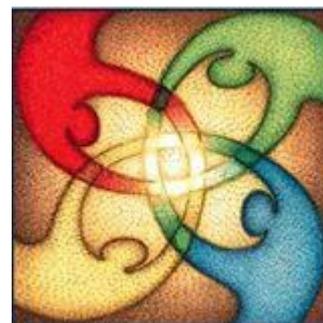


Intercultural Platform press statement on developments in Afghanistan



Donegal Intercultural Platform fears a catastrophe in Afghanistan and offers support to Afghan people living in the county...

The Donegal Intercultural Platform is deeply concerned by the recent developments in Afghanistan and calls on the Irish Government, through its department of Foreign Affairs, through its participation within the EU and through its seat on the United Nations Security Council, to do what it can to ensure that international aid can continue to flow to the beleaguered people of Afghanistan.

Through our intercultural work in the county we know something of the deep concerns of the Afghan people living here, for the safety and security of their families back home. We have spoken to a number of families who are in contact with relatives in Kabul and other places and they say they are deeply fearful for their relatives' safety and livelihood.

The Intercultural Platform welcomes the call from the Immigrant Council of Ireland for the Department of Justice to prioritise family reunification applications from Afghan nationals. All the internal resources that are required need to be urgently diverted to swiftly process any outstanding applications. It is our view that there should be a major emphasis on expediting applications in the coming days, with necessary processes such as DNA testing to verify family relationships being done in situ here in Ireland.

We also welcome the statements from Minister Roderic O'Gorman TD and the Minister of State for Law Reform, Youth Justice and Immigration, James Browne, TD, who have announced the provision of up to 150 additional humanitarian visas for Afghans under the Irish Refugee Protection Programme (IRPP). We believe however, that Ireland can do more in terms of numbers offered international protection here.

We fear a humanitarian catastrophe for all the people, particularly the impacts on women and girls, in Afghanistan and hope that Ireland can play a progressive and enabling role in bringing the necessary supports and assistance to the Afghan people. We hope that the human rights and safety of the people can be defended through all governmental and non-governmental channels.

If we can promote or coordinate any local assistance for the Afghan people we will do this – when pathways for solidarity and assistance become clearer.

If anyone originally from Afghanistan would like to speak to members of the Intercultural Platform please email us at donegalip@gmail.com and we will offer what support we can.

Thoiba Ahmed and Paul Kernan
Co-Chairpersons
Donegal Intercultural Platform