

Australian immigration and asylum

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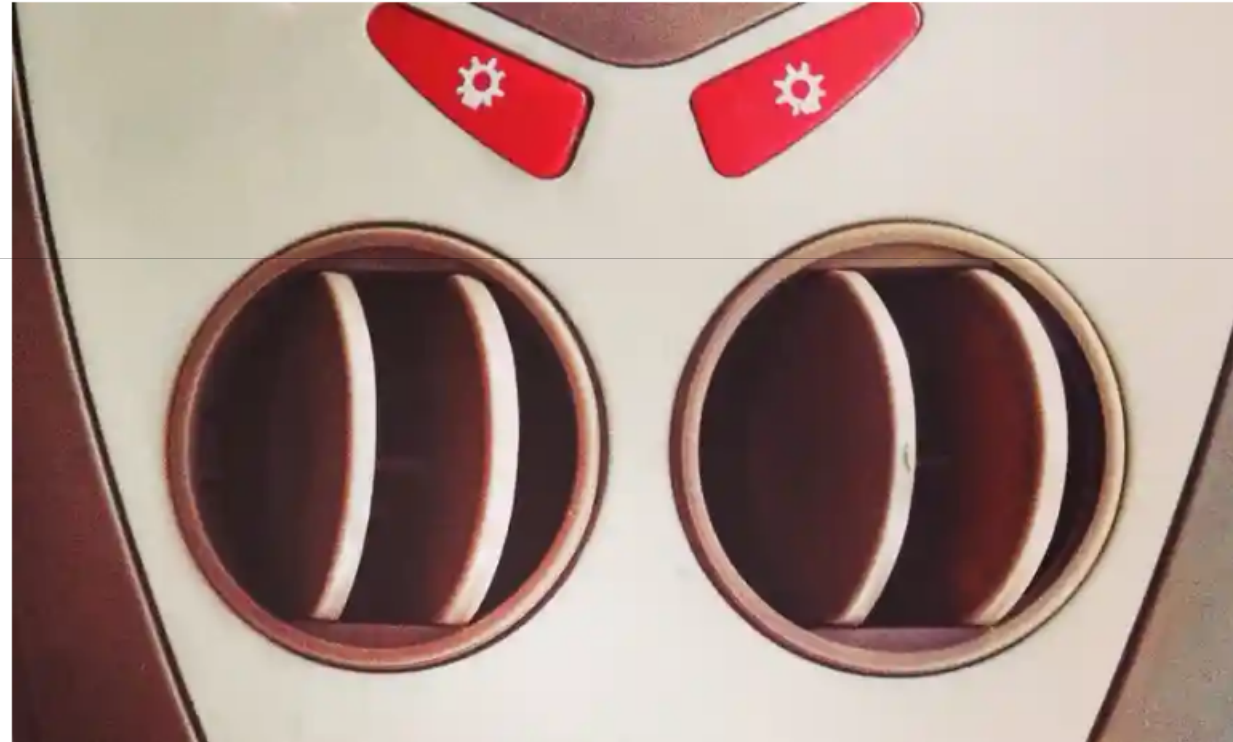
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Heavily pregnant refugees 'fainted after bus air-conditioner turned off'

Refugee Action coalition says standoff outside Darwin detention centre ended when women were dragged off the vehicle



▲ The husband of one of the women says the air-conditioning was switched off as the bus sat in high Northern Territory temperatures. Photograph: Vincent Boisgard/EyeEm/Getty Images

The air-conditioning on a bus parked at a Darwin detention centre was turned off after two heavily pregnant refugees **refused to get off**, causing them to faint, a refugee advocacy group says.

Adnan, the husband of one of the women, alleged this was done as the bus sat in high **Northern Territory** temperatures.

“On Monday, both pregnant women fainted after the bus was intentionally allowed to heat up,” a Refugee Action Coalition spokesman, Ian Rintoul, said on Wednesday.

Hussein, the husband of the other pregnant woman, collapsed and was taken to the medical centre in the Wickham Point facility, Rintoul said.

The refugee advocate disputes the timeframe for the end of the standoff, saying the two pregnant women had been “dragged off the bus” between 5.30pm and 6pm on Monday, rather than Tuesday morning as reported.

The lawyer acting for the couples could not confirm the claims.

Adnan alleged he was physically restrained by four guards as his wife, Maryam, was taken off the bus, and said he was not reunited with her and his son until Tuesday night.

The immigration minister, Scott Morrison, branded the allegations as malicious.

“The government denies claims of cruelty and mistreatment of the individuals in the strongest possible terms,” he said in a statement. “These are yet more malicious claims by asylum activists.”

Morrison said the welfare of all the people involved was monitored and they acted appropriately toward the women and their families.

“My understanding is they’re fine,” the minister told reporters in Canberra.

Adnan said the federal government had deliberately transported the two families to Australia without travel documents.

“On arrival in Darwin, they were told they had arrived in Australia illegally and that they would be placed in immigration detention,” Rintoul said.

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