

Australia will accept more Syria refugees: Tony Abbott

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Canberra: Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott on Sunday announced that he is prepared to accept more refugees from war-torn Syria, but within the current humanitarian intake.

Abbott has been urged to increase Australia's refugee intake after photos of drowned three-year-old Syrian toddler, Aylan Kurdi, on a Turkish beach shocked the world and put a human face to the dangers refugees risk trying to reach safety, ABC reported.

The premier said he was moved by Aylan's images and was prepared to lift the percentage of refugees Australia takes from Syria.

But he said the increase will not mean Australia's overall yearly intake of refugees, which stands at 13,750, will go up.

"No, we are proposing to take more people from this region as part of our very substantial commitment," he said.

"Our focus will be on families and women and children, especially of persecuted minorities, who have sought refuge in camps neighbouring Syria and Iraq."

In the last financial year, Australia settled more than 4,400 people from Syria and Iraq, Abbott said, adding that the overall refugee intake will increase to 18,750 by 2018.

- IANS