rejected, disenfranchised and dehumanised.

I am disgusted and ashamed by your treatment. You are a fellow human being. Someone's parent. Someone's sibling. Someone's child.

How dare anyone say you are not welcome to our safer place?

With compassion through tears,


A fellow parent,

Kylie Orr

**Comment on this article below or in the [Essential Baby forum](#).**

**To learn more about refugees in Australia, visit [www.rethinkrefugees.com.au](http://www.rethinkrefugees.com.au). You may also be interested in reading about [the 'no advantage' policy](#), written by a detention rights advocate.**

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