



PRIME MINISTER

Reference: C15/19642

12 MAR 2015

Mr Hermiz Shahan
Deputy Secretary General
Assyrian Universal Alliance
PO Box 34
FAIRFIELD NSW 1860

Dear Mr Shahan

Thank you for your letter of 26 February regarding the situation of Assyrians in Iraq and Syria.

I want to assure you and the Assyrian community that the Government shares your horror at the assaults, kidnappings and murder of Assyrians in Iraq and Syria. Daesh's attempts to drive one of the world's oldest cultures from its ancestral homeland are an affront to us all.

It is important we do not stand aside in the face of what is pure evil.

You would be aware that Australia has joined coalition air strikes against Daesh and is advising and assisting Iraqi forces. The Government is now preparing to contribute to the Building Partner Capacity training mission to help Iraq's army roll back Daesh.

These measures are in addition to RAAF deliveries of humanitarian and military aid and to the \$22 million of humanitarian aid for Iraq which the Government has provided since June.

The Government has also listed Iraqi Christians as eligible for special humanitarian visas and set aside 4400 places in Australia's refugee and special humanitarian programmes for people fleeing violence in Iraq and Syria.

I hope that Assyrians will once again be able to live in peace and prosperity in Iraq and Syria. This is why I welcomed Prime Minister al-Abadi's efforts to build an inclusive government when we met in Baghdad in January and assured him of Australia's resolve against Daesh.

Thank you again for your letter. My thoughts and prayers are with Australia's Assyrians.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Tony Abbott', written over a horizontal line.

TONY ABBOTT