

Labor for Refugees

New South Wales
www.labor4refugees.com

Convenors:

Shane Prince SC Mob: 0416 229 338
Jenny Haines Mob: 0418 634 448

Secretary:

Nizza Siano Mob: 0404 532 249

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ROHINGYA

- **Australian humanitarian intake should be non-discriminatory and Rohingya intake should be increased under that program.**

Although this escalating humanitarian and human rights nightmare is the fastest growing refugee crisis in the world, Australia's intake of Myanmar refugees has operated to the exclusion of Rohingya people. Australia has resettled only 37 Rohingya since 2013 whereas 18,750 people are going to be settled in 2018-2019 under this humanitarian program.

- **1,933 Rohingya people with TPV and SHEV in Australia should be resettled as soon as possible and the Australian government should provide additional priority resettlement places in Australia for affected Rohingya people who have immediate family members in Australia.**

There is a feeling of despair in the Rohingya community in Australia because 1,933 of these Rohingya people are on Temporary Protection Visas (TPV) or Safe Haven Enterprise Visas (SHEV) which doesn't allow them to sponsor their family. These people came by boat after 2012. Their families have been forced to flee over Myanmar's border into Bangladesh, where they remain in squalid camps, at risk of flooding, landslides and disease outbreaks as the monsoon season approaches. There is a feeling of desperation among these people for their families and their lack of access to education because there is no option for education for kids in refugee camp in Bangladesh. Their future generations will drown in the darkness of illiteracy. Family reunion should be a priority for refugees irrespective of how they have arrived in Australia. Excluding refugees from being reunited with their family due to their mode of arrival into Australia undermines one of the primary aims of Australia's Humanitarian Programme.

- **Rohingya women should be prioritised in the settlement process under "Women at Risk" visa**
Australia provides a Women at Risk visa (subclass 204) 'for women and their dependents subject to persecution in their home country or registered as being 'of concern' to UNHCR and without the protection of a male relative'. In 2016-17, a quota of 1,200 places was set for vulnerable women, and 1,607 visas were granted during that period.

Rohingya women are victims of gender based violence in both Myanmar and in the refugee camps in Bangladesh. Myanmar military has for decades, used sexual violence as a weapon of war against ethnic groups and in traditional Rohingya Muslim society, rape brings shame to households. As a result, many survivors are made to suffer twice - first from the trauma of sexual violence and again from the exclusion of conservative society that abandons them when they most need support. Moreover, aid groups have reported a rise in serious domestic

violence in the camps in Bangladesh, where the sustained uncertainty of refugee life heightens household stress. A rising number of husbands leaving wives – either to slip off into the black economy of Bangladesh beyond the Rohingya settlements, or with other women. Rendered stateless by their own country, Myanmar, Rohingya women officially belong nowhere and have no official right to be heard.

Australia can play a significant role in setting these vulnerable women by bringing them here with ‘Women at Risk’ visas under the humanitarian intake program.

Related articles

The Daily Telegraph 14 April 2018 “Malcolm Turnbull’s Government accused of cherry picking refugees and ignoring those in Rohingya”. Attached document.

RCOA, Australia’s Refugee and Humanitarian Program 2017-18: Community views on current challenges and future directions, May 2017, https://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/RCOA_intake-sub_2017_2018.pdf P.35