



**The Hon Clare O'Neil MP**  
**Minister for Home Affairs**  
**Minister for Cyber Security**

Ref No: MC22-057891

s. 47F(1)

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Dear s. 47F(1)

Thank you for your correspondence of 14 November regarding the repatriation of Australian women and children from internally displaced persons camps in northeast Syria. I appreciate the time you have taken to bring this matter to my attention.

The Australian Government's decision to repatriate four women and 13 children was informed by national security advice and supported by detailed work, including individual assessment, by our national security agencies.

The women and children that have been repatriated are Australian citizens and can return to Australia at any point. The National Security decision the Government made, on the advice of national security agencies, was to repatriate these persons in a controlled manner. This ensured the return of these women and their children was undertaken with regard to the protection and security of the Australian community and the repatriated individuals.

Repatriations require a whole-of-government approach and prior to the repatriation occurring, agencies and the Government worked closely with the New South Wales Government. As you may be aware, on 25 November 2022, I met with Mayors from Western Sydney to discuss their concerns about the recent repatriation of Australian women and children from Syria. As advised to the Mayors, the women and children repatriated from Syria returned to the state from which they had departed Australia, and the New South Wales Government assisted them to return to areas where they have community and family connections and support. These families are receiving a full range of services to assist them to reintegrate into their communities.

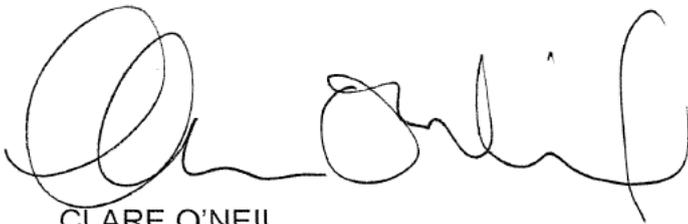
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The Australian Government's decision has enabled agencies to implement measures to ensure the safety and security of the community and prepare for ongoing law enforcement assessment and engagement. I have confidence in the well-established framework that enables the AFP and Joint Counter Terrorism Teams to respond and manage extremist threats in Australia. The AFP's Community Liaison Teams, continue to work with community leaders to keep the Australian community safe.

As outlined by the Australian Federal Police Commissioner, these women and children will continue to be assessed by the AFP and their partners through Joint Counter Terrorism Teams. Alleged breaches of Australian law will be investigated and where appropriate subject to law enforcement action.

Thank you for raising these matters.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Clare O'Neil', written in a cursive style.

CLARE O'NEIL

21/12/2022