

TO THE HONOURABLE THE SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF  
THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

This petition of Panjtan Society of Victoria

**draws to the attention of the House:** that we welcome and acknowledge the need for the Counter-Terrorism Amendment (Foreign-Fighters) Legislation Bill 2014 ("Bill"), yet we bring to your attention a crucial issue. For Shi'a Muslims, after the Holy Pilgrimage to Mecca (Saudi Arabia) for Hajj, the main sites of Holy Pilgrimage are in the cities of Iraq, which primarily include Karbala, Najaf, Kazmain, Kufa & Sammara. If Australian Shi'a Muslims are prevented from performing the Holy Pilgrimages in Iraq as a result of the amendments to the Bill, it is likely that community members will become very anxious and upset, as they may believe they are being prevented from practicing their religion. As a result, uninformed community members who do visit Iraq for this pilgrimage may be in breach of Australian law and possibly become innocent victims of the Bill, the aim of which is to identify, prevent and sanction Australians from and for becoming foreign-fighters, rather than punishing Australians performing spiritual Holy Pilgrimages in Iraq.

**We therefore ask the House** that if the above mentioned cities of Iraq, or Iraq in its entirety falls under a 'declared area' under the meaning of the Bill and eventually the corresponding Act, then as per part 119.2 (3) of the Bill, such Religious Pilgrimages be considered an exception and that 'entering and remaining' in the declared areas be considered for a 'legitimate purpose'.