



Australian Government

Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

ANDREW FISHER BUILDING
ONE NATIONAL CIRCUIT
BARTON

Reference: C15/32899

18 May 2015

Mr Hermiz Shahen
Deputy Secretary General
Assyrian Universal Alliance Australian Chapter
PO Box 34
FAIRFIELD NSW 1860

Dear Mr Shahen

Thank you for your letter to the Prime Minister of 7 April 2015 regarding the terrible situation facing the Assyrian people in the Middle East. I have been asked to reply on the Prime Minister's behalf.

As the Prime Minister noted in his letter to you of 12 March and in the comments he made during Assyrian New Year celebrations in Fairfield on 22 March, the Australian Government shares your horror at the assaults, kidnappings and murder of Assyrians in Iraq and Syria.

As you would know, Australia is taking part in the coalition assisting the Iraqi government to counter ISIL. And the Government has made 4,400 places available in Australia's refugee and special humanitarian programmes in 2014-15 for people fleeing violence in Iraq and Syria. As the Prime Minister stressed in his remarks at Fairfield, the Assyrian people will not be left alone in their struggle to resist persecution and violence at the hands of ISIL.

Thank you for the suggestions in your most recent letter to the Prime Minister. Your letter has been forwarded to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade for its consideration of what can be done to urge authorities in the Middle East to do more to address the plight of the Assyrian people.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Ridwaan Jadwat', written in a cursive style.

Ridwaan Jadwat
A/g Assistant Secretary
Asia-Pacific, Americas and the Middle East