

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES HEARING: 13 FEBRUARY 2012

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

(AE12/0244) Program 2.1: Refugee and Humanitarian Assistance

Senator Cash (L&CA 62) asked:

Has the department received a specific request to take the concerns of the Assyrian, Chaldean and Mandaean communities to the UNHCR?

Answer:

The Department has not received a specific request to take these concerns to the UNHCR. However, the Department has had contact with Assyrian, Chaldean and Mandaean communities in Australia and at overseas posts about their concerns for their communities in the Middle East. Departmental officers engage regularly with UNHCR in Australia and at overseas posts to discuss refugees in vulnerable situations. In recent years significant numbers of Assyrians, Chaldeans and Mandaeans have been granted offshore visas under the Humanitarian Program.