

# After the Christchurch mosque attacks: In pain and a life on hold

Conan Young / RNZ08:11, Sep 13 2019

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Ahmed Jahangir, who was injured at the Linwood mosque, has been living with constant burning pain that can only be managed with a cocktail of powerful painkillers.

For the past six months, Ahmed Jahangir, [who was injured at the Linwood mosque](#), has been living with constant burning pain in his right hand that can only be managed with a cocktail of powerful painkillers.

A single bullet has caused damaged to chest wall, shattered his collar bone and shredded nerves.

Like many of the victims, Ahmed has a young family to support and is facing having a lifelong disability.



IAIN MCGREGOR/STUFF

Ahmed Jahangir is being helped through by his brother who has moved here with his family from overseas.

He is being helped through by his brother who has moved here with his family from overseas. Ahmed's brother is here on a temporary visitor's visa and [was](#)

[recently declined permanent residency](#). He's now applying directly to the Immigration Minister, Iain Lees-Galloway.

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Like many of the victims, Ahmed has a young family to support and is facing having a lifelong disability.

He is one of dozens who are now scrambling to get their cases in front of the minister, who has the power to make a final call on whether or not they can stay.

However, [papers released to RNZ's \*Insight\* programme](#) under the Official Information Act, in the run up to this weekend's six month anniversary of the mosque attacks, reveal it didn't have to be this way.

They show Lees-Galloway was keen to ease the way for the 25 widows left without husbands and having to rebuild lives on their own.

Having lost the family's main bread winner, many of these women are taking on that role themselves, learning to drive and pay the bills for the first time and, in some cases, going out to work.



REBEKAH PARSONS-KING/RNZ

"There's no visa category in the immigration system that catches everybody," says Iain Lees-Galloway.

The Cabinet papers show that just two weeks after the shootings, the minister was of a mind to make their lives just a little bit easier, with the help of a special visa.

The "Christchurch Family Support visa" would have allowed the widows to nominate one family member of their choice, currently living overseas, who would have been eligible to apply for permanent residency.

The aim, to provide "certainty" and "to stabilise family units already living in New Zealand."

Part of the rationale for the scuppered Family Support visa was to capture those not helped by the Christchurch Response visa that opens up permanent residency to victims and their family members, but only if they were already living in New Zealand at the time of the attacks.

The proposed new visa was taken to Cabinet but failed to get the necessary backing.

Lees-Galloway insists the outcome is the best possible result for the widows, who are now having to wait for him to decide their fate.

"There's no visa category in the immigration system that catches everybody. That's exactly the reason why we've had ministerial discretion for a very long

time across the whole system. So we knew that whatever we did, we would not capture everybody's individual circumstance," he says.



IAIN MCGREGOR/STUFF

Jahangir when he was in hospital, with Linwood mosque Imam Alabi Lateef Zirullah (right).

The advice sought by the minister outlines how a Family Support visa would demonstrate the Government's commitment to a "humanitarian response."

Even though the visa was not brought in, the minister says the government has supported victims through the fast tracking of temporary visitor visas for the families of victims and free immigration advice as they prepare their visa applications.

"The feedback that I have had from people in Christchurch is that they feel the government has responded appropriately, we've responded with compassion and kindness and have been spectacularly led by Jacinda Ardern through all of this. And they know that the Government is there for them to continue that support. It's not over."

Lees-Galloway is committed to working as quickly as possible to consider all of the permanent residency applications he anticipates will be coming across his desk from mosque victims and their families in the coming weeks.

He has so far considered two, but declined to say whether or not they had been granted.



TE REO  
IRIRANGI  
O AOTEAROA