

Media Release

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IT'S ALL TOO EASY MR PETERS

It's all too easy to take an isolated incident and embellish it to play upon our global fear of terrorism . . . or reinforce our sub-conscious suspicion of those who are *different* and just don't seem to belong, says Peter Cotton, RMS Refugee Resettlement's National Manager of External Relations.

"It's all too easy to take the word "*refugee*" and interpret it as synonymous with "*security threat, illegal migrant, criminal or bludger*". It's all too easy . . . but is it true?

It has been said that "*prejudice is a great time-saver, because it enables us to form opinions without wasting our valuable time on researching the true facts!*" So let's review the facts:

The facts are:

- ❖ That New Zealand offers a life of peace and renewed opportunity to 750 refugees each year.
- ❖ That these people have been identified by UNHCR (United Nations Commissioner for Refugees) as being amongst those in the greatest need of international care and protection.
- ❖ That approximately two-thirds of them are women and children
- ❖ That they are just like me and you . . . except their lives have been interrupted by unexpected war, persecution, suffering and multiple loss.
- ❖ That for more than half a century, they have helped to build Aotearoa New Zealand

Through their hard work, bravery and determination, they have become builders, mechanics, priests, architects, merchants, doctors, dentists, teachers, restaurateurs . . . to name just a few. They are our friends and neighbours, and we may not even know about their history!

And then there are just a few that '*didn't make the grade!*'

Perhaps the fact that they had suffered violent physical abuse, multiple rape, family separation, community isolation and bureaucratic indifference might just have tipped the scales?

But it's all too easy to speculate." Peter Cotton said.

"It's harder to crack a prejudice than an atom" – Einstein – former refugee

ENDS

For more information about refugee resettlement in New Zealand please contact Peter Cotton, National Manager of External Relations.

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