Compassion urged for refugees and asylum seekers

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Bishop Joe Grech

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Australian Catholic Bishops Conference delegate for refugee and migrant issues Bishop Joseph Grech said the annual numbers of asylum seekers entering Australia are not a significant burden for a wealthy country and urged compassion.

"While the assessment of each individual’s claim for refugee status must be left to the formal process, we should all be aware of the incredible trauma being experienced by many people in present and past war zones such as Sri Lanka, Afghanistan and Iraq," Bishop Grech said.

"Not only does Australia have humanitarian obligations under UN Charters, but many Australians are descendants of people who came to Australia to escape persecution in their countries of birth. This can help us understand and open our hearts to those who are suffering."

"I am not suggesting that we can take everyone in the world, but we should particularly look towards the needs of those in our immediate area of the world. Let us look at the reasons why these people have become asylum seekers and let us encourage our government to talk to other governments in our region to offer assistance to relieve such suffering."

FULL STATEMENT

Catholic Bishop calls for compassionate discussion about refugees and asylum seekers (Australian Catholic Bishops Conference)