

COMMUNITY and STAKEHOLDER UPDATE : Afghanistan Humanitarian Crisis

2 September 2021

New Zealand Red Cross (NZRC) is deeply saddened by the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan. We are here to help support our Afghan community in Aotearoa New Zealand during this difficult and uncertain time. We also stand ready to support evacuees from Afghanistan as they arrive in the country.

We will continue to release regular updates and look for opportunities to directly connect with community leaders and members on emerging needs. Below is an update on some of the latest developments, what NZRC is currently doing, and some resources for those who may need additional support and help.

In addition to these written updates, we are regularly updating the content available on our website: redcross.org.nz/stories/overseas/afghanistan-humanitarian-crisis/. Please share [this page](#) widely with your networks. There are Dari and Pashto audio recordings of all the text on the page.

On **Thursday 2 September 2021 from 1-2pm** we will be hosting a Facebook Live event with the following speakers: Sarah Stuart-Black (Secretary General of New Zealand Red Cross), Rachel O'Connor (NZRC General Manager of Migration), Aklilu Habteghiorghis (NZRC National Settlement Advisor), and Hamish Low (NZRC Restoring Family Links Coordinator).

[Facebook Live: "The Afghanistan Humanitarian Crisis and How New Zealand Red Cross is Providing Support to the Afghan Community"](#)

We invite you to join us virtually. The session will be in English with Dari interpretation provided by one of our Cross Cultural Workers, Mahsheed Mahjor.

Latest News Update

- As of Thursday 26 August, New Zealand has ended evacuations from Hamid Karzai International Airport in Kabul.

- 390 people including New Zealand citizens, permanent residents and visa holders – including interpreters and those working with government agencies – have been evacuated from Afghanistan in the past two weeks.
- While many of these evacuees have arrived in New Zealand, some have not yet made it into the country so exact numbers on the different categories are not yet known.
- The government has said they will work with international partners for ongoing efforts to extract remaining people with a connection to New Zealand when possible.

What New Zealand Red Cross is doing

1. **Support for Evacuees:**

On 29 August, New Zealand Red Cross was asked by Immigration New Zealand to provide clothing and other essential items to help support arriving evacuees. Clothing and other items were sourced from our Red Cross stores and delivered to MIQ facilities and Mangere Refugee Resettlement Centre under strict COVID-19 Alert Level 4 guidelines.

We were heartened by the overwhelming community response to support the new arrivals into Aotearoa New Zealand over the weekend. Offers of support included culturally appropriate clothing, toys and activities for children, household items, and food. Afghan community members also made contact to help with translation and interpretation services.

The generosity and kindness from the Auckland and Waikato communities were incredible. While no further donations are needed at this time, we will post updates on our website and contact communities if and when further support is requested.

2. **Restoring Family Links (RFL):**

If contact has been lost with family members in Afghanistan

Families abroad may have difficulties maintaining contact with their families in Afghanistan.

If you are in New Zealand and have lost contact with family in Afghanistan, we may be able to help you. Despite the uncertainty of the situation the New Zealand Red Cross Restoring Family Links service is working with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in Kabul to find missing family.

Please contact the Restoring Family Links team via [the online form](#) or by emailing familylinks@redcross.org.nz and we will call back as soon as possible.

- You must be residing in New Zealand to lodge a tracing case with New Zealand Red Cross.
- Our service is free of charge and confidential. We can provide an interpreter at no cost.
- We support people of all genders, faiths and ethnicities.

If you are in contact with your family in Afghanistan please discuss alternative means of contact in the event it is not possible to make contact through usual means.

Please note: We are unable to assist with visa applications or to advocate directly to Immigration New Zealand for permission to bring family members to New Zealand. Please do not send us sensitive personal information and documentation unless advised.

3. **Afghanistan Appeal:**

NZRC has set up a special appeal. Donations collected from the appeal will go to where the need is greatest, whether that be here at home helping Afghan evacuees settle into Aotearoa New Zealand, or on the ground in Afghanistan where the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is assisting the wounded and disabled, helping detainees maintain contact with their families, supporting hospitals, preventing violations of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and supporting the Afghan Red Crescent.

For more information or to donate visit: redcross.org.nz/donate/afghanistan-humanitarian-crisis/



AFGHANISTAN HUMANITARIAN CRISIS

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Clarifying the Role of New Zealand Red Cross

As with everything we do, the support New Zealand Red Cross provides is aligned with our Fundamental Principles. We are a humanitarian organisation whose mission is to improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilising the power of humanity and enhancing community resilience.

New Zealand Red Cross is unable to influence decisions made by Immigration New Zealand on visa applications or immigration status. Therefore, personal information including identification documents should not be shared with New Zealand Red Cross **unless requested**. The only reason NZRC will request proof of identity is to lodge a tracing request for the Restoring Family Links (RFL) service.

If people in New Zealand are seeking immigration advice and support for family members remaining in Afghanistan, contact should be made directly with MFAT and Immigration New Zealand.

Counselling and Support Services

We know this is an incredibly distressing time for our Afghan communities here in New Zealand. The Ministry for Ethnic Communities has compiled a list of community resources where individuals and families can seek support.

<https://www.ethniccommunities.govt.nz/news/counselling-and-other-support-services-for-afghan-communities-in-aotearoa/>