

## NICF STATEMENT REGARDING THE SYRIAN CRISIS

The Imams present at the fifth session of the National Imams Consultative Forum have discussed the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Syria. Human rights groups estimate over 140,000 people have lost their lives, including 7,000 children. There are now over 2.4 million registered refugees as a result of the conflict, with thousands more unregistered. This number has continued to rise steadily since the conflict began and shows no signs of abating.

The imams would like to communicate the following:

1. The imams deplore and condemn the continuing violence and bloodshed in the strongest possible terms. In particular, attacks on innocent civilians and non-combatants, including women, children and the elderly, are condemned as violations of international norms and of Islamic law.
2. The imams wish to express their concern about international military interference in Syria, as it is feared that outside funds, arms flow and foreign fighters are prolonging the conflict and preventing a solution.
3. The imams advise Australian citizens against traveling to Syria to engage in fighting.
4. The imams advise that fighting for either side in the conflict is prohibited under Australian law.
5. The imams call on all Muslim Australians to aid civilians caught up in this humanitarian crisis through legal avenues, including through donations, political participation, and prayers. There are many legal channels available to convey aid funds to Syria and to refugee camps in surrounding nations such as Turkey, Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon.

Melbourne, 9 March 2014

National Imams Consultative Forum – Australia