

For Immediate Release

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## **Against Racial Discrimination Refugees rally for human rights**

Start: Southorn Playground, Wanchai

End: Central Government Complex, Admiralty

Date: Saturday, 30 April 2016, 2 pm

We are the Refugee Union, the only refugee-led society in Hong Kong, comprising a community of ethnically and religiously diverse refugees struggling for justice. Our main objective is to safeguard the rights and interests of people seeking asylum in Hong Kong, rights that ought to be protected while such claims are being assessed and determined by the Government.

Refugees are misleadingly depicted in public and official quarters as either criminals, illegal and economic migrants, or abusers of the asylum mechanism who undeservedly enjoy free benefits. The Refugee Union argues that the Hong Kong Government shares responsibilities for conducting an inefficient asylum policy which turns some refugees into criminals and abusers. The media are responsible for amplifying a message of hate which negatively categorizes refugees in the public eye. Certain politicians jumped on the hate band-wagon for personal gain.

Hong Kong's Chief Executive praised such a smear campaign during his latest policy address by openly thanking a leading newspaper with an anti-refugee bias. An unprecedented coverage of refugee stories followed regrettably bringing to the fore a largely negative and divisive message based on stereotypes, racial discrimination, ethnic profiling and outright xenophobia.

The Refugee Union strongly condemns the current propaganda which smears refugees, promotes racism and hatred, while calling for the establishment of camps, broader detention, and the enactment of harsher deterrent strategies to draw a wedge between residents and refugees.

The call to detain and imprison asylum seekers on a rightful quest for safety and freedom, in particular, is not only morally devious, but infringes upon the very asylum rights defined and protected by law. Denying refugees their rights will fail to resolve a government-made refugee "crisis", while fomenting nativist hatred against a growing numbers of foreign residents.

The Refugee Union calls upon the government to condemn such divisive politics that promote disharmony and discrimination. Xenophobia is not a solution. It plants evil seeds that inescapably give root to widespread attacks on anyone who is perceived, suspected or feared to be different.

### **Notes to Editors:**

What: Combat racial discrimination against refugees

When: Saturday, 30 April 2016, 2pm

Why: To demand that HKSAR end the recent spike in the politics of fear

Who: 200 refugees mobilized by the Refugee Union at Southorn Playground, Wanchai