



Chaldean Australian Society

Paper Presented to the Refugee Council of Australia

29th April 2014

- The Chaldeans are Iraqi people and form the major part of Iraqi Christians. The Chaldeans are the indigenous people of Iraq who speak the Chaldean language, a form of Aramaic, in addition to Arabic. In the last ten years after the 2003 events the Chaldeans suffered and they are still suffering from persecution in their home country Iraq because of their Christian religion. The situation in Iraq is still very bad and many Chaldeans are targeted, threatened, tortured, and even have been killed by terrorist organisations groups and members who are in Iraq and many Chaldeans fled Iraq for their safety to seek asylum in countries like Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and Turkey. Our society (Chaldean Australian Society) serves and supports Chaldean people in NSW and there are many concerns from our Chaldean members to the situation of their families, relatives and friends in these countries. Please refer to UNHCR website for more information about Iraqi asylum seekers in these countries.
- In RCOA last submission (February 2014) about Australia's 2014-15 Humanitarian Programme, there is no clear statement or mention about the persecution of the Chaldeans and Christians in Iraq and the bad situation of the Chaldeans and Christians Iraqi asylum seekers in Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and Turkey. We hope to mention this in your future submissions.
- There are concerns from Iraqi (Chaldean and Christian) asylum seekers in Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and Turkey about the long waiting periods for their refugee status determination (RSD) and resettlement by UNHCR. If possible to transfer these concerns to the UNHCR.
- We hope from RCOA to push towards that Australia should continue to prioritize refugees from Iraq where Australia has made a military commitment and to continue providing resettlement in Australia to Iraqi asylum seekers in Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and Turkey.
- According to the settlement data "Migration Stream by Religion" published by Department of Immigration and Border Protection: (4,412) Chaldean Catholic migrants settled in Australia from 1 October 2008 to 31 September 2013. The

Chaldean Australian Society (CAS) provides services and support to the Chaldean people particularly new entrants but we need more support and funding from the government to be able to continue and improve our services to this number of Chaldeans.

We need:

- To include our organisation with Settlement Grants Program (SGP) funding
 - Funding to our organisation for Chaldean youth worker
 - Other funding and resources to our organisation from federal, state, and local governments.
- The Chaldean Australian Society is happy to participate in any future consultation with RCOA regarding Australia's refugee and humanitarian program.