




Speech By
Hon. Mark Bailey

MEMBER FOR YEERONGPILLY

Record of Proceedings, 15 March 2016

ADJOURNMENT

Shamsalilpoor, Ms M

 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Yeerongpilly—ALP) (Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety and Ports and Minister for Energy, Biofuels and Water Supply) (10.13 pm): As I speak here tonight, a courageous young woman, a constituent from my electorate of Yeerongpilly, Ms Mojgan Shamsalilpoor, is sitting imprisoned in a detention centre in Darwin. Mojgan has done nothing wrong. In fact, she has done quite the opposite. She has shown great courage and tenacity over many years given the hand she was dealt in life, yet she is a prisoner with no prospect of release. Why is she in prison? Mojgan is a refugee who fled Iran under extraordinarily difficult circumstances. While I do not intend to detail here the specifics, I can assure the parliament that Mojgan is not an economic refugee. Mojgan fled because her basic human rights were violated and she cannot go back to Iran. No compassionate country or person should make her do that.

She arrived by boat in 2012 and applied for a bridging visa in early 2013. Her application was rejected and she was placed in community detention in 2014. Mojgan enrolled at Yeronga State High School in 2015 and, despite initial language difficulties, progressed so quickly that she graduated in less than 12 months, at the end of last year. This is despite her being removed forcibly from the school 12 weeks before the end of semester, in August 2015, to Darwin, where she continued her studies in detention, supported by the teachers of the Yeronga State High School community who visited her in detention with materials and kept teaching her. Mojgan is respected and loved by her school community, who have embraced her and supported her all the way, publicly and practically. Her fellow students, her teachers and the school community have rallied behind her, wanting her to be allowed to stay permanently in Australia as they know who she is.

She has married a permanent Australian resident, Milad Jaffari, who also arrived by boat and was allowed to stay. He will be eligible to apply for Australian citizenship in July this year. Mojgan applied to the federal government to be allowed to stay in Australia. Her application for a partnership visa has been rejected, leaving her two options: to stay here imprisoned indefinitely or to return to Iran, where her safety cannot be guaranteed. Mojgan has no choice. She cannot return to Iran. Milad cannot return to Iran either, due to his safety not being guaranteed. She now faces indefinite incarceration in Australia, a country we revere for freedom and liberty. Why? Because she stood up for herself. She fled oppression. She risked everything to escape people who did not respect her basic human rights.

As Mojgan's state member of parliament I appeal to the federal minister for immigration, Peter Dutton, to review her case and for him to establish a way to grant her permission to stay permanently in Australia. Mojgan's case is unresolved and will remain unresolved unless the minister can look at the matter in detail. I sincerely appeal to Minister Dutton to look into this case and to grant justice to Mojgan.

Mr Bleijie interjected.

Mr BAILEY: Mojgan is suffering in detention. She is a young woman who has been imprisoned for seven months and is stuck with no way of returning to freedom, with no prospect of release. I understand that the federal government has just met with the Iranian foreign minister and agreed for Iranian refugees to not have to return to Iran.

Mr Bleijie interjected.

Mr BAILEY: This is the time for the minister to review Mojgan's case and to free her and grant her permanent residency in Australia, to reunite her with her husband, to reunite her with her friends, to reunite her with her tremendous community, who will not give up—

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister.

Mr BAILEY: They will not give up, Mr Speaker, until justice is done.

Mr Bleijie interjected.

Mr BAILEY: You shut up! You just shut up!

Mr SPEAKER: Minister, I have given you a reasonable degree of latitude.

Mr BLEIJIE: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The minister just told me to shut up. I am personally offended. I ask him to withdraw those comments.

Mr SPEAKER: Minister, I ask you to withdraw, please.

Mr BAILEY: I withdraw, Mr Speaker. Shame on you!

Mr Bleijie interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Kawana, you have been here for some time. You know the requirement. If you are going to interject, interject from your assigned seat. Let us not be too precious.