

Australia's Abu Ghraib: Australian Government Complicit in Torture of Children at Don Dale Detention Centre

By [Ken Canning](#)

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The following article from Australia is a sharp rebuke of Australian Prime Minister Malcolm B. Turnbull by an Aborigine candidate of the Australian Senate that rightly criticizes his government for doing nothing to stop the torture and widespread abuse of children and juveniles at the Don Dale Detention Centre that was exposed by investigative journalist Caro Meldrum-Hanna on Australian national television on July 25, 2016. The indigenous or Aborigine Australian community repeatedly demanded that the Australian government take legal action. Reports about Aborigine or First Nation children and juveniles, which are the bulk of the detention wards in the Northern Territory, being brutalized were frequently made without meaningful consequences.

Leaks from Don Dale Detention Centre show children being forcefully stripped naked, hog tied like cattle, carried by the neck, knocked down, and thrown by facility staff. Prison guards systematically de-humanized and humiliated children and juveniles with insults, beatings, and gassing in what amounts to nothing short of unjust abuse of authority and criminal acts. Prior to the leaked footage aired by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation's Four Corners program that explicitly shows children and juveniles being abused and tortured by guards, current and past Australian governments were well aware of what was happening at the youth detention centre for [approximately two to five years](#). These governments, however, refused to take any action. Only when the broader general public became aware of the horrific crimes at Don Dale Detention Centre did the Australian government feign outrage and pledge to take action by saying that it would establish a royal commission of inquiry. This is utter hypocrisy and dishonesty on the part of the federal government of Australia, which has been motivated by the self-interest of saving face.

Along with the long history of the Australian state to abuse vulnerable peoples, the racist attitudes that serve to justify the marginalization of the Aborigine of Australia are deeply entrenched in Australian society and have enabled what has happened in Don Dale Detention Centre. The victims were not seen or respected as being equals. Instead the victims were viewed as lesser people by virtue of their socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds. Essentially they were treated as non-people that could be abused with impunity. This is why Don Dale Detention Centre should be viewed as nothing short of being Australia's own Abu Ghraib. The Iraqis that were tortured by the US military in Abu Ghraib were also viewed as non-people by the US personnel stationed there, which for the US perpetrators excused the violation of the rights of their Iraqi victims. Moreover, the comparison between Abu Ghraib and Don Dale is especially fitting since many of the wards at Don Dale are children and juveniles from Australian indigenous communities, which are a

dispossessed people that have been driven off their ancestral lands by the colonial process that established Australia.

Mahdi Darius Nazemroaya, Asia-Pacific Research Editor, 26 July 2016.



Dylan Voller, a thirteen-year old boy, being strangled at Don Dale Detention Centre.



Dylan, age seventeen, is seen above and below being tied to a chair in adult prison.



Malcolm Turnbull has called for a Royal Commission after seeing on ABC's *Four Corners* the brutality that has been happening under both his government and the previous Labor government.

He said this evidence had not been brought forth at previous inquiries. Not good enough Turnbull!

People have been screaming for the past five years about the Don Dale detention centre and your government and the Labor government have chosen to ignore this pure evil. You not only ignored it, you let it fester.

You either knew and thus are complicit, or you did not know and are simply not fit to govern. You cannot get out of this one with a slippery smile, Turnbull.

A Royal Commission? What a joke! You have all the evidence you need; it shocked a whole nation. Predominantly First Nations children are being brutalised by a system you let continue in your pretence of ignorance.

The evidence is there. Sack everyone in Corrective Services in the Northern Territory. Those who did not actually do anything would have known of these practices and allowed it to happen.

Sack the NT government and while you are at it, sweep the federal parliament of the rubbish currently holding seats of power who sat by and watched while our kids were being tortured.

This is an international disgrace and this country should be dragged before the United Nations and stripped of its powers. The Australian government had its racist intervention into the NT so maybe its time for an international intervention into Australia?

Put simply the Coalition and Labor have lost the ability to govern.

Ken Canning is a First Nations activist who was a Senate candidate for the Socialist Alliance in the July 2 elections.

To read a past report about abuse at Don Dale Detention Centre please [click here](#).

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