

FECCA calls for compassionate grounds to be considered in case of Tamil family's visa bid

The Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia (FECCA) has called on Immigration Minister David Coleman to consider whether there are grounds to personally intervene and stop the deportation of a Tamil couple and their two Australian-born children to Sri Lanka.

Priya and Nadesalingam fled Sri Lanka's civil war in 2012 and 2013 respectively, eventually securing a temporary bridging visa and settling in the Queensland town of Biloela.

Since then they have had two children in Australia and were fully integrated into the Biloela community until they were transferred to a Melbourne detention centre when their bridging visa expired in March 2018. Now, the family is being held in Darwin awaiting the outcome of a last-minute court hearing relating to their case.

The family believe they would face persecution in Sri Lanka, and hold grave concerns for the safety of their young children if they are deported.

FECCA Chairperson Ms Mary Patetsos has asked the Minister to consider whether this case in particular warrants intervention on compassionate grounds.

"This is a family that fled civil war and persecution and have made Australia their home.

"They have been welcomed with open arms by their regional Queensland community and are productive, active members of that community.

"Australia is the only home this family's two daughters know, and if they are deported along with their parents, they may be put in danger.

"As Australians we ask that Minister Coleman fully consider the option to exercise discretion in this case and whether it warrants intervention on compassionate grounds."

FECCA is the peak, national body representing Australians from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds. FECCA's role is to advocate and promote issues on behalf of its constituency to government, business and the broader community.

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