

Labor urged to ban returning ISIS brides through temporary exclusion order as Albanese defends government ‘obligations’

www.skynews.com.au/australia-news/politics/anthony-albanese-stands-by-obligations-to-isis-brides-attempting-to-return-to-australia-as-governments-involvement-questioned/news-story/071f4f6ee5283635a933cd477a899c45

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The government is facing calls to block the return of ISIS brides using temporary exclusion orders, after Prime Minister Anthony Albanese stood by “obligations” to the cohort.

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The federal opposition has called on the Albanese government to prevent ISIS brides from re-entering Australia after the Prime Minister stood by “obligations” to citizens.

A [large group of Islamic State brides](#) and their children has been trying to turn to Australia from Syria – but they were turned back before they reached the embassy.

It's understood their plans for repatriation were not cancelled but postponed, after reports the [women and children were given passports by the government](#).

In response, Liberal Senator Jonno Duniam urged the government to “commit 100 per cent” to doing everything it can to prevent the ISIS brides’ return.

“One avenue available to the government to stop these people from returning to Australia is a Temporary Exclusion Order,” Mr Duniam said on Tuesday.

The legal order allows the Home Affairs Minister to ban citizens from re-entering the country for up to two years if they pose a national security risk.

“The ISIS Brides cohort are a group who have followed or have been forced to relocate to Syria alongside their ISIS fighter husbands,” Mr Duniam said.

“These are people who have been part of a group that want to attack our way of life and are a very serious risk to our society.

“The opposition has consistently advocated the urgent ending of Labor’s policy of self-managed returns for ISIS brides.”



Prime Minister Anthony Albanese has said the government has “obligations” to ISIS brides who have been attempting to return to Australia.

The Albanese government, however, has stood by its “obligations” under Australian law while insisting it will not actively repatriate the cohort.

“We have a very firm view that we won’t be providing assistance or repatriation. Australian law applies and there are obligations,” Mr Albanese told the ABC.

“We want to make it clear, as we have to the people involved, if there are any breaches of the law, they will face the full force of the Australian law.”

Multiple countries, including the United Kingdom, have stripped ISIS-linked women of their citizenship to prevent their return, but Australia has not taken this step.

Several ISIS brides have returned from Australia in recent years, although only one individual has been charged with an offence.

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Nationals Senator Matt Canavan accused the Albanese government on Tuesday of being “inconsistent and at times deceptive” about the ISIS brides.

“If the government is not involved in this then the ISIS brides should not come back,” Mr Canavan told Sky News.

“But of course, we have seen that the government has been a little bit more involved than it’s let on.”

“I think it’s about time the Labor Party comes clean with the Australian people about exactly what they’re involved in.”

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The Albanese government has repeatedly claimed it has had no involvement with the return of the ISIS brides cohort.

There were however revelations in 2025 that Home Affairs Minister Tony Burke met with Save the Children, which has advocated for the return of children stranded in Syria.

Liberal MP Tim Wilson told Sky News the Albanese government “clearly” does not do what it says.

He accused Mr Burke of “being tricky” over the previous return of two ISIS brides and four children in 2025.

“If you’re involved in going to a declared area, connecting with terrorist organisations... then I don’t really see what place you have in this country,” Mr Wilson said.

He did not explicitly say what the government should do to stop their return, and admitted he did not know the specific processes.

NEW: 34 Australian women and children have left Roj camp in north eastern Syria and are currently travelling in convoy to Damascus. They plan to return to Australia from there pic.twitter.com/I9luCpkawE

— Heidi Pett (@heidipett) [February 16, 2026](#)

Video footage revealed on Tuesday showed three Australian men organising women and children into three vans in Syria.

Guards wearing the insignia of Kurdish forces were seen facilitating the departure, confirmed it was carried out in agreement with local authorities.

The government denied responsibility for the cohort's return, saying it was not and will not repatriate people from Syria.

"Our security agencies have been monitoring and continue to monitor the situation in Syria to ensure they are prepared for any Australians seeking to return," it said.

It comes after [two ISIS brides and four children](#) returned to Australia on September 26, with no public charges being laid against the cohort.

The latest returns follow a previously repatriated bride, [Mariam Raad](#), who in June 2025 was discharged conditionally and received no conviction.

The AFP told Sky News that only one individual has been charged since 2019 with travelling to a declared zone. There has been at least six returned ISIS brides.

Sky News recently contacted the office of Attorney General Michelle Rowland to ask if she was satisfied with existing laws after a "no conviction" ruling.

"Sentencing of an offender for a Commonwealth criminal offence is ultimately a matter for the court," a spokesperson from the Attorney-General's Department said.

"The court imposes a sentence or makes an order that is of a severity appropriate in all the circumstances of the offence.

"The declared areas provisions in the Criminal Code Act 1995 (Cth) are an important part of the Australian government's efforts to stop the flow of foreign fighters."

Agencies said they were tracking any returned women and children, and the Australian Federal Police told Senate Estimates that "appropriate investigations" had begun.

Under the [Criminal Code, it is an offence to intentionally enter or remain in a declared area](#) of a foreign country where a terrorist organisation is engaging in hostile activity.

The Al-Raqqa province in Syria — where many foreign fighters joined the Islamic State — was formerly listed as a declared area between December 2014 and November 2017.