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revised 25 july 2012



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Why Hazaras flee: An historical perspective of their persecution<sup>1</sup> Submission  
for the Government's Expert Panel on Asylum Seekers

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\_\_\_\_\_ Denise Phillips BA (Hons), PhD Candidate,  
University of New England, 19 July 2012 Quetta are also discussed. The past ethnic and religious animosity against minority Shiite Hazaras continues to drive the bloodshed today. When we shift our responsibilities offshore, vilify refugees and pursue a punitive style of deterrence as a solution, we ignore these past and present atrocities. Executive summary This paper provides historical information about the source country, Afghanistan. As minority Shiites, Hazaras' current persecution is borne out of an unresolved, century-old religious and ethnic hatred of them. This has resulted in massacres, dispossession of their lands and decades of institutionalised discrimination. Their persecution was fiercely reignited during the civil war and by the Taliban in the 1990s. Understanding that history is critical to policy-making. Not only are Hazaras dying on boats, but also in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Australia must respond to this over-all crisis with humanity rather than punitive measures. I support the recommendations made in the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre's submission and the Open Letter. As Afghanistan moves towards a possible Taliban alliance or faces growing lawlessness, and as Hazaras continue to be slain or attacked in Hazara-populated regions and in neighbouring Quetta, Hazaras are likely to continue to flee and have grounds under the 1951 Refugee Convention to fear persecution.

Introduction In addressing the problem of asylum seekers risking their lives on boat journeys to Australia, the reasons for their flight should remain at

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the forefront of policy-making and political debate. I offer an historical overview of a key source country, Afghanistan, and of the origins of Hazaras' persecution. Current crises in both Afghanistan and Abdur Rahman's subjugation of Hazaras in the nineteenth century After the traditionally dominant Pashtuns and the Tajiks, Hazaras are the third largest ethnic group in Afghanistan, although a minority. The Hazaras traditionally live in the Hazarajat, a loosely defined region within the central highlands. While about 85 percent of Afghanistan's population follow Sunni Islam, most Hazaras are Shiite Muslims, causing them to be condemned as ' infidels' at different points throughout history. 2 Their suffering began in earnest in the late 1800s. The Hazaras were a semi- autonomous society living in Afghanistan's central highlands, the Hazarajat. The entire Hazara population possibly numbered over half a million, with about 340, 000 families in the Hazarajat. Although not a cohesive group, most were Shiites and spoke the Hazaragi language, a derivative of Dari. In contrast, their surrounding ethnic groups were mostly Sunni Muslims and spoke Pashto or Dari. 3 Against a backdrop of imperial tensions between Britain and Czarist Russia, Britain helped install an anti-Russian Pashtun, Amir Abdur Rahman (1880-1901), on the throne in Kabul in 1880. In between British India and Russia. 4 exchange for a British annual subsidy, Afghanistan was to provide a buffer zone In the previous century, the Pashtun tribal ruler, Ahmad Shah Durrani (1747-1773), had already established a pattern of subjugating sub-groups and other ethnic groups within the region. To bring Afghanistan's many different tribes under a centralised authority, Abdur Rahman proclaimed the Durrani Pashtuns as supreme and mobilised Sunni Islam with a patriotic xenophobia. Condemning Shiite Hazaras as ' infidels', Rahid Rahman 1 Over-all notes drawn from

Denise Phillips, *From Afghanistan to Australia: An oral history of loss and hope among Hazara refugees*, PhD thesis, University of New England, Armidale (forthcoming); Denise Phillips, 'Wounded memory of Hazara refugees from Afghanistan: Remembering and forgetting persecution', *History Australia*, vol. 8, no. 2, August 2011, pp. 177-198; and Denise Phillips, 'Hazaras' persecution worsens: Will the new government show leadership by lifting the suspension on Afghani asylum claims?', *Australian Policy and History*, August 2010, <http://www.aph.org.au/files/articles/hazarasPersecution.htm>. 2 William Maley, *Security, People Smuggling and Australia's New Afghan Refugees*, Working Paper no. 63, p. 8; M. Hassan Kakar, 'The pacification of the Hazaras', in M. Hassan Kakar, *A Political and Diplomatic History of Afghanistan, 1863-1901*, Leiden, 2006, p. 126. 3 Sayed Askar Mousavi, *The Hazaras of Afghanistan: An Historical, Cultural, Economic and Political Study*, Richmond, 1998, p. 114; Kakar, 'The pacification of the Hazaras', pp. 120-122, 126. Amin Saikal, with assistance from Ravan Farhadi & Kirill Nourzhanov, *Modern Afghanistan: A History of Struggle and Survival*, London, 2004, pp. 6, 7, 12. 4 1 2 Denise Phillips, revised 25 July 2012 Denise Phillips, revised 25 July 2012 rallied soldiers and tribal levies to quash Hazara rebellions in the Afghan-Hazara wars of 1891-1893. Hazaras were slain, raped and sold into slavery. Soldiers piled Hazaras' heads into towers to warn others against dissent, and some were skinned to death or had their tongues cut out. Although slavery was banned in 1895, many remained enslaved until King Amanullah's emancipation laws were passed in the 1920s. Much of the Hazarajat was decimated, and their agricultural economy destroyed. Starving, some ate grass and sold their children for wheat to survive. The Hazaras were fined for rebelling and taxed

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indiscriminately. 5 All facets of Afghani government, society and law conspired against Hazaras, seeking to destroy their property, tribal systems, religion and culture. Rahid Rahman attempted to impose Sunni Islam and demanded that qazis (judges) and muftis (Islamic leaders) in various districts use only Hanafi, a Sunni Islamic legal system, for dealing with Hazaras. To depopulate the Hazarajat, the government issued 'firmans', royal decrees, authorising Pashtun nomads, Kuchis, to access Hazaras' lands for grazing their livestock. Possibly several tens of thousands fled to Central Asia, and Balochistan in what is now Pakistan. 6 Victorious, Rahid Rahman demeaned the Hazaras and claimed that Afghans saw them as 'enemies of their country and religion', 7 laying the foundation for a century of persecution to the present. Marginalisation in the twentieth century Successive governments have since marginalised Hazaras. Under the banner of nationalism in the early 1900s, ruling Pashtuns tried to assert their identity, culture and history over all other ethnic groups. The Hazarajat was removed from official maps and lands were divided into five provinces to weaken the Hazaras' political authority. King Nadir Shah (1929-1933) outlawed the promotion of Hazara history and culture, 5 Peter Marsden, *Afghanistan: Minorities, Conflict and the Search for Peace*, London, 2001, p. 6; Saikal, *Modern Afghanistan*, pp. 5, 12, 17, 35-39; Kakar, 'The pacification of the Hazaras', pp. 120-122, 132-137; Burchard Brentjes & Helga Brentjes, *Taliban: A Shadow over Afghanistan*, Varanasi, 2000, p. 75; Mousavi, *The Hazaras of Afghanistan*, pp. 101, 120-129, 131-136. 6 Kakar, 'The pacification of the Hazaras', pp. 137, 138; Lenard Milich, 'The Behsud conflicts in Afghanistan: A blueprint to avoid further clashes in 2009 and beyond', *Eurasia Critic*, June 2009, pp. 2, 3, <http://www.eurasiacritic.com/articles>, accessed 10 June <https://assignbuster.com/denise-phillips-revised-25-july-2012/>

2010; Alessandro Monsutti, trans. Patrick Camiller, War and Migration: Social Networks and Economic Strategies of the Hazaras of Afghanistan, New York, 2005, p. 105. 7 Mir Munshi Sultan Mahomed Khan (ed.), The Life of Abdur Rahman, Amir of Afghanistan, with a new introduction by M. E. Yapp, vol. 1, Karachi, 1980 (1900), pp. 276-279, 282-284. imprisoning or executing intellectuals who wrote on the subject. Official policies tried to strip names associated with the Hazaras from historical archives. Between the 1930s and 1970s, the Anjom-e Tarikh (Historical Society), aided by the Pashto Tolana (Pashto Academy), rewrote much of Afghanistan's official histories. Significant texts were also reportedly burnt. Until 1978, the Hazaras were marginalised, taxed indiscriminately, and denied equal rights and vital infrastructure in their villages. 8 Former president of Afghanistan Dr Najibullah (1986-1992) acknowledged their suffering, saying that ' the most difficult and lowliest paid jobs, poverty, illiteracy, social and nationalist committed, and bloodshed continues to this day. discrimination were the lot of the Hazara people'. 9 No justice was gained for atrocities Massacres during the civil war and Taliban regime Hazaras became politically mobilised in the 1980s and have since gained greater political representation. However, their persecution was brutally re-ignited during the civil war by rival ethnic groups and by the Taliban. In 1993, soldiers under command of the Rabbani government (1992-1996) targeted the stronghold of the Hazaras' political party, the Hizb-e Wahdat, in Afshar, a district in West Kabul with a large Hazara population. Soldiers, however, turned against civilians. After a frenzy of looting, rape killed or remain missing. 10 and summary executions driven by ethnic hatred, approximately 700-750 Hazaras were Persecution intensified under the Taliban regime (1996-2001) as its soldiers

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advanced into Afghanistan's north and the Hazarajat. Not only do Hazaras shun the Islamist beliefs of the Taliban, the Taliban are recruited mostly from the Pashtun group, the Hazaras' traditional enemy. (In reverse, being Pashtun does not automatically equal Taliban support and millions of Pashtuns have also suffered within Afghanistan's 8 Hafizullah Emadi, 'The Hazaras and their role in the process of political transformation in Afghanistan', *Central Asian Survey*, vol. 16, no. 3, 1997, pp. 363-371; Mousavi, *The Hazaras of Afghanistan*, pp. 5-8, 155-174, 218; Saikal, *Modern Afghanistan*, pp. 111-113, 283. Hazaras cite *Putra Khazana* (The Hidden Treasure), published in 1960, as an example of a controversial or fictitious history funded by the government which promoted Pashtun superiority. 9 Quoted in Mousavi, *The Hazaras of Afghanistan*, p. 162 10 Mousavi, *The Hazaras of Afghanistan*, pp. 198, 199; Human Rights Watch, *Blood-Stained Hands: Past Atrocities in Kabul and Afghanistan's Legacy of Impunity*, New York, 2005, pp. 70-100. Numbers have never been accurately ascertained. One Hazara website estimates that approximately 1, 000 were killed or remain missing. See 'Afshar and Kateh Sahe massacre', Hazara. net, 2009 <http://www.hazara.net/taliban/genocide/afshar/afshar.html>, accessed 19 June 2010. 3 4 Denise Phillips, revised 25 July 2012 Denise Phillips, revised 25 July 2012 conflicts.) In 1998, in retaliation for war crimes committed by the United Front (of which Hazaras were a part) against Taliban soldiers, the Taliban slaughtered approximately 2, 000 or more Hazaras in Mazar-e Sharif. Civilians were killed in residential areas and market places, some dying with their throats slit. Highlighting the accompanying religious hatred, Taliban governor Mullah Manon Niazi had publicly incited the attack, preaching that, 'Hazaras are not Muslim. You can kill them. It is not a sin'. Hazaras were

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reportedly warned to take lessons from their own history, and to either convert, flee or be killed. Hundreds fled the terror of Mazar-e Sharif. Massacres continued, with Taliban soldiers rounding up civilians in the Yakaolang district in 2001, publicly executing at least 170, many of whom were Hazaras. Near Robatak Pass, the Taliban also executed at least 31 civilians, with 26 confirmed to be Hazaras. 11 A resurgent Taliban After more than a decade, American and NATO forces have failed to bring peace and a withdrawal is imminent. Regrouping since 2001, the Taliban is now made up of an alliance of three Islamist groups; the Quetta Shura Taliban, the Haqqani Network, and Hezb-i Islami Gulbuddin, an insurgency described by the US Department of Defence as ‘resilient and evolving’. 12 With safe havens for terrorism in western Pakistan, the insurgency maintains strongholds in southern and eastern regions of Afghanistan, and has been expanding to the west and north. 13 The Taliban’s clear presence in Shinwari district of Parwan province, less than a few hours from Kabul, was demonstrated with news last week of the Taliban’s execution of a young woman on ‘adultery’ charges. 14 Terror in the Hazarajat Analysts recently deemed Ghazni to be ‘among the most volatile provinces in southern Afghanistan’. 15 In 2006, a former governor was assassinated, and in 2007, the Taliban held 23 South Koreans hostage. Located in Ghazni province is Jaghori, an Hazara-populated district and former home of many Hazara refugees now in Australia. Jaghori and Hazara-populated Malistan are surrounded by Pashtun areas under Taliban control. In June 2010, the Taliban reportedly distributed ‘nightletters’, a method of intimidation, to districts within Ghazni province, warning that the main road out of Jaghori to Kabul is now closed. Residents need to travel beyond Jaghori for medical, commercial, study and work



reasons, but travel is now perilous. Taliban routinely search travellers on the Qarabagh-Jaghori road. Travellers have been tortured, detained and some have gone missing. Their vehicles have been stolen and the road is periodically closed. Many fear a repeat of the Taliban's 1997 road blockade of essential supplies. Additionally, Jaghori strongly supports education, with numerous high schools and primary and middle schools. The Taliban, however, have targeted schools. For example, in July 2010, the Taliban attacked and burnt schools in Tamki, Jaghori district, and in Qarabagh district. The Taliban also killed Syed Sekander Muhammadi, the head teacher of a school in Shaki Nuka, in Qarabagh district, as he travelled to Ghazni. 16 In nearby Oruzgan province, the decapitated corpses of 11 Hazara males were discovered in the Khas Oruzgan district on 25 June 2010. Police official Mohammed Gulab Wardak reported that the Taliban killed them ' because they were ethnic Hazaras and Shiite Muslims'. 17 This occurred in the very province where Australia's Defence Personnel have been deployed in a security and reconstruction role, showing the dire 11 Human Rights Watch, Afghanistan: The Massacre in Mazar-I Sharif, vol, 10, no. 7(C), November 1998, <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/45c9a4b52.html>, accessed 18 June 2010; Human Rights Watch, Massacres of Hazaras in Afghanistan, vol. 13, no. 1(C), February 2001, <http://www.hrw.org/legacy/reports/2001/afghanistan/>, accessed 18 June 2010; Peter Marsden, Afghanistan: Minorities, Conflict and the Search for Peace, London, 2001, p. 22; Mullah Manon Niazi quoted in ' On genocide of Hazaras', Hazara.net, January 2011, <http://www.hazara.net/taliban/taliban.html>, accessed 18 July 2012. 12 Department of Defense, Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan: Report to Congress in Accordance with 2008 National

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Defense Authorisation Act (Section 1230, Public Law 110-181), USA, January 2009, p. 7, [http://www.defense.gov/pubs/OCTOBER\\_1230\\_FINAL\\_pdf](http://www.defense.gov/pubs/OCTOBER_1230_FINAL_pdf), accessed 12 August 2010. 13 Maria Golovnina, 'Factbox: Insurgency in Afghanistan: Who are they?', 25 September 2009, Reuters, <http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSTRE58O2F620090925>, accessed 12 August 2010. Dylan Welch & Ben Doherty, "'God tells us to finish her': Taliban remind world they are no spent force', The Sydney Morning Herald, 10 July 2012, p. 1. 14 threat to Hazaras, even alongside a broader military presence. 15 William Maley, 'On the position of the Hazara minority in Afghanistan', 28 June 2010, posted on Welcome to Ataulah's Page, <http://ataullahnaseri.wordpress.com/2010/06/28/on-the-position-of-the-hazara-minority>, accessed 5 August 2010. 16 Thomas Ruttig, 'A new, new Taliban front', Foreign Policy, 21 June 2010, [http://afpak.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2010/06/21/a\\_new\\_new\\_taliban\\_front\\_0](http://afpak.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2010/06/21/a_new_new_taliban_front_0), accessed 5 August 2012; Ahmed Rashid, Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia, New Haven, 2000, p. 67; Abdul Karim Hekmat, 'Unsafe haven: Hazaras in Afghanistan and Pakistan', Special report, University of Technology Sydney, October 2011, pp. 18, 19. 17 Tahereh Ghanaati, 'The Hazara carnage in Afghanistan', Press TV, 27 June 2010, <http://www.presstv.ir/pop/Print/?id=132225>, accessed 28 June 2010; Ismail Sameem & Jonathon Burch, 'Police find 11 beheaded bodies in Afghan South', 25 June 2010, Reuters, <http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSTRE65O2ML20100625>, accessed 28 June 2010. 5 6 Denise Phillips, revised 25 July 2012 Denise Phillips, revised 25 July 2012 Hazaras. Although the Taliban denied involvement, Afghani analyst Ahmad Shuja fears In Maidan Wardak province, land disputes between Hazaras and Kuchis often erupt each summer but <https://assignbuster.com/denise-phillips-revised-25-july-2012/>

have worsened in recent years. Kuchis have been arriving in the Behsud and Daimirdad districts heavily armed for conflict. Kuchis believe the aforementioned decrees issued under Abdur Rahman entitle them to access, while many Hazaras have never accepted the loss of full rights over their land. Consequently, Hazaras have been killed and their homes burnt. In 2008, approximately 60, 000 people were displaced, and in May 2010, a report estimated that 1, 800 families had been displaced, 68 homes burnt, and 28 schools closed, leaving 10, 000 students without school facilities. As nomads, the Kuchi are also a minority group, but belong to the traditionally dominant Pashtun group. It is feared that the Taliban may be exploiting the past to incite attacks by their fellow Pashtuns, the Kuchi, against Hazaras. The Karzai government has either largely ignored repeated Hazara pleas for assistance or has been impotent in stopping the violence, sparking worldwide protests by Hazaras. 18 These crises cannot be dismissed as internal land disputes; rather, they stem from the nineteenth century acts of conquest, dispossession and persecution — and another government's marginalisation of Hazaras. Terror in Kabul Brutal assaults also have occurred recently in Kabul. On 6 December 2011, a suicide bomber killed at least 56 Shiites pilgrims worshipping at the Abdul Fazal Abbas Shrine in the Murad Khani district in Kabul during commemorations for Ashura, the holiest day of Muharram. On the same day, a bomb attached to a bicycle exploded, killing Shiite pilgrims in Mazar-e Sharif and bringing the death toll to 60. A spokesperson for Lashkar-e Jhangvi (LeJ) claimed responsibility via Radio Free Europe. LeJ, formed in 1996, is a militant Sunni Deobandi Islamist group based in the Punjab region of Pakistan. Among links with numerous terror groups, it has a close relationship with Afghani Taliban and Tehrik-e-Taliban

Pakistan (TTP). Most killed and injured were 18 Lenard Milich, 'The Behsud conflicts in Afghanistan: A blueprint to avoid further clashes in 2009 and beyond', Eurasia Critic, June 2009, pp. 1-3, <http://www.eurasiacritic.com/articles>, accessed 10 June 2010; Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, 'AIHRC grave concern about armed conflict between Kochies and native inhabitants of Behsood district of Maidan Wardak', Kabul Press, 22 May 2010, <http://kabulpress.org/my/spip.php?article11725>, accessed 9 August 2010; 'UNAMA silent on Kuchi attack in Behsud', Hazaristan Times, 21 May 2010, <http://hazaristantimes.wordpress.com/2010/05/21/unama-silent-on-Kuchi-attack-in-behsud>, accessed 6 August 2010. the attacks will inflame religious tensions, echoing a recent past in which the Taliban massacred thousands of Hazaras. 19 Increasing bloodshed in Quetta, Pakistan Since the nineteenth century, Hazaras have traditionally fled or migrated to Quetta, the capital of Balochistan province, in what is now Pakistan. Quetta has long been a 'second home' for Hazaras; some live there as permanent Pakistani citizens, others as refugees. Possibly 30, 000-50, 000 Hazara refugees now live in Pakistan after fleeing the Taliban in 1996. Over the last decade, however, Shiite Hazaras in Balochistan have been dying in an escalating spate of sectarian attacks, often occurring daily. Lej have distributed leaflets condemning Shiites as 'infidels'. Proclaiming their right under Islam to kill them, Lej publicly state that they will continue acting against Shiites. One of its leaders, Milak Ishaque, had 40 murder charges pending against him: after serving 15 years imprisonment he was released on 14 July 2011. Hazaras and the Asian Human Rights Commission report that the Pakistani government, army and law enforcement impunity. 20 authorities are failing to act, openly allowing the banned terror

organisation to kill with These are but a few examples in a litany of bloody attacks. Eight Hazaras were slain in Poodgali Chowk in 2001, and 12 Hazara policeman killed in Sariab, in 2003. On 20 September 2011, armed men intercepted a bus in the Ganjidori area of Mastung, southeast of Quetta. It carried 45, mostly Shiite, pilgrims travelling to Taftan, Iran. Ordering them off the bus, gunmen shot those identifying themselves as Shiites in the ‘ head, chest and abdomen’. Twenty-nine Shiites were killed and five escaped. An hour 19 Ernesto LondoÃ±o, ‘ Dozens dead in rare attack on Shiite mosque in Kabul’, The Washington Post, 6 December 2011, [http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/rare-attack-in-kabul-targets-shiitemosque/2011/12/06/gIQAVnEKYO\\_print](http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/rare-attack-in-kabul-targets-shiitemosque/2011/12/06/gIQAVnEKYO_print), accessed 7 December 2011; ‘ Lashkar-e Jhangvi (LeJ)’, Australian National Security, Australian Government, updated 15 March 2012, [http://www.ema.gov.au/agd/WWW/nationalsecurity.nsf/Page/What\\_Governments\\_are\\_doing\\_Listing\\_of\\_Terrorism\\_Organisations\\_Lashkar\\_I\\_Jhangvi](http://www.ema.gov.au/agd/WWW/nationalsecurity.nsf/Page/What_Governments_are_doing_Listing_of_Terrorism_Organisations_Lashkar_I_Jhangvi), accessed 18 July 2012. 20 Lashkar-e Jhangvi (LeJ)’, Australian National Security; Syed Shoaib Hasan, ‘ A year of suffering for Pakistan’s Shias’, BBC News, Balochistan, 6 December 2011, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/worldasia-15928538>, accessed 21 January 2012; Hekmat, ‘ Unsafe haven’, pp. 20-23; ‘ The state of human rights in Pakistan in 2011’, Asian Human Rights Commission, 2011, p. 42, <http://www.AHRC-SPR008-2011-HRRptPakistan.pdf>, accessed 18 July 2012.

7 8 Denise Phillips, revised 25 July 2012 Denise Phillips, revised 25 July 2012 later, gunmen killed 3 Shiites, believed to be victims’ relatives on their way to retrieve the bodies of their loved ones. LeJ claimed responsibility. 21 On 28 June 2012, a bomb blast killed Shiite pilgrims travelling by bus near a fruit

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market in the Hazarganji area of Quetta. Thirteen were killed and 30 injured, with most of the victims Hazaras. LeJ again claimed responsibility. Prominent leaders, professionals, intellectuals and policemen have been assassinated, along with a sportsman and artist. For example, Chairman of the Hazara Democratic Party, Hussain Ali Yousofi, was slain on 26 January 2011. The general Hazara population, including women and children, are now also being indiscriminately targeted. Australian Hazaras visiting relatives in Quetta speak of witnessing attacks on Hazara civilians in the streets and of a climate of terror. Abdul Karim Hekmat reports that ‘ over 500 Hazaras have been killed and over 1, 500 injured as a result of targeted’ attacks in Pakistan since 2003. 22 Other sources cite even higher numbers. Failures of protection and continuing fear Afghanistan’s 2004 Constitution includes exemplary protection for human rights and Hazaras have gained prominent government positions. However, with critical failures to implement the rule of law beyond Kabul — or even maintain it in Kabul — reform has not translated to improved safety for Hazaras in remote villages. Insurgents do not recognise government law. Moreover, Afghani culture is bound up with traditions of governing and maintaining security through tribal and religious consensus, gained at district and community levels rather than through a centralised authority. In December 2009, the Karzai government also gazetted a law giving amnesty to all who committed war crimes in the past two decades of conflict, allowing alleged war criminals from various ethnicities to hold parliamentary positions with impunity. Professor William Maley cautions against ‘ tokenism’, arguing that the inclusion of Hazaras within government has not brought about real changes. 23 History shows that the 1980s’ reforms which delivered greater equity for Hazaras did not

stop the bloodshed which followed in the 1990s and beyond. That this is the sixth constitution since 1923 also exemplifies the fragility of Afghani reforms. Safety for minority groups requires broad social changes to address deeply-rooted tribal, religious and ethnic prejudices — this is something that will take years. The possibility of a Taliban alliance with international support, set against the draw-down of troops, causes terror among many Hazaras. 24 In summarising why Hazaras risk their lives on boats, an Hazara refugee says: When the government and law enforcement agencies can't provide protection, when your house [in Quetta or Afghanistan] is on fire, when your home country becomes hell for you, when you can't go anywhere without the fear of being killed, when your religion and your facial features make you the easy target. When death is hovering over your head every day, then you don't have options but to flee, seek refuge, knock at other people's door for help, sit on a leaky boat, choose a dangerous journey that possibly leads to death. Today the Hazara Shias (boat people, the asylum seekers) are in a state of desperation and struggling for their survival as it is a basic human instinct. 25 Recommendations flee. I therefore make the following comments: Based on the continuing and unresolved history of bloodshed, Hazaras will continue to 1) Given the need for negotiation within a democratic process, I have reflected deeply on the current options being debated. However, we cannot participate in the 'trade' of 21 Shehzad Baloch, 'Sectarian atrocity: 29 killed in Mastung, Quetta ambushes', The Express Tribune, 21 September 2011, <http://tribune.com.pk/story/256419/gunmen-attack-bus-in-balochistan-20killed/?print=true>, accessed 22 September 2011. 22 'Shia pilgrims bus attacked by a rocket near Quetta, 13 martyred over 30 injured', Jafria News, 29 June 2012, <https://assignbuster.com/denise-phillips-revised-25-july-2012/>

<http://jafrianews.com/2012/06/29/shia-pilgrims-bus-attacked-by-a-rocket-near-quetta-13martyred-over-30-injured/>, accessed 16 July 2012; 'Hazara Shia community on strike over Quetta attacks', BBC News, Asia, 29 June 2012, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-18640945>, accessed 16 July 2012; 'Blast kills 13, including Shia pilgrims, in Quetta', Dawn.com, 28 June 2012, <http://dawn.com/2012/06/28/eight-including-policeman-killed-in-quetta-blast/>, accessed 16 July 2012; Hekmat, 'Unsafe haven', p. 22; Informal discussions with Australian Hazaras. 23 William Maley, Radio interview conducted by Geraldine Doogue, 'Afghan Hazara', Breakfast, ABC Radio National, 13 April 2010, <http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/breakfast/afghanhazara/3039616>, accessed 16 June 2010; Una Moore, 'UN human rights rep in Kabul calls for repeal of war crimes amnesty', UN Dispatch, 30 March 2010, <http://www.undispatch.com/un-human-rightsrep-in-kabul-calls-for-repeal-of-war-crimes-amnesty>, accessed 11 June 2010; Department of Defense, Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan, p. 11; Shahmahmood Miakhel, 'Understanding Afghanistan: The importance of tribal culture and structure in security and governance', US Institute of Peace, November 2009, p. 1. 24 Sonya Hepinstall, 'Holbrooke: Reformed Taliban in Afghan government not wrong', Thomson Reuters, 6 June 2010, <http://in.reuters.com/article/2010/06/07/idINIndia-49088220100607>, accessed 18 June 2010.

25 Anonymous Hazara refugee, 29 June 2012. 9 10 Denise Phillips, revised 25 July 2012 human lives with the Malaysian option. I support the principle suggestions made in the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre's submission and the Open Letter, so will not reiterate their points here. 2) Help educate parliamentarians and the public as to why refugees flee their homelands.

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Exercise clear leadership in depoliticising the debate. 3) Hazaras tell me they want peace and human rights in their homeland — only then will they stop fleeing. Hazaras have witnessed the brutal deaths of their family members, including fathers, mothers, siblings and children. Flight is accompanied by intense grief, trauma and longing. Waiting years for family reunions will drive loved ones to get on boats. Those left behind in Afghanistan not only face destitution, but are also often brutally targeted by warlords who learn that their husband, son or brother has fled to a Western country. In a recent case, the intimidation of a young Hazara refugee's family members left in Jaghori resulted in an attack on the family home, killing an eight-monthold baby. I have witnessed refugees' debilitating distress as they wait years