Submission to the Inquiry on Children into Detention

I was born on [redacted]. I was born in Rakai State, [redacted], Burma. I was able to recall the memory in the year 1988 as far as I remember. And I remember there were a lot of massacres, killings. [redacted] At the time, I had an experience of killings. It was a trauma for me to see those killings of others as I was very young. I was traumatised to see those killings and because of my family’s poor economic situation I was able to go to school till year 4. I believe that the reason why we were very poor financially is that because of the instability of government, political situation and the government’s mismanagement. It’s like you can see without education I feel like I am blind. I grew up with a very disadvantaged family until the age of 18. And then I was married. I grew up under the rules of military government and I was persecuted. The soldier tried to rape me. I have already put all those in my refugee applications and then I fled to Malaysia and then I gave birth to my daughter. I gave birth to my daughter with a mid-wife that was not in hospital but that was in my house. I lived in Malaysia for many years but I felt insecure and my life was still in danger. I was scared of two kinds of people. One kind was Indian people who were gangsters. They used drugs and they robbed people anytime they want and I feel like my life was not safe. The other was that I was scared of was police because I did not have proper documents to live in Malaysia. I have to survive. I have to live on for the sake of my daughter. I have to live for my daughter because my daughter was uneducated like me. I have tried for three times to be able to send my daughter to school in Malaysia and they required some proper documents and passport to be able to send my daughter to school. So as I couldn’t do anything and I was helpless the only thing I could do was just cry and come back home. I have only one daughter and I do not want her to be uneducated like me. So as I heard that Australia is full of human rights and I chose
Australia just be my home for my daughter. I have tried two times to be able to go to Australia by boat. I took risks for my daughter and the risk was that if I could make it to Australia my daughter would have better life or I will die. You could ask anyone, no-one wants to die on a boat. I do not think that anyone wants to die in that ocean in a very bad condition. The first time when I try to go to Australia, I had two days without drink on a boat. We were on a boat for 7 days and 2 days without drink and my daughter passed out due to unavailability of water. But then what was terrifying me was the boat was just leaking and there was water coming inside the boat. The storm hit the boat. What happened was the boat was hid away by the storm and they saw a small island. Unfortunately, the military was based on that island. And the soldiers from that military sent us to a detention centre in Indonesia for 9 months and we received United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) registration cards from UNHCR. And we tried a second time to come to Australia after that.

There was also a terrifying situation I came across in that second attempt to come to Australia. That was a woman who gave birth to a baby on the boat. It was very terrifying to see that woman give birth to a baby without any medication. When I arrived on Christmas Island the bad news I heard was about that the Australian government was not accepting boat people who came after 19 July 2013. I was very sad when I heard that news and I wanted to kill myself. I had stayed on that Christmas Island for six months. I have been on Nauru for 4 months now. My child has been in detention centres for two years now. I want my daughter to have a better future and I want her to be free from this detention centre. I heard another news. The news is if we were found not to be refugees we would not be released to the community. I don’t want my daughter psychologically affected. If I would like to appear to to help me to get out of this place. Thank you very much.
I’ve never come across a person like [NAME] who helped me with all her heart. She’s my case manager. We have a lot of case managers in this centre but they are not the same and there are none like her. I believe all the case managers are professional and are good at their work. But [NAME], my case manager is special. She works with all her heart. At the same time there is also an interpreter. His name is [NAME]. He helps us with all his heart, professionally. Therefore I would like to thank these two professionals. And because of these two people, I was able to forget my pains when I have very difficult situation. As you care about us, I also want these two professional to be recognised and appreciated at what they have done. Thank you very much.

First of all, I am a mother and I’m extremely worried about my daughter’s future. To talk about her briefly, my daughter has been in detention centres for two years. She had lived in a terrifying situation which was in Indonesia detention centre for 9 months. She’s from Rakan background. She was unable to speak her own dialect in detention centre because of the religious violence between Buddhists and Muslims. They are two ethnic groups from Burma identified in this detention centre which are Muslim Rakai and Buddhist Rakai. As we are Buddhist Rakai, it is very difficult for us to live in this detention centre with Muslim Rakai and it’s important for my daughter to practice her mother tongue. While in Indonesia detention centre we heard about a Buddhist Rakai that was killed by a Muslim Rakai in Indonesia. When my daughter heard about this news, my daughter was extremely worried and she wanted to hide her identity. She had nightmares where she was saying in her dream “I am a Karin, I am a Karin” which is not her real identity. I was hearbroken when I heard this and I comforted her by saying we would not have these nightmare troubles anymore when we get to Australia. Therefore I am very worried about my daughter as she has been in a detention centre for two years and I don’t want her to be psychologically
affected. And finally, I would like to say the detention in Nauru is the worst situation I have come across and is totally not for any children. If my child is detained continuously, I will be very much worried about her mental health. There are also a lot of children facing the same situation in this detention centre. Please help these children.

Thank you very much.