



UN refugee agency welcomes end of TPVs

The UN refugee agency has welcomed the Immigration Minister's budget announcement to end the Temporary Protection Visa (TPV) system for refugees.

UNHCR's Regional Representative, Mr Richard Towle, said the agency has long held concerns about the punitive TPV system which denied refugees access to family reunion and travel rights.

"The old system also perpetuated uncertainty for refugees who had already suffered enormous hardship, impeding their ability to restart their lives and prolonging the separation of families," said Towle.

"The fact that people on TPVs were also denied access to refugee settlement services like English language programs heightened the discrimination against certain refugees purely based on the mode of their arrival and hindered the integration process."

"The scrapping of both the TPV and its offshore cousin the THV is a very positive step," he said.

UNHCR also appreciates the increase of 500 refugee places (to 6,500) in the coming financial year to assist people affected by the conflict in Iraq.

"There are more than 2 million refugees from the Iraq crisis currently in neighbouring Syria and Jordan and it is good to see resettlement countries like Australia showing their solidarity to these host countries by increasing their resettlement quotas for this crisis," said Towle.

UNHCR also welcomed the increased core funding for UNHCR from \$8.3 million to \$9.9 million announced as part of the Global Programs, International Development Assistance Budget for 2008-09.

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