



Darwin Asylum Seeker Support and Advocacy Network

MEDIA RELEASE – 15 NOVEMBER 2011

Refugee Needing Urgent Medical Attention Locked in Room by Serco, Collapses

A refugee collapsed in a locked interview room at the Northern Immigration Detention Centre (NIDC) on 15 November after having earlier been electrocuted by a fence in one of the compounds. The man, who was accepted as a refugee over a year ago and has been awaiting security clearance, was locked in the interview room by Serco guards for over an hour after receiving the electric shock. Upon being found to have collapsed he was taken to hospital by ambulance where he was treated for six hours. Upon being returned to the NIDC, he was again locked in isolation.

The man reportedly climbed the fence in an attempt to get to see friends in another compound within the centre. DASSAN spokesperson Rohan Thwaites said "It is disgraceful that an electrocuted man who was clearly in need of medical attention was instead punished by being locked in an interview room, without access to water, where he subsequently collapsed. The fact that he was then placed in isolation immediately following a six hour stint in hospital, away from friends is equally concerning. Mr Thwaites added "DIAC and SERCO often speak about their duty of care to asylum seekers when justifying their running of detention centres. It would seem a clear breach of a duty of care for them to lock someone in a room for over an hour when they were clearly in need of urgent medical attention."

"This latest incident is yet another example of the need for an independent observer in the NIDC and other detention centres around the country to be able to ensure that serious incidents are responded to appropriately and that the health and safety of detainees is not compromised." For comment - Rohan Thwaites, DASSAN Spokesperson - 0402 555 841