



Senator the Hon Penny Wong
Minister for Foreign Affairs

MC25-001752

Ms Susan Templeman MP
petitions.committee.reps@aph.gov.au

Dear Chair

Thank you for your referral of petition EN7090 regarding ongoing violence, persecution and atrocities in Syria.

The Australian Government remains deeply concerned by ongoing attacks against civilians in Syria - including in the last few months since the petition was presented - violence in Suweida in July; the attack on the Mar Elias Church in Damascus in June; and the bloodshed in Syria's coastal region in March.

We understand the distress felt by the communities affected. The Australian Government has publicly condemned the murder of innocent civilians at the highest levels. As the Prime Minister and I expressed in our joint statement in March this year, all minorities in Syria must be protected. Those responsible for the horrific violence must be held to account.

We call on all parties to protect civilians, exercise restraint and prioritise dialogue. We are engaging with the UN and our international partners to encourage lasting political change and inclusive governance to deliver long-overdue peace and stability for the Syrian people.

Syria continues to navigate critical security, political, humanitarian and economic challenges. While Australia's ability to influence events inside Syria is limited, we have urged Syria's transitional government to conduct an inclusive political transition process that establishes a representative, non-sectarian government that protects the rights of all Syrians.

Australia's national statement on the Syrian Arab Republic at the 58th Session of the Human Rights Council in March 2025 made clear our desire to see an inclusive political transition that protects the rights of all Syrians.

In April 2025, Australia co-sponsored a United Nations Resolution on the 'Situation of Human Rights in the Syrian Arab Republic', supporting the rights of all Syrians – regardless of religious or ethnic background – to representation and participation in the political process and state institutions, and calling on Syria to address community violence through transparent and victim-centred judicial mechanisms.

Throughout Syria's transition, Australia remains committed to our long-standing support for its immense humanitarian needs. Australia has provided over half a billion dollars to assist vulnerable and crisis-affected people in Syria and neighbouring countries since 2011. We announced a further \$30 million in humanitarian assistance in March 2025 to help deliver a range of fundamental services, including critical healthcare and livelihood support.

The Government is also committed to providing appropriate support for those requiring Australia's protection through humanitarian resettlement. Our Humanitarian Program for 2024-25 offered a total of 20,000 places. Demand for places is unprecedented, following record levels of forced displacement and ongoing global instability. We are working closely with the community and stakeholders, including the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

We remain conscious of the needs of vulnerable cohorts in Syria, including particular ethnic and religious minorities. The Hon Tony Burke MP, Minister for Home Affairs, and his department are continuing to work through these matters with Syrian community representatives.

I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely



PENNY WONG

17 SEP 2025