



## COVERSHEET

<b>Minister</b>	Hon Kris Faafoi	<b>Portfolio</b>	Minister of Immigration
<b>Title of Cabinet paper</b>	Government Response to the Petition of Sam Vincent – Let's Show Compassion to the Uyghur Community	<b>Date to be published</b>	17 January 2022

### List of documents that have been proactively released

<b>Date</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Author</b>
November 2021	Government Response to Referral of Sam Vincent's Petition: Let's show compassion to the Uyghur community	Office of the Minister of Immigration
11 November 2021	Government Response to the Petition of Sam Vincent – Let's Show Compassion to the Uyghur Community LEG-21-MIN-0185	Cabinet Office

### Information redacted

**NO**

Any information redacted in this document is redacted in accordance with MBIE's policy on Proactive Release and is labelled with the reason for redaction. This may include information that would be redacted if this information was requested under Official Information Act 1982. Where this is the case, the reasons for withholding information are listed below. Where information has been withheld, no public interest has been identified that would outweigh the reasons for withholding it.



# Cabinet Legislation Committee

## Minute of Decision

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### Government Response to the Petition of Sam Vincent - Let's Show Compassion to the Uyghur Community

**Portfolio**                      **Immigration**

On 11 November 2021, the Cabinet Legislation Committee:

- 1        **noted** that on 8 April 2021, the Petitions Committee referred the petition entitled Let's Show Compassion to the Uyghur Community to the government for a response;
- 2        **noted** the submission of the Minister of Immigration, and in particular his advice about New Zealand's commitment to provide protection to refugees who need international protection through our Refugee Quota Programme;
- 3        **approved** the government response, attached to this submission under LEG-21-SUB-0185, to the Petition of Sam Vincent: Let's Show Compassion to the Uyghur Community;
- 4        **invited** the Minister of Immigration to present the government response to the House in accordance with Standing Order 380;
- 5        **invited** the Minister of Immigration to write to the petitioner enclosing a copy of the government response, after the response has been presented to the House.

Rebecca Davies  
Committee Secretary

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**Present:**

Hon Michael Wood (Chair)  
Hon Andrew Little  
Hon David Parker  
Hon Poto Williams  
Hon Kris Faafoi  
Hon Michael Wood (Deputy Chair)  
Hon Kiri Allan  
Hon Dr David Clark  
Keiran McAnulty, MP (Senior Government Whip)

**Officials present from:**

Office of the Prime Minister  
Officials Committee for LEG

**Government Response to Referral of Sam Vincent's Petition:  
Let's show compassion to the Uyghur community**

**Presented to the House of Representatives**

**In accordance with Standing Order 380**

## Introduction

- 1 The Government has carefully considered the Petitions Committee's referral of the petition entitled *Let's show compassion to the Uyghur community*. The petition requests that:
  - “the House of Representatives recommend to the Government that it create a pathway for Uyghur refugees to resettle in New Zealand through the Refugee Quota programme so that they can build their future without fear of being persecuted; and
  - note that 1,158 people have signed an online petition calling for this.”
- 2 In addition, the written submission sought:
  - “a formal response to the request made in the open letter. We would appreciate a thorough explanation in the response if the refugee pathway for some reason is deemed inappropriate for us to utilise. We would appreciate the Minister to consider:
    - The process used in the Syria and Rohingya situations as exemplars of how we have responded in urgent crisis situations previously;
    - Family reunification for those Uyghurs who already reside here, as existing familial connections can support the resettlement process and make it easier to provide the necessary socio-economic support. This would allow the intake of Uyghur refugees to have less of an impact on the scarce resources we have in the system”.
  - “an official response on the claims made in *Deleted* around our government's involvement with companies who are supporting human rights abuses in Xinjiang”.
- 3 The government welcomes the Committee's referral of this petition and we thank the petitioners for bringing this matter to the government's attention.
- 4 The government responds to the referral of this petition in accordance with Standing Order 380.
- 5 The government has considered the petition as it pertains to New Zealand's existing refugee policy settings.

## Requests and government response

- 6 *Request 1:* That the New Zealand Government create a pathway for Uyghur refugees to resettle in New Zealand through the Refugee Quota Programme so that they can build their future without fear of being persecuted.
- 7 *Response:* New Zealand is committed to working with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the international community

to find durable protection solutions for refugees who need that protection. Our Refugee Quota Programme reflects that commitment to providing protection to the most vulnerable refugees with priority protection needs that require resettlement in a safe third country.

- 8 The Government makes decisions on the Refugee Quota Programme every three years – this includes decisions on the size, priorities (including sub-categories) and the percentage of places for each of the international regions refugees are resettled from.
- 9 In working with the UNHCR and the international community, the UNHCR determines whether resettlement is the best option for a refugee and whether their case is referred to a safe third country, like New Zealand.
- 10 The UNHCR refers refugees to New Zealand to consider for resettlement according to New Zealand’s agreed resettlement plan and internationally accepted guidelines, which take into account refugees’ physical and legal protection needs, as well as family reunification.
- 11 Should the UNHCR refer Uyghur refugee cases to New Zealand through our Refugee Quota Programme, then those cases would be considered for resettlement following New Zealand’s Refugee Quota selection criteria and assessment processes.
- 12 *Request 2:* note that 1,158 people have signed an online petition calling for this.
- 13 *Response:* the government acknowledges that this submission is made jointly by Khadija Leadership Network and Uyghur Solidarity Aotearoa New Zealand and supported by numerous community groups and organisations across the country.
- 14 *Request 3:* an official response on the claims made in *Deleted* around our government’s involvement with companies who are supporting human rights abuses in Xinjiang.
- 15 *Response:* New Zealand Growth Capital Partners (NZGCP, formerly known as New Zealand Venture Investment Fund), which was referred to in the *Deleted* documentary, has reviewed its investment policy and investment decisions regarding two technology companies with shareholding links to the Chinese company referred to in the documentary. Neither of the two New Zealand companies, nor NZGCP, has supported human rights abuses in Xinjiang.
- 16 Following that review, NZGCP released and published an updated Responsible Investment Policy, where it has undertaken to monitor and consider any geopolitical or other factors which may impact its investing as well as investments which could impact adversely on New Zealand’s international reputation. Subsequent to the publication of the updated policy, one of the New Zealand companies has been acquired by a United States of

America-based company, and the identified Chinese company shareholding no longer exists.

- 17 Icehouse Ventures, which receives government funding via Callaghan Innovation, has ended its partnership with the Chinese company after its board completed an investigation of the relationship.

## **Conclusion**

- 18 New Zealand has a long-standing commitment to working with the international community and UNHCR to find durable protection solutions for refugees in need of that protection.
- 19 The UNHCR refers refugees to New Zealand to consider for resettlement according to New Zealand's agreed resettlement plan and internationally accepted guidelines, which take into account physical and legal protection needs, as well as family reunification.