

National Inquiry into Children in Immigration Detention 2014

Sydney Public Hearing

Thursday, 31 July 2014

President	Thank you very much for coming back so promptly. I would now like to call if I may, Kirsty Diallo. <i>Swearing in of witness</i>
President	Thank you Ms Diallo, now I will hand over if I may to Counsel.
Ms Diallo	Thank you.
Ms Sharp	Ms Diallo, thank you for coming today, could you state your full name for the record please.
Ms Diallo	My name is Kirsty Jane Diallo.
Ms Sharp	Could I just explain that I am going to spend around 15 minutes asking questions of you, then we are going to stand you down as it were and ask some Departmental Representatives some questions because I understand they only have a very specific timeframe during which they are available today, so I apologise for the inconvenience to you but will make a start in the interest of getting through the busy agenda today. Ms Diallo you were formally employed by an organisation called Save the Children.
Ms Diallo	Yes that's right.
Ms Sharp	And in that capacity, let me confirm firstly, you no longer work with Save the Children.
Ms Diallo	No, I do not.
Ms Sharp	Alright, when did you stop working with them?
Ms Diallo	I finished working with them at the end of January 2014.
Ms Sharp	In the capacity of working with them you went to Nauru?
Ms Diallo	That's right I worked only in Nauru.
Ms Sharp	Alright, what dates were you at Nauru?
Ms Diallo	I think I flew there, first rotation, the end of October and I left my final rotation was late

	January.
Ms Sharp	What was your role and position on Nauru?
Ms Diallo	I was a child protection support worker.
Ms Sharp	And just to be clear you worked at the Detention Centre there.
Ms Diallo	I worked in the off-shore processing centre no. 3 where the families and children were.
Ms Sharp	Okay, and one of your roles there in relation to the children was to develop individual management plans for them.
Ms Diallo	That's right and to regularly review them.
Ms Sharp	We may take it you had a good deal of interaction with the children in the Detention Centre at Nauru.
Ms Diallo	I was in the camp every day that I worked, I worked six days straight and then I would have a day off, so I saw the children and families every day.
Ms Sharp	May we also take it that you made it your business to understand as much as you could about the situation of the children on Nauru?
Ms Diallo	That's right we complete, all of the social workers complete a psycho-social assessments so that includes understanding the dynamics in the family as well the development needs of a child and I guess how they are coping and mental health issues, medical issues.
Ms Sharp	And it's right Ms Diallo that you have a background in social work and in child protection.
Ms Diallo	That's right I've worked for 16 years as a social worker. I worked for six and a half years in sexual assault as a counsellor advocate, specifically with children and I also worked in child protection in Victoria and in the UK.
Ms Sharp	Now, according to data published by the Department, as at the 30 June this year there were 1,169 people in detention on Nauru including 193 children. Now, doing the maths that means that at that time 17% of all detainees on Nauru were children. Now, is it correct that all of those children were accommodated at the off-shore processing centre 3?
Ms Diallo	I can't be certain if at that time they were all accommodated in the OPC 3 some may have been provided Visas, I wouldn't know that because I didn't work there after

	January.
Ms Sharp	Now OPC 3 is surrounded by a high security fence.
Ms Diallo	It is and they have actually rebuilt the fence since I left, so initially it was wire fence but I believe they have built an even higher fence now.
Ms Sharp	Are children and families free to come and go as they please?
Ms Diallo	No there aren't. There is a security check point, anybody going in and out of the camp has to be wanded with a metal detector before they can go in or go out and children have to be given a reason, so they have to be given an appointment slip to be able to leave the camp.
Ms Sharp	And what sorts of procedures are followed before children can leave the camp?
Ms Diallo	So, children would have to be given an appointment for a specific reason to leave the camp, so they can't leave the camp for education for example, for medical appointments, often medical appointments occur in the camp, it might just be mental health appointments that they get to leave the facility or if they were part of a pilot at the time where they got to go to a local school but generally they couldn't just leave the camp. So once they were given a reason to leave they had to then sit and wait in a waiting area where there was security for a bus to come to collect them, they might sit there in the sun 20, 30 minutes depending how long it takes for the bus. They would have the metal detector put over them before they got on the bus and they would be made to wear a particular safety vest, a colour that would indicate to everybody that they were actually a detainee.
Ms Sharp	To your knowledge and observation, how were children responding to these kinds of security measures.
Ms Diallo	Children were often distressed, there was one 11 year old girl who told me a story when I first started working there about how she had gone on an excursion and she wanted to take back in a shell that she had found at the beach and she was searched by security and they took away her shell and she was distressed about the fact that she wasn't even allowed to have an item like that and take it into the Centre.
Ms Sharp	Can you describe the nature of the accommodation provided to families and children on Nauru in OPC 3?
Ms Diallo	All families are accommodated in tents, plastic tents. On the ground is Masonite panels. The tents house approximately six families, so they are divided with a petition, a plastic petition, there are no doors, it's just two pieces of plastic that overlap that they use as a door. There is no privacy, there is no actual ceiling or a

	<p>petition at the top of the tent, so you can hear what is happening in the space next to you. It's incredibly hot because it is actually in an abandoned quarry so it's actually down a hill to get into the Centre. There's no breeze because it is not situated close to the ocean. There's white rocks that cover the ground and they seem to attract the heat, so there is also significant glare from the white rocks, for staff you always had to wear sunglasses, it was impossible to get around the camp without sunglasses on because of the glare would hurt your eyes. Often children and families didn't have sunglasses, they also didn't have hats, but we would wear hats.</p>
Ms Sharp	<p>What temperatures did it ordinarily reach in Nauru?</p>
Ms Diallo	<p>It's quite a humid environment so I think the temperatures probably close to the ocean are about 37°C-38°C but quite high humidity. In the camp in the tents it would be ordinarily 40°C.</p>
Ms Sharp	<p>Is that inside the tents or outside the tents?</p>
Ms Diallo	<p>Inside the tents.</p>
Ms Sharp	<p>Was there any fans or air-conditioning?</p>
Ms Diallo	<p>Most families were issued with a 30 cm sized (about that big) fan and that was it, inside the tent.</p>
Ms sharp	<p>Is it right that there is a wet season and a dry season in Nauru?</p>
Ms Diallo	<p>There is a wet season when I was there it was quite late the wet season hadn't come. But yes there is a wet season with sporadic downpours of rain so obviously the water would rain down the hills into the quarry which is where the OPC3 was.</p>
Ms Sharp	<p>I wanted to ask you what happen to the accommodation when it rained.</p>
Ms Diallo	<p>I wasn't there during huge downpours so I don't know but I am assuming that the accommodation would flood. I know that I worked previously in OPC1 when it was just men and one of the main issues was that the tents would flood when it rained.</p>
Ms Sharp	<p>Were there any raised walkways in OPC3?</p>
Ms Diallo	<p>No. There was no marked walkways.</p>
Ms Sharp	<p>Were there any mechanisms at all for sound proofing in these tents between the different families?</p>
Ms Diallo	<p>No they were just plastic, so there is no way to sound proof?</p>

Ms Sharp	Was there any security in these tents between the different families or to prevent people coming into the tents?
Ms Diallo	No there wasn't. If there were specific concerns around safety of someone then security might monitor that situation more closely. Maybe they stand near that tent.
Ms Sharp	To your observation was the nature of the accommodation having any impact on the children detained at OPC3?
Ms Diallo	I saw a dramatic ... the children mental health suffered significantly and I witnessed the dramatic deterioration in children's mental health over the course of my time when I worked in the OPC.
Ms Sharp	Was it your view that the very form of the accommodation was contributing to that decline?
Ms Diallo	Yes, the children were aware that they couldn't leave the centre. So they would be distressed by that. Two children have witnessed their father being assaulted because he was speaking in his own language and was apparently very animated so the guards took that to be threat and assaulted him and as a result ended up with an injured arm. Another father was arrested because he walked out of the centre and was put in jail for three days. So children were aware that this environment was like a prison I guess and that they couldn't leave. They would often ask why are we here when can we leave? One 11 year old girl asked the Red Cross why are we here, we didn't choose to come here this was our parents decision why are we here?
Ms Sharp	Can I just return to the accommodation for one moment. Was it a fairly noisy environment in these communal tents?
Ms Diallo	It was very noisy and it was difficult for parents to have a regular routine for their children to put them to sleep and parents would say if they tried to put their child to bed at a regular time, it was difficult because you could hear the other children in the camp and you could hear the children right next to you crying so they had problems getting their children to sleep and maintaining a routine.
Ms Sharp	The next question I was going to ask you were there any impacts to your knowledge on the ability of children to sleep because of the accommodation they were in?
Ms Diallo	Well children's routines, I don't think there were many children at all that had a regular routine. Often they would stay up very very late and some of the children would be in the centre. There was no curfew so they would just be running around in the centre. The coolest time was at night so often that's when families would come out of the tents because it was cooler and it felt more comfortable at that time so

	children would be up late because of that as well.
Ms Sharp	Were the children able to play in their accommodation during the day?
Ms Diallo	No. There were no facilities for play. There were no books. There were no toys. There was no space for children to play. There were no tables and chairs in any of the families' accommodation, therefore, families couldn't sit with their children and do homework or have a meal together. They weren't allowed to take food out of the dining space so they weren't even allowed to eat in the accommodation.
Ms Sharp	What was the set up for showers and bathrooms at OPC3?
Ms Diallo	So the shower blocks were situated at a central point which was away from the accommodation. So children would complain about having to walk quite a distance at night to go to the toilet and they were often scared they would have to be accompanied by an adult. They had 4 minute showers only. Most of the children that I worked with had begun wetting the bed since arriving in Nauru. So there was the additional issue of needing to make sure that the child was clean but also wash their underwear because there was a limit to how much underwear children had. So parents were often trying to wash the underwear if they had maybe two or three pairs.
Ms Sharp	How many showers and toilets were there?
Ms Diallo	I don't recall specifically. There was probably maybe 4 shower blocks at that time.
Ms Sharp	Did you have any safety concerns about the shower and toilet facilities for the children?
Ms Diallo	There were safety concerns obviously children having to walk a distance to get to a bathroom the safety concerns I would probably talk later about an instance where I young person was sexually assaulted that happened just around corner from a shower block.
Ms Sharp	Are the facilities lit at night?
Ms Diallo	There are flood lights but there is not specific lighting around the shower blocks.
Ms Sharp	Do you have any comments on the sanitation levels in the showers and bathrooms and toilets?
Ms Diallo	There are issues around sanitation. At times the centre actually ran out of soap, so there was no hand soap and parents expressed concern particularly because there are regular outbreaks of gastro in Nauru. So there were concerns about the children and the health of the families in the camp.

Ms Sharp	And to your knowledge have there been difficulties with the water supply on Nauru and the detention centre there?
Ms Diallo	All water has to be brought in. Nauru doesn't have a natural water supply, so all of it has to be brought in. So those had to be refilled regularly by staff.
Ms Sharp	Did the water ever run out to your knowledge?
Ms Diallo	Not while I was there, no.
Ms Sharp	Ms Diallo, I mentioned previously that the Departmental representatives only had a specific window of time, the time has come now. Is it okay if I ask you to stand down for a little while and we will recall you, probably after lunch.
Ms Diallo	That's fine.
	<i>Witness stood down</i> <i>Witness returns at 2:00pm</i>
President	Good afternoon everybody, thank you all for staying with us we really do appreciate it because one of the objectives of any public hearing is to get information out to the public and for members of the public to be able to form their own views on the evidence that is produced here, and we will be interested in any feedback you want to give us because that is important. It is an important part of any public hearing and of our inquiry hearing here at the Australian Human Rights Commission, so thank you for staying with us and thank you especially for Kirsty Diallo because she has been extremely patient and courteous to the Department in allowing them to put their evidence in when you had just begun yours, so may we now resume your evidence please and we do very much appreciate your direct answers to our questions, so I will pass over now to Counsel to continue with the questions if re-swearing is required.
	<i>Swearing in of witness</i>
Ms Sharp	Ms Diallo can I have you describe to the inquiry what the surface of the ground is at Nauru in OPC3.
Ms Diallo	Oh, its large rocks, white stones, they're quite hard on footwear so they cut the shoes. Staff are advised to take more than one pair of footwear for a three week rotation because they will wear through that footwear quite quickly. So children their footwear is often damaged, they might have holes the size of a 20 cent piece in the bottom of their shoes. I've seen children who have used wire to strap adult thongs to their feet so the grounds surface is not particularly appropriate for children.

Ms Sharp	Is there a requirement that staff on Nauru wear closed footwear?
Ms Diallo	Yes it is a requirement that they wear closed in footwear.
Ms Sharp	What footwear have you observed being worn by children?
Ms Diallo	Crocs with holes in the bottom of them and adult thongs with the backs ripped off so that they can wear them, with wire tying the thong to their feet.
Ms Sharp	Are children sustaining any injuries because of the ground covering and the footwear they're wearing?
Ms Diallo	Parents were reporting to me that their children had cuts and sustained cuts to their feet. Children regularly, almost daily, would approach Save The Children staff and beg for shoes. They would show you the holes in their shoes and beg you to get them some shoes.
Ms Sharp	When you were giving evidence before lunch you talked about the accommodation which was in the nature of a tent accommodation. Could I now ask you to tell the Inquiry what other facilities are available at OPC3?
Ms Diallo	There's not really any other facilities available. There's a tent that IHMS operate a medical clinic out of. When I was there they were constructing one playground but prior to that there was no play equipment for children. There was no place to purchase play equipment or toys, or books for children. Education or school was in the camp and was in tents, so children were forced to share a space, maybe 3 or 4 difference classes would be in one space with big industrial fans that would make it very difficult for children to hear what was being said. They had to sit on the floor because there was no tables and chairs. So a lot of children were distressed about the lack of education facilities.
Ms Sharp	Aside from ... I'll come back to the schooling facilities if I may. What, if any, recreation areas were there at OPC3 while you were there?
Ms Diallo	There was a tent. Again, everything was a tent, so there was a tent for recreation activities for the children and Save The Children recreation staff ran daily activities for children after school.
Ms Sharp	Was there anywhere for the children to play sport or run around?
Ms Diallo	They could run around in the camp. That was the only space that they really had. You had to get permission to go outside of the camp, so to play sport outside of the camp wasn't really possible unless it was a special program organised.

Ms Sharp	What about within the camp? Was there anywhere they could play sport?
Ms Diallo	Half way through, probably in January they opened a space where there was some trees so there was a bit of shade and they put up a volleyball net, but that was mostly used by adults. That was the only space really for children to play in. So children generally just used rocks and stones. They would play in the dirt.
Ms Sharp	And prior to that time in January, were there any shaded areas where children could play outside?
Ms Diallo	No there weren't any shaded areas. I often conducted assessments with children sitting out in the sun or sitting next to a tent to try and get some shade, sitting on the rocks.
Ms Sharp	You've given evidence that the children were playing with the rocks, and so what other activities did they ordinarily engage in for leisure activities?
Ms Diallo	Well the recreation programs run by Save The Children, but without those activities it was just ... they didn't really have much to do. They would pick up, you know, industrial waste, things that were left and sticks and things like that. They would climb sometimes some of the barriers, the fences just to pass time.
Ms Sharp	Do you have any comments based on your observations at Nauru about the type of clothing that was provided to the children?
Ms Diallo	The clothing provided was grossly inadequate, so children often had just one pair ... item of clothing that they would arrive in. So they would be wearing winter clothing and they wouldn't be able to get any other clothing. So, for example, I had a 7 year old girl who for six weeks asked me every time she saw me if I could get her some shorts or a T-shirt. She was wearing a skivvy and tracksuit pants, and after six weeks her mum wept and said I have a mosquito net, I will now make this into a dress for my daughter.
Ms Sharp	Was it your observation that the inappropriate provision of clothing to children was widespread or was it isolated?
Ms Diallo	It was widespread it was throughout the camp
Ms Sharp	Now while you were working at Nauru were you familiar with the food that was being provided to the children?
Ms Diallo	The children frequently complained about the food and I actually did eat in the camp on a couple of occasions with the families so I did observe the food.

Ms Sharp	And what can you tell us about the food provided to the kids?
Ms Diallo	It wasn't particularly appetising for children, it was the same food all the time so there was like vegetable salad lamb chops like shrivelled lamb chops and there was usually some kind of curry like a dhal with rice. The children, a number of the children I worked with would say that they can't eat the food they don't like it ... a lot of the children also had problems with their teeth so they had significant dental problems and couldn't eat the food because it was hard to chew for them.
Ms Sharp	Just on that topic, to your knowledge or understanding were there any dentists on Nauru at the OPC 3
Ms Diallo	My understanding was there weren't dentists and children were placed on a waiting list to see dentists but they had significant dental problems.
Ms Sharp	During the entire period you were at Nauru were you aware of whether a dentist ever attended at Nauru
Ms Diallo	I wasn't aware of a dentist attending
Ms Sharp	In relation to the food provided for children, were children ever provided with snacks between meals?
Ms Diallo	The only snacks that were available is parents could buy from a shop that operated a couple of hours a day they could buy, was junk food chocolate and sugary drinks, that was the only thing that parents could buy for their children with points, they weren't allowed to take food out of the dining tent and parents weren't supposed to have food in their accommodation so if they had a young child they would complain often that they didn't have anything to give their child after 8 o'clock at night if the child was hungry.
Ms Sharp	Now is it right that there are a number of children on Nauru with only one parent?
Ms Diallo	That's right, there's a number of single parents.
Ms Sharp	To your knowledge were there ever occasions in which a child with only one parent was separated from that parent for a significant period of time.
Ms Diallo	I'm not aware of a child being separated, I am aware of some issues with a single father and his two children – he was assaulted by security staff so when obviously he went for treatment there's some concern that his children are then not able to have a care giver with them.
Ms Sharp	What happens when a parent a single parent for whatever reason is unable to mind

	their child for a period of time?
Ms Diallo	Well sometimes Save the Children staff that would be called down to look after the child and stay with the child. We would encourage parents obviously to develop some friendships with other people in the camp and see if they could assist with the child minding for a short period of time.
Ms Sharp	To your observations were things such as toys or reading books or colouring books or pencils or pens ever provided to children on Nauru?
Ms Diallo	They were not available, they weren't available at the shop that operated in the centre and parents regularly requested that they be able to purchase toys and books for their children. I sat with a 4 year old girl once who begged for an instructional book on using therapeutic tools because she just wanted to have a book.
Ms Sharp	What are the educational services provided on Nauru on OPC3 to children?
Ms Diallo	At the time, classes were provided in the camp in a tent, I believe that they are now provided in the administration camp which is OPC1 so in classrooms. At that time they had a I think it was like a middle primary school, lower primary school and upper primary school and then a high school class so they weren't able to put children in specific classes based on I guess their capacity and their ability. Obviously resources were fairly limited in terms of books, pencils, stationery those kind of things.
Ms Sharp	How frequently did children attend those schools you've described?
Ms Diallo	School was on every day Monday to Friday – a lot of children didn't attend and a lot of adolescents didn't attend they would complain that the curriculum wasn't useful for them that they weren't doing things like Maths or Science, that they were not studying anything that there was no benefit for them and some children wouldn't go because they found the environment so distressing that they had no chair, no table, no pencils, that they couldn't hear the teacher so some students would stop attending because they would get so upset from going to school.
Ms Sharp	To you observations where there any areas in the camp where children were able to do their homework?
Ms Diallo	There was no-where for children to do homework. If they are in the accommodation in the tent they would have to sit on the floor and do it which is obviously dirty and dusty, not a very appropriate space.
Ms Sharp	Are there any other comments you want to make about the schooling provided to children in OPC3?

Ms Diallo	I don't have any comments about the schooling.
Ms Sharp	Information that's been given to the Commission suggest that there's a practice on Nauru of guards and other staff referring to children not by their name but by their boat name are you familiar with that practice?
Ms Diallo	The boat ID is used all the time and you will see in incident reports that children are not referred to by their name, adults aren't referred to by their name they are referred to by their boat ID.
Ms Sharp	To your observation did this practice have any effect on the children at Nauru?
Ms Diallo	Children would often identify themselves by their boat ID so when you would ask their name they would tell you what their boat ID was so it's particularly concerning that they you know didn't have any particular identity and the only thing they identify with was a boat ID.
Ms Sharp	Were you in the position while you were on Nauru to regularly observe interactions between guards and children?
Ms Diallo	I did observe some interactions, there were also a number of conversations with colleagues regarding interactions and there were concerns from Save the Children staff in terms of guards' interactions with children. So there were some inappropriate, I guess interactions, it was a little girl the youngest girl that was in the camp I think she was about 3 years old she was often picked up by guards she was sitting on their lap which workers felt was inappropriate, on occasions I observed adolescent girls engaging what I would describe as flirtatious behaviour with adult male guards and I also had a colleague report to me that he had observed an adult male guard stroking a 15 year old girl's hair.
Ms Sharp	Did you ever observe the guards acting in a violent manner towards children?
Ms Diallo	I didn't observe any violence. There was some concerns that not specifically guards but some other local staff had been physically aggressive towards children. A client of mine who were 17 was in the shop to purchase some items and a Salvation Army staff member staff was actually restrained from hitting the young person. There were also reports that a bus driver had threatened a child with a cricket bat.
Ms Sharp	You ever observed the guards or auxiliary staff threatening or behaving in an otherwise abusive manner towards children?
Ms Diallo	I think sometimes staff perhaps didn't have a very good understanding of children and how children behave when they are under stress and so there wasn't a lot of tolerance so sometimes children I guess would be labelled as naughty maybe they

	would be threatened verbally with physical chastisement because there was a lack of understanding of what that behaviour was about.
Ms Sharp	Did the children ever expressed to you any concerns about the treatments by guards or other staff?
Ms Diallo	Children didn't express to me they did talk a lot about not feeling safe and that they didn't believe that their guards would keep them safe so there was also quite a lot of violence that occurred between adult males in the camp and children and other parents physically chastising someone else's children and children expressed concern that no one could keep them safe from that.
Ms Sharp	The Commission's been provided with some information suggesting that a 16 year old boy was sexually assaulted by a cleaner on Nauru are you able to tell this inquiry anything about that incident?
Ms Diallo	So the incident occurred in the middle of November, it was actually part of the incident was actually witnessed by security staff, Wilson security staff, the 16 year old boy was near the toilet blocks and there was a male cleaner who was on his own in the centre and it's unclear why he was on his own in the centre cause it was against policy. He touched the boy's genitals and then grabbed his own genitals and said giggly gig at that point guards were alerted because the young person was screaming out and had kicked at the cleaner and pushed the cleaner away from him.
Ms Sharp	Now obviously Nauru is an institutional framework for the full time detention of children. In that context can I ask you, to your knowledge and observation what child protection framework was available at Nauru?
Ms Diallo	There is no child protection legislation that exists in Nauru and there is no child protection authority that exists in Nauru. So the capacity to I guess put in place strategies to prevent child abuse, well it just doesn't exist. So the role of Save the Children was to, I guess address child protection concerns but we didn't have the normal avenues to address those child protection concerns. For example in Australia or in the UK or in any other country where there is a child protection system if a child is at risk and the parents are unable to protect then you would have the option of removing that child or you would have the option of removing the perpetrator or the threat to the child. That wasn't an option in Nauru.
Ms Sharp	Are you able to indicate around about what percentage of staff on Nauru, be they guards or auxiliary staff were Nauruan.
Ms Diallo	I don't know how many. I know that a number of the services had an obligation with the Department of Immigration as part of their contractual obligation to employ a percentage of Nauruans. Save the Children didn't have that in their contract but from

	what I understand every other service provider did.
Ms Sharp	Now your background is in child protection. That's right isn't it?
Ms Diallo	That's correct.
Ms Sharp	Are you able to assist the Commission with understanding whether there were any sort of what I will describe as 'working with children checks' for the Nauruan staff who worked at the detention centre?
Ms Diallo	My understanding is that there is no capacity for there to be any 'working with children checks' done of local staff because they don't have the legislation and they don't have the infrastructure in place to do those checks so none of the local staff are checked in terms of working with children.
Ms Sharp	In your dealings with the children and with the parents on Nauru, did any of them report whether they felt comfortable with reporting any instances of abuse to the authorities.
Ms Diallo	In the instance of the child that I just mentioned, his family were fearful of following through with any criminal action. I was advised that that was the only option and that they should have taken that option. However, they were terrified that there were a number of other local Nauruans in the camp who would be aware of the reason why their friend was dismissed and that if they followed through with criminal actions the repercussions for that family would be serious and they weren't prepared to put up with that.
Ms Sharp	The Commission has been advised that detainees in Nauru spend a very large part of their time queuing for things. Is that consistent with your observations.
Ms Diallo	That's right. They do queue for long periods of time in the sun waiting for the shop to get shoes, or to get you know, chocolate, or clean sheets or to go to the doctor.
Ms Sharp	Are they queuing for medication?
Ms Diallo	They queue for medication. They also queue if they need to go to IHMS mental health or if they need something at the clinic they will queue to get on a bus to go up there.
Ms Sharp	What sort of lengths of time are we going?
Ms Diallo	I would estimate 30 minutes to an hour standing out in the sun.
Ms Sharp	Have you observed whether the heat has any effect on the children at Nauru?

Ms Diallo	I mean I guess children continually begging for some clothes that are appropriate is an indicator that they were affected by the heat. I know that there was a father that was complaining that his tent actually got the bulk of the sun and it was a particularly hot tent and that his children were suffering. They were struggling to sleep at night. They also lived in flannelette pyjamas because they didn't have any other clothes. So there were some physical concerns about those children in terms of the heat.
Ms Sharp	Did you see any parents or any children on Nauru that had physical conditions such that you were surprised they were on Nauru in the first place?
Ms Diallo	Parents or children?
Ms Sharp	Parents or children.
Ms Diallo	There were children that we were surprised I guess Save the Children staff were surprised that they were on Nauru. An example of that would be a 10 year old girl who arrived, she had kidney stones in her left kidney and had had them removed in 2009 and at that time was told that her right kidney was not functioning and that she would need to have that removed by the time, between the age of 8 to 10. She was 10 years old in Nauru and she was particularly concerned and her parents were particularly concerned about her right kidney that was in kidney failure and the lack of services available.
Ms Sharp	Now the Commission has received information to suggest that on a number of occasions family members, or entire families, have suddenly been transferred off Nauru without receiving any prior notification. Is that consistent with your observations or what you have been told while you were at Nauru?
Ms Diallo	I wouldn't know about families. I would imagine that that would be consistent with the process. Information isn't shared with detainees in terms of what is happening so there were three unaccompanied minors that were removed from Nauru temporarily. They were advised on the morning, probably 2 hours before the flight, that they were going to be leaving Nauru and they were only allowed to tell one other person in the centre that they were leaving.
Ms Sharp	To your observation were children on Nauru sometimes exposed to incidents of violence or unrest or self-harm attempts?
Ms Diallo	Children would have been exposed to self-harm. They were also exposed to violence. There was an incident where a young person, a 17 year old boy, was, 3 adult males attempted to assault him and security guards intervened. One of the security guards was knocked to the ground, bleeding. There was another incident on New Year's Eve that, there was a raid conducted on OPC 3 and weapons were found in the camp. The children that were in the camp were subjected to searches, pat-

	downs and they were made to stand out in the sun for 4 hours waiting while their tents were searched. Other children that were outside of the camp were not allowed to return to the camp until about 10.30 at night so there were a lot of children very distressed, not knowing what was going on and why they couldn't return to their families.
Ms Sharp	While you were on Nauru were you ever made aware of any attempted suicides or other acts of self-harm on the part of children?
Ms Diallo	I was aware that there were particular concerns when I was there in regards to unaccompanied minors who were engaging in self-harm behaviour and were expressing suicidal ideations.
Ms Sharp	Did you personally observe any children on Nauru exhibiting signs of mental distress?
Ms Diallo	I think that all of the children that I worked with exhibited signs of mental distress. The children that I worked with presented with behaviour that would be consistent with children who have been subjected to physical abuse or neglect or some type of abuse and I guess it was consistent with trauma.
Ms Sharp	Ms Diallo what percentage of children were exhibiting what I might describe as more serious behaviours in that regard?
Ms Diallo	I would suggest that the percentage was probably 80% of the children presented with particularly disturbing behaviour with significant changes in their behaviour and their personality as a result of being in Nauru.
Ms Sharp	Did you personally observe any children with developmental delays or problems?
Ms Diallo	I didn't work with any children with developmental delays.
Ms Sharp	Do you have any comments about the level of support that is provided to children in detention on Nauru who are exhibiting signs of mental distress or other mental health problems?
Ms Diallo	I think there is a significant lack of support provided. There is a trauma and torture service. The difficulty is that they have a huge waiting list but the other difficulty is that you can't really do trauma recovery work when children remain unsafe and so children weren't generally in a position where they were able to recover from their trauma and that is why they continually, you know, presented with trauma symptoms.
Ms Sharp	Based on your experience as a social worker, what is your opinion? Is Nauru a safe environment for children?

Ms Diallo	Nauru is completely inappropriate. It is inappropriate for adults but it is completely inappropriate for children and I actually think it is causing physical and mental harm to children and it wouldn't be an acceptable place for Australian children to be, to live in. If there was a child, I guess in a child protection matter, if a child was living in an environment that caused that kind of distress then I imagine the State authorities would look to remove that child.
Ms Sharp	Ms Diallo thank you very much for your time. I don't have any further questions.
President	Thank you very much indeed. We really have appreciated you giving us your time and being courageous enough really to give us this very clear evidence that will obviously be taken into full account when we report.