



Chaldean Australian Society Inc.

CAS Submission to the Department of Home Affairs on Australia's Humanitarian Program 2019-20

March 2019

For further information about this CAS submission contact Dr Emad Arabo, Secretary, at email: earabo@chaldeanauss.org.au and phone: (02) 9728 4170

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About the Chaldean Australian Society (CAS)

The Chaldean Australian Society (CAS) is a community-based and not-for-profit organisation established in 1993 to serve the Chaldean community in NSW. CAS addresses the settlement needs to the increasing numbers of Chaldeans arriving to Australia under humanitarian entry and family reunion. CAS maintains the Chaldean culture and at the same time assists the engagement of Chaldeans with the Australian society. CAS provides advocacy, information and referral, settlement-related advice, community development programs, and social activities.

For more information about CAS, visit our website: www.chaldeanauss.org.au

About the Chaldeans

The Chaldeans are the indigenous people of Iraq who speak the Chaldean language, a form of Aramaic, in addition to Arabic, the official language in Iraq. Chaldeans are Eastern Rite Catholic, led by the Patriarch of Babylon and affiliated with the Roman Catholic Church. The Chaldeans form the major part of Iraqi Christians.

The Chaldeans in Australia

The migration of the Chaldeans to Australia began in the 1970s. There are now more than 25,000 Chaldeans in Australia most of them in Sydney and Melbourne. In recent years there has been increasing migration of Chaldeans to Australia due to the war and events in Iraq and most of them arrived under humanitarian programme. We appreciate this and we are very grateful to Australian government for resettling in Australia Chaldean refugees over the previous years.

The Situation of the Chaldeans in Iraq

In the last 16 years after the 2003 events in Iraq, the Chaldeans as all Christians and other ethnic and religious minorities suffered and they are still suffering from persecution in their home country Iraq. Add to this in 2014 the Islamic State occupied Mosul city and Christian towns and villages in Nineveh plain, Nineveh province, in north of Iraq.

The situation in Iraq is still critical and still there is persecution against the Christians (Chaldean, Syriac, Assyrian, and others). Terrorist organisations, groups and individuals in Iraq are targeting, threatening, torturing, and even killing Christians and consequently many Christians fled Iraq for their safety to seek asylum in countries like Lebanon, Jordan, and Turkey.

The Situation of Chaldean Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Neighbouring Countries to Iraq

The Chaldeans refugees and asylum seekers in neighbouring countries to Iraq are in desperate situation and in need for all types of support from the international community including the Australian community. The humanitarian aid and resettlement are required to help them. Our society (Chaldean Australian Society) serves and supports Chaldean people in Sydney and there are many concerns from our Chaldean community members to the situation of their families, relatives and friends in Iraq and in the neighbouring countries.

The Chaldean refugees are:

- Genuine refugees
- Highly suffering from persecution, discrimination, and severe abuse to their fundamental rights
- Linked to Australia through their families, relatives, friends and Chaldean community who are willing to support them

Recommendations

- 1- The Australian government to continue providing resettlement in Australia to Chaldean refugees and asylum seekers who are now in Lebanon, Jordan, and Turkey.
- 2- More visas/places to be granted for Iraqi ethnic and religious minorities who are suffering from persecution in Iraq and have no safe haven to stay in Iraq.
- 3- Speeding up the visa granting and resettlement process practically for the applicants under SHP who their applications have been transferred to relevant embassies in Beirut, Amman and Ankara and they are waiting for years for processing their applications and finalising their visas.