HAZARA

INTRODUCTION

Hazara people are an ethno-social group native to Afghanistan. It is believed that most Hazara Image can be traced to Turkic-Mongolian tribes of Central Asia including Genghis Khan, albeit there are Hazara scholars who trace it back to the Indo-European Kushans. The Hazarajat community in Afghanistan was persistently attacked by ISIS and Taliban, including a brutal attack of a maternity ward in May 2020 killing health staff, pregnant mothers and babies (Mahdy 2020).

According to UNHCR, Afghan people are the third largest refugee group in the world, after Syrian and Palestinian, with 2.7 million people seeking international protection worldwide (UNHCR 2020). The countries that host the largest number of Afghan refugees are Iran and Pakistan, Hazara refugees still face persecution by Sunni extremists because of their religious beliefs. Hazara’s are Shi’a Muslim, while Pakistan is predominantly Sunni Muslim country.

While due to lack of reliable sources and data is difficult to draw a clear picture of Hazara people migration to Australia, it is possible to get a sense of their history through the Afghan-born people in Australia. Migration from Afghanistan to Australia started in the 19th century with the cameleers. Between 1901 and 1970, the White Australia policy prevented any further migration. In the late 70s, after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, forced migration started to grow as a consequence of the continuous state of conflict and unrest in Afghanistan. While census and migration data refer to Afghan people, a large percentage of Afghan refugees are Hazara people (Morotti 2004). According to the Cultural Atlas (Evason 2016), Afghan refugees and asylum seeker-Australians, commonly are:

- Ethnic Hazara fleeing persecution in Afghanistan and neighbouring countries of refuge such as Pakistan,
- Intellectuals, journalists or activists,
- Individuals who assisted the Australian mission in Afghanistan and were at risk of harm (e.g. interpreters),
- Women and children who arrived under the Program ‘Women at Risk’ humanitarian visa.

Demographic data pertaining individual ethnic groups is minimal, difficult to obtain and not always reliable.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF MIGRATION

HZARA

Migration to Australia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Asylum/Migrants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1978-80</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981-90</td>
<td>1,731</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991-2000</td>
<td>6,638</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001-2005</td>
<td>6,894</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-2010</td>
<td>10,260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011-2016</td>
<td>19,928</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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1 Accordance statistical data of minority in Afghanistan are not available due to the sensitivity of the subject. 
2 Taliban - 2020
3 The killing spree started on 8th August 1998, in Hazara Darband blast. At least 1,300 Hazara people were killed. The deaths of 6,000 to 7,000 Hazara people recognized as one of the worst attacks against the Hazara. The attack also caused the largest wave of Hazara refugees.
4 Hazara and suicide bombings targeting Hazara people continued in Afghanistan, including killings and target attacks cherished in Quetta Pakistan. A lots of Hazara’s left Pakistan during these years.

1895 - The killing spree started on 12th August 1998, in Hazara Darband blast. At least 1,300 Hazara people were killed. The deaths of 6,000 to 7,000 Hazara people recognized as one of the worst attacks against the Hazara. The attack also caused the largest wave of Hazara refugees.

1999 - The newly established Taliban regime declared jihad on the Shi’a Hazaras.

2001 - War and associated bombing campaigns between the Taliban and United States-led forces resulted in more than 25,000 casualties, most of some of their basic rights restored in the Constitution, rendering them more vulnerable.

2005 onwards - The surge of Afghan attacks, including suicide bombings targeting Hazara people, particularly those in Kabul. 

2011 - Religious minorities are been targeted by ethno-political groups (IGS after 2001).

2009 - The Shi’a Personal Status Law was passed, stripping Shi’a women, men by men, of most of their rights under the law. The 10,260

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IN AUSTRALIA

VISA AND SAFETY CONCERNS

The ongoing political and civil unrest in Afghanistan as well as the ongoing discrimination and persecution of Hazara people in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran, causes the community in Australia ongoing anxiety and a fear of the future. Additionally, humanitarian protection and family reunion visa processes are long and difficult. People that arrive by boat are kept in detention for a prolonged period of time in environments that are detrimental to mental health. In Afghanistan the language of Hazara people is considered a dialect of Dari (or Persian).

The uncertainty around the safety and security of family members overseas, the prolonged and strenuous visa process which prevents them to fully resettle fully or sponsor their families from overseas, despite being recognised as refugees, causes:

• Less (or long delayed) chances to fully establish in Australia, for instance buying a property, investing in long term ventures. Employers may be hesitant in employing them because of their visa types and the uncertainty of how long the person may be around etc.

• Damages to physical and mental health. Those who have had personal experiences of violence and now live in Australia do not necessarily seek emotional/mental health help for fear of criticism by their families/community, labio and lack of culturally appropriate mental health services.

• Those who have arrived via boat and are applying for Australian citizenship are waiting two to three years to hear a response from the department on their citizenship applications. The system is punishing them for coming to Australia via boat.

EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT ISSUES

Community sources reported that the gaps in younger Hazara education creates a situation where the students almost always play ‘catch ups’ on their literacy and language skills. Schools are not always prepared, particularly state schools possibly because of funding and financial resources, to effectively fill these gaps in the students' education gaps. The gap is carried through the schooling career until universities or colleges, for those who reach it.

The recognition of work rights is an issue for many Hazara people. A lot of skilled Hazara tradesmen and labourers come to Australia from Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran and because of lack of language proficiency end up working for people for cash, at much lower rates than the legal rates, exposing themselves to a range of issues, such as:

• no insurance and protection in cases of injury at work
• inability to claim underpaid rates and more.

In Afghanistan

CHALLENGES

• Safety and security in Afghanistan and other refugee host countries such as Iran and Pakistan. Resurgence of conflict and attacks targeting Hazara people.
• Humanitarian aid provided by NGOs and other agencies does not reach remote areas and/or may not reach the most vulnerable populations.

OCCUPATIONAL ISSUES

• Hazara people can support diplomats to liaise with the community in Afghanistan. The Hazaras in Afghanistan have been leading in education, gender equality and democratic freedom aligning with Australia’s mission.

PARTICIPATION IN CIVIL SOCIETY

There is a general distrust of authorities, particularly towards those in political power given previous experiences with authorities in Afghanistan.

“Personally for me if there were any attempts made by DFTA to politically show concern over the ongoing attacks on Hazaras in Afghanistan and Pakistan, this would have a great impact on the psychology of the Hazaras who feel so abandoned by their own and the world leaders” (Hazara community member).

Having said that, the Hazara community in Australia is increasingly participating in social economic and political processes, however there are various challenges that serves as barriers such as lower community education capacities.

OPPORTUNITIES

• Hazara are community oriented and resilient people. The more established community members are providing support to newly arrived people either on an individual level or through community organisations. If adequately supported, they can be a great resource and asset to migration agencies.

• Hazara people are genuinely interested in working toward improving the lives of those around them in partnership with local, state, and federal government bodies. The opportunity to engage with the community in a meaningful manner is always there.

• Hazara refugees have resulted mostly successfully and have experienced incredible social mobility in a short period of time (e.g. less than two decades). Hazara diligently work in construction and trades as reported by the last Census and they have benefited from the construction boom. As an increasing number of Hazara refugee arrivals from 2003 are becoming Australian Citizens and voters in Australia.

PRIORITIES

• One of the most urgent issues facing Hazara men who are out of detention and have a bridging visa or a Safe Haven visa, to be able to go through the visa process quickly so they can begin to resettle and reunite with their families.

• Early culturally and linguistically appropriate interventions to assist these students to catch up and stay connected to their education reduce dropout rates.

• Build on the trust and support that the Hazara people have towards Australia. The Hazara community has actively taken part in the Bushfire Appeal providing cash donations and by volunteering (SSI 2020).

In Afghanistan

CHALLENGES

• Hazara children receive formal education relative to the children of other Afghan ethnicities. Hazara children are generally encouraged to consider further education options where family circumstances allow (DFAT 2019).

OCCUPATIONAL ISSUES

• Concerns of the education capacity issues.

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• Hazara people can support diplomats to liaise with the community in Afghanistan. The Hazaras in Afghanistan have been leading in education, gender equality and democratic freedom aligning with Australia’s mission.

• Hazara aid and foreign missions have an opportunity by working with the Hazara diaspora in Australia to target issues that are considered asylum seeker push factors such as the human security issues and the lack of economic opportunities in central Hazarajat provinces.

• It is believed that the Hazara community remittance to the poverty-stricken central provinces of Afghanistan, and to the refugee communities of Pakistan and Iran, is a significant amount.

PRIORITIES

• The Government can invest and facilitate the flow of remittances.

In Australia

CHALLENGES

• Recognition of Hazarapeople’s human rights, experience of persecution and their identity, language and ethnicity.

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