



Wednesday 22nd September 2021

The Hon. Scott Morrison MP
PO Box 6022
House of Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Prime Minister,

On behalf of the Board and Staff of inTouch Multicultural Centre Against Family Violence we write to you to request immediate and further action regarding the Australian government's moral obligations in Afghanistan and those to Afghan communities here in Australia.

Almost 20 years ago, Australia committed to the US-led intervention that removed the Taliban after five years of violent and brutal military rule across Afghanistan. As the withdrawal of troops from the region commenced in 2014, the world has watched the Afghan people again endure the violent oppression of this regime. This culminated in a deeply distressing explosion of force as the US and its allies officially left the region last month, leaving the Taliban to again seize control over Kabul.

This crisis leaves Afghan women particularly vulnerable to a myriad of abuses- the denial of their rights to education and work, self-determination, freedom of movement and bodily autonomy. They face daily threats of public beatings, torture and execution.

In addition, we have grave concerns for the historically persecuted Hazara ethnic group, locally engaged employees and allies of the Western intervention (specifically interpreters), LGBTIAQ+ people and members of the media. Australia helped to instil rights and protections for all of these groups- only to see that taken away upon our withdrawal.

As a multicultural organisation, we have deep ties to the Afghan community through our staff, clients and partnerships. We share their heartbreak and anguish and recognise the deep and traumatic toll this takes on the community, especially for those supporting friends and family back home.

As a specialist family violence service, we also recognise that in times of stress and crisis, in every community and culture, incidents of family violence will more than likely increase. It is essential that all levels of Government recognise this and implement pro-active, culturally appropriate measures in terms of prevention and early intervention as soon as possible. We must avoid more harm and tragedy within the Afghan community.

We strongly urge the Government to take immediate action on the following-

1. Support the 5,100 refugees and asylum seekers who are currently on temporary and Safe Haven visas to transition to permanent visas
2. Allow the Afghan refugees who have arrived in Australia to fast-track their family reunion applications so they can sponsor their families
3. Provide a one-off allocation of 20,000 humanitarian visas to Afghans fleeing the Taliban instead of the current, limited commitment
4. Provide diplomatic support to all Australian citizens in Afghanistan, Australian visa holders and locally engaged employees who are still waiting for their visas
5. Provide funding for Afghan communities to support family violence prevention and early intervention initiatives
6. Restart the processing of Afghan refugees and asylum seekers in Indonesia who cannot return to Afghanistan due to fear of prosecution by the Taliban regime.

After two decades of intervention and countless promises to the most persecuted of Afghan citizens, the Australian Government must act concretely and urgently in response to the deepening humanitarian crisis.

Australia must not abandon Afghanistan, nor the Afghan people that now proudly call this country home.

Yours sincerely,



Miriam Silva
Chair, inTouch



Michal Morris
CEO, inTouch

CC (via email):

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