



Cabinet

Minute of Decision

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Additional Item: Possible Request for the New Zealand Defence Force to Provide Support in Afghanistan for Evacuation Operations

Portfolios **Defence / Foreign Affairs / Immigration**

On 16 August 2021, Cabinet:

- 1 **noted** the update on the security situation in Afghanistan;
- 2 **noted** that the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia and Canada are planning to evacuate their nationals and approved Afghan citizens from Afghanistan;
- 3 **noted** that the NZDF has prepared options to assist international efforts to extract nationals and approved Afghan citizens;
- 4 **agreed in principle** to the deployment of NZDF assets and/or personnel to assist with the extraction of nationals and approved Afghan citizens subject to operational deployment decisions by Australia and other countries;
- 5 **agreed in principle** that Afghan nationals may be considered for resettlement in New Zealand if they:
 - 5.1 worked directly with the NZDF, NZ Police, MFAT or other New Zealand agencies during the Provincial Reconstruction Team period (2003-2013) or since, or were employed by third parties who worked alongside these agencies; and are able to be verified by those agencies;
 - 5.2 provided material assistance to the Inquiry into Operation Burnham and can be verified by relevant parties; and
 - 5.3 there are reasonable grounds to believe that the safety or well-being of the individual or their immediate family has been put at risk from their association with New Zealand in Afghanistan, and that no other partner government (e.g. US, Canada) would bear greater responsibility for their welfare;
 - 5.4 this would apply to individuals or/and their immediate nuclear family only;
- 6 **directed** Immigration New Zealand to work with NZDF, NZ Police, MFAT and other relevant New Zealand agencies to enable visa processing for those who meet the criteria for resettlement, as set out in paragraph 5;

- 7 **authorised** a group of Ministers comprising the Prime Minister, Minister of Finance, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister of Immigration and the 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 NZDF assets and personnel to assist with international efforts to extract nationals and approved Afghan citizens, and the criteria for resettlement.

Michael Webster
Secretary of the Cabinet

Proactively Released by the
Minister of Foreign Affairs