



Refugee Communities Association of Australia Inc.
For Refugees / With Refugees / By Refugees

Media Release

Tuesday 28th April 2020

RCAA seeks support to continue providing essential food items to Asylum Seekers affected by COVID-19 during Ramadan

The Refugee Communities Association of Australia Inc (RCAA) in partnership with Help Himalayan Youth Foundation (HHYF) has provided basic food items to support 40 Rohingya Asylum Seeker families during Ramadan. These Asylum Seekers are struggling to provide basic food for their families during the Holy month of fasting and are not eligible to receive any government or other support during the COVID-19 crisis.

The RCAA is an independent refugee-led peak national advocacy organisation providing a unified voice for people with a lived refugee experience in Australia. RCAA is active in every Australian state and territory. It has established the RCAA COVID-19 Relief Taskforce to support Asylum Seekers and other temporary visa holders and international students affected by the pandemic. The RCAA has so far used its own savings and contributions from committee members to provide the support. RCAA Chairperson Juma Piri Piri said “If any fellow Australians are able to help us support vulnerable Asylum Seekers at this time, please contact us so we can make a difference together.”

Mr Piri Piri said, “From day one, the RCAA has been committed and dedicated to work with grassroots refugee communities, often left out, vulnerable and neglected. I am very proud my team has made a small difference in the lives of some of the most vulnerable families overlooked by the system. At this unprecedented time of uncertainty, I urge fellow Australians to think of those temporary visa holders and Asylum Seekers with no job or income, who depend entirely on acts of kindness. Any contribution you can make will contribute to the greater cause of humanity.”

While receiving a food package from the RCAA, Faisel Mohammad, Chairman of the Australian Burmese Rohingya Organisation (ABRO), said “This relief food package, especially during Holy month of Ramadan means a lot to our community. As Rohingyas we are forgotten people, and we thank the RCAA for supporting our community at this critical time.”

ABRO spokesperson Aung Soe (Ro Habib) said, “We have about 60 to 70 Rohingya Asylum Seekers in Victoria on bridging visas who are not eligible for any kind of government support. These families have no job and income, and I am seeking financial and other support for them, particularly during Ramadan.”

“I request RCAA raise our issue with Hon Alan Tudge MP, Acting Immigration, Citizenship, Migrant Services and Multicultural Affairs Minister and urge him to finalise these cases and provide protection visas so that they are eligible for support. I thank RCAA for providing temporary relief for my people and supporting refugee communities. As an organisation formed by refugees with lived experience RCAA will understand the exact issues of refugees better than any other,” said Aung Soe.

Ms Hazara, also a Rohingya Asylum Seeker said, “I will do 1000 Duwa (Pray 1000 times) for RCAA for coming to my door with food when I don’t have enough to feed my family in the most important religious time in my faith. I will use all this food to break our Ramadan fasting as long as it lasts.”



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Another Rohingya Asylum Seeker, Ms Begum said, “Until today no one has provided food like this to my family. We have no support from the government or Centrelink. This food will mean a lot to us, thank you RCAA and Rohingya leaders, she said.”

Mr Piri Piri said, “While consulting our refugee communities across Australia during the COVID-19 crisis, we have also found a need for digital devices (tablets, laptops, smart phones) for students to study from home. Many families have only one or two devices but have around five or more family members who need individual devices to be able to study from home. I urge fellow Australians or organisations to donate if you have spare devices in your homes.”

For donations, financial or in-kind, please visit our website www.rcaoa.org.au for details or contact RCAA General Secretary, Parsu Sharma Luita JP on 0412 265 317 or by email: admin@rcaoa.org.au.