

# A last resort

## Activity sheet

The aim of this activity is to introduce students to the issues that faced children who were kept in Australian Immigration Detention Centres prior to the policy change in 2005.

**Note:** In June 2005 the Migration Act was amended so that children and their families could only be detained in immigration detention centres 'as a measure of last resort'. Prior to this, children were automatically detained in detention centres.

Families and children have since been released from immigration detention facilities into community-based detention, which means that they can live in the community and participate in education and community life. For shorter periods of time, children and their families may be placed in residential housing centres or alternative detention arrangements.

For current Government policy refer students to <http://www.immi.gov.au>

1. Read the following case study to students as a listening exercise (or provide them with the text).

### Case study

The year is 2002. Zarah is a 12 year old Iraqi girl being held in one of Australia's immigration detention centres. She fled Iraq with her parents and younger brother because the family had received death threats and were afraid of political persecution. After a long and dangerous journey, the family arrived in Australia hoping to be accepted as refugees and to begin a new life. However, under previous Australian Government immigration policy, they were placed in an immigration detention centre while their application for refugee status was processed and finalised. Zarah and her family were in detention for almost 18 months.

2. Discussion questions:

- Who had the responsibility to protect Zarah's rights while she was held in immigration detention?
- What do you think Zarah might list as her top three rights?
- Do you think that she would have been able to enjoy those rights? Why or why not?
- What impact do you think it would have on Zarah if she can't enjoy those important rights?

3. Have students read through the quotes included in the Resource sheet: A last resort. These interviews were part of the Commission's 2003 *National Inquiry into Children in Immigration Detention*.

4. Ask students to examine each quote and identify:

- the *right(s)* that have been denied to the young person
- the *action* that should have been taken to ensure that their rights were protected
- the *groups* that might have been involved in protecting those rights.

A grid is included with the Worksheet: A last resort to assist students to record their answers.

