



19 August 2021

Action for Afghanistan

The United Nations Association of Australia wishes to express our grave concern for the fate of Afghanistan and its people. In doing so, we wish to draw your attention to the [recent statement made by the United Nations Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres, to the United Nations Security Council on 16 August 2021](#).

We reaffirm the Secretary-General's view that the safety and dreams of a generation of young Afghan women and girls, boys and men hang in the balance, and that the international community's actions in the coming days, weeks, and months will be crucial in determining the fate of many in the region for years to come.

Australia has an incredibly important role to play in ensuring the best possible outcomes from this situation. It can do this by remaining a vocal supporter of the rule of law and human rights, by continually calling for restraint from all parties, and by lobbying for international cooperation in ensuring aid and transit channels remain open. Vulnerable people must be allowed to leave, and vital supplies must continue to flow into the country to avoid a widespread humanitarian crisis.

We therefore support the Government's current efforts to evacuate the reported 600 people from Kabul Airport, and the use of humanitarian visas to support Afghan people fleeing their country. Both measures are extremely important in making it clear that Australia stands with our allies and is prepared to help those most in need.

To ensure this continues to happen, we strongly urge the Government to consider dramatically and immediately increasing its refugee intake in relation to the crisis. Both the British and Canadian Governments have announced plans for greatly increased intake. We support Australia prioritising the evacuation and support of women, girls, human rights advocates, and members of the LGBTIQ+ community, those most at risk of violence. We strongly support Australia increasing its financial support for organisations like the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees who continue to provide essential aid and basic services on the ground in Afghanistan.

Australia has the opportunity and the moral obligation to be a leader in these dark times. To quote the Secretary-General, "Afghans are a proud people with a rich cultural heritage. They have known generations of war and hardship. They deserve our full support. The following days will be pivotal. The world is watching. We cannot and must not abandon the people of Afghanistan."

Mario D'Elia
National President