

Proactive Release

Date: 29 September 2021

The following Cabinet minute has been proactively released by the Minister of Foreign Affairs:

Title

Oral Item: Update on Afghanistan

Reference

CBC-21-Min-0080



Cabinet Business Committee

Minute of Decision

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Oral Item: Update on Afghanistan

Portfolios **Foreign Affairs / Defence**

On 25 August 2021, the Cabinet Business Committee:

- 1 **noted** that on 16 August 2021, Cabinet:
 - 1.1 agreed in principle that Afghan nationals may be considered for resettlement in New Zealand, if they met certain specified criteria (the resettlement criteria);
 - 1.2 authorised a group of Ministers (the Prime Minister, Minister of Finance, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister of Immigration and Minister of Defence) to have Power to Act to take further decisions on New Zealand's response to the situation in Afghanistan and the deployment of New Zealand Defence Force assets and personnel to assist with international efforts to extract nationals and approved Afghan citizens, and the criteria for resettlement;
- [CAB-21-MIN-0323]
- 2 **noted** that the number of individuals who have been approved by officials for resettlement in New Zealand, including those individuals' immediate nuclear families, is significantly higher than anticipated;
- 3 **directed** officials to rigorously apply and retest the application of the previously approved resettlement criteria, and to investigate the options available in relation to any visas that are currently being processed for those individuals who may not meet the previously approved resettlement criteria;
- 4 **noted** that the evacuation window is closing imminently, and that it is likely evacuation flights from Hamid Karzai International Airport will no longer be possible from 26 August 2021;
- 5 **agreed** that New Zealand should stop accepting applications under the resettlement criteria referred to in paragraph 1 above as at 23.59 hours on Wednesday, 25 August 2021;

- 6 **directed** officials to provide further advice to Ministers on options to manage the current and any future requests for New Zealand assistance from individuals in Afghanistan, including multilateral processes such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

Janine Harvey
Committee Secretary

Present:

Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern (Chair)
Hon Grant Robertson
Hon Kelvin Davis
Hon Dr Megan Woods
Hon Carmel Sepuloni
Hon Andrew Little
Hon David Parker
Hon Nanaia Mahuta
Hon Poto Williams
Hon Damien O'Connor
Hon Stuart Nash
Hon Aupito William Sio

Officials present from:

Office of the Prime Minister
Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
Ministry of Defence
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade
Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment
New Zealand Security Intelligence Service