



**DEPARTMENT OF
FOREIGN
AFFAIRS**

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AUSTRALIA CONTRIBUTES TO REPATRIATION OF BENGALI
AND PAKISTANI REFUGEES

The Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Whitlam, today announced that Australia would contribute \$U.S.500,000 to an international appeal by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. The funds will be used to repatriate Bengalis in Pakistan to Bangladesh, and a number of people in Bangladesh who are Pakistani citizens and have expressed a wish to go to Pakistan.

Mr Whitlam said the UNHCR was co-ordinating an international effort to assist with the simultaneous repatriation of over one-quarter of a million people, principally by airlift.

Mr Whitlam said Australia's contribution, one of the first to be announced, reaffirmed Australia's support for the New Delhi Agreement to resolve outstanding humanitarian issues between India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. It was hoped the Agreement would pave the way for normalisation of the situation in the sub-continent and an improvement in relations between the countries concerned.