



## [ABC Online](http://www.abc.net.au)

### **Aust accused of breaching UN refugee convention. 15/03/2007. ABC News Online**

[This is the print version of story <http://www.abc.net.au/news/newsitems/200703/s1872797.htm>]

**Last Update:** Thursday, March 15, 2007. 4:02pm (AEDT)



Kevin Andrews says the decision will send a strong message to those considering any attempt to enter Australia illegally. (ABC TV)

## **Aust accused of breaching UN refugee convention**

A human rights legal group says Australia is breaching its international obligations by sending a group of asylum seekers to Nauru for processing.

The Immigration Minister, Kevin Andrews, today announced the transfer of more than 80 Sri Lankan men currently being held on Christmas Island.

Mr Andrews says the move will deter people smugglers and potential asylum seekers from trying to reach Australia.

The spokeswoman from the group Australian Lawyers for Human Rights, Eve Lester, says the Government's policy is contrary to the United Nations (UN) convention on refugees.

"The message is loud and clear that the purpose of sending people to Nauru is a deterrent purpose," she said.

"That means that the measure assumes a punitive quality and that puts Australia unquestionably in breach of article 31 of the Refugee Convention which prohibits the imposition of penalties on people who arrive in the territory of a state illegally."