

Friday 10 September 2021

Catholic Religious call for greater assistance for Afghans

Catholic Religious Australia (CRA) has urged the Government to make a greater commitment to assist those Afghans whose lives are now at risk as a result of the recent Taliban take-over of the country.

CRA President, Br Peter Carroll FMS, said, “Australia has responsibility for the safety and wellbeing of Afghans, not only because of our 20-year-long military presence there, but also because of the common humanity we share. This responsibility is especially owed to those who have worked alongside Australian soldiers, diplomats and aid workers over the past two decades.”

“While we recognise that the Government has evacuated over 4,000 Afghans to date, we join the many individuals and organisations around Australia who are advocating for the government to commit to a long-term goal of taking in 20,000 Afghan refugees,” he added.

“We’re pleased that the Prime Minister responded to our letter assuring us that the 3,000 commitment is a floor, not a ceiling, and that the Government will increase the size of its intake as needed.” he added.

CRA expressed its deep concern for the human rights defenders, women and girls, who may be subjected to great suffering through a denial of civil rights, forced marriages and sexual violence under the Taliban regime or other extremist groups.

“In war-torn regions, often only one person can afford to leave ahead of their family. We know that a large community of Hazara men who have previously fled Afghanistan for Australia, have been forced to leave behind their wives and children, who now face grave danger,” said Anne Walker, CRA National Executive Director.

“Obtaining a family reunion visa via the Refugee and Humanitarian Visa Program is costly, can take many years to be processed due to a small quota, and is not available for the family of those who have arrived by boat, seeking asylum in Australia. This has exacerbated family separations and creates unnecessary hurdles when individuals in Afghanistan face imminent suffering,” she explained.

CRA called on the government to stand in solidarity with the peoples of Afghanistan in practical ways. This should include a sincere review of Australia’s system for granting family and partner reunion visas under the Refugee and Humanitarian Program, which is currently undergoing a Senate Inquiry, to which CRA has made a submission.

“We urge the government to hear the cries of our brothers and sisters with open hearts and take decisive action,” Br Peter concluded.

Read [CRA’s letter to the Prime Minister](#) and [CRA’s submission to the Senate Standing Committee on Family Reunion Visas](#). Read the [Prime Minister’s response to CRA](#).

MEDIA ENQUIRIES

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