



PRESS RELEASE

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**AUSTRALIA'S NATIONAL
ISLAMIC ORGANISATION
REPRESENTING
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**45 Years of Community
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11 January 2009

AFIC Executive Committee Urges Asylum for Uyghurs

The President and the Executive Committee of the Australian Federation of Islamic Councils (AFIC), in their meeting today had called upon the Australian Government to grant Asylum to refugees from Uyghurs detained in Guantanamo Bay military prison.

The Uyghurs, who are Muslim, oppose Chinese occupation of their homeland in the western Chinese province of Xingiang. In recent years, China has used antiterrorism efforts as an excuse to repress and persecute Uyghurs. Many Uyghurs seek independence from China, but human rights groups note that most Uyghur groups do not advocate violence and have been cleared as a national threat to the US and its allies and are not terrorists.

They further added that it is Australia's moral and humanitarian obligation to help people who have already suffered physically and psychologically in Guantanamo Bay. If fighting terrorism is global issue than helping the victims of this war is a global issue and the whole of humanity should find some solution to it.

China is guilty of numerous human rights violations and even though a signatory to the UN Refugee Convention it violates the Convention and endangers the lives of people who seek refuge. Therefore repatriating them to China and not granting them asylum in Australia is to endanger their lives which are against the moral stance which Australia is famous for.

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