

Press Statement: 1st December 2015

“New refugee protection legislation to be enacted before end of year”

The new International Protection Bill will see a number of changes to the refugee protection system in Ireland, but fails to address the key concerns raised by Doras Luimní and other advocates working in the sector. The Bill will be before the Seanad today, Tuesday 1st December, and is planned to be enacted quickly before the end of the year.

Leonie Kerins, Doras Luimní Director, said “After many years of campaigning for new protection legislation, Doras Luimní welcome elements of the proposed Bill, in particular the introduction a single application procedure. However, we remain deeply concerned that the legislation does not address many of the concerns raised over Ireland’s treatment of asylum seekers, and may in some instances limit the rights of people seeking protection.”

Fiona McCaul, Legal Officer at Doras Luimní said “Doras Luimní is extremely concerned with the speed at which the Bill is being progressed through the varying stages of the political process. We see this as a deliberate attempt to prevent proper debate on the more alarming areas of the legislation such as the restriction to the right to family reunification, the failure to properly promote the rights of the child throughout the process as well as the non-implementation of key rights such as the right to work for those within the protection process.”

Several NGOs working in the sector, including Doras Luimní, previously made submissions to the Government outlining key concerns relating to provisions of the. Regrettably, these issues have not been addressed and the power now lies with political representatives to advocate for a stronger refugee protection framework over the coming weeks before the Dáil closes on 21st December.

Fiona McCaul, Legal Officer at Doras Luimní added “The new refugee protection Bill is a huge opportunity to address the failures of the current system and to bring Ireland in line with international practice and the Common European Asylum System in particular. Given the scale and impact of the ongoing refugee crisis, the need for robust and well-considered legislation has never been greater. We believe that the unwillingness by the State to introduce a clear set of minimum standards for protection applications in Ireland, ensuring a fair and humane protection and reception system, is failing to protect the equality and the human rights of asylum seekers.”

The Government has also disregarded the report of the Government’s Working Group on the Protection Process, which issued over 170 recommendations in June of this year. Key recommendations arising from the report included the right to employment for asylum seekers in the system for over 9 months, vulnerability assessments, specialised supports, and for Ireland to put reception conditions on a statutory footing - none of which have been reflected in this legislation.

Doras Luimní call on political representatives in Limerick and nationwide to help ensure stronger protection and fairer treatment of asylum seekers and refugees in Ireland by advocating for amendments to this legislation over the coming weeks, including stronger protection of the right to family reunification; employment; the right to appeal; statelessness and respecting the principle of best interest of the child.

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Editor's Notes:

- Doras Luimní is an independent, non-profit, non-governmental organisation based in Limerick which promotes the human rights of migrants through personal advocacy, integration development and collaborative advocacy campaigns.
- Doras Luimní advocates for a stronger international protection system in Ireland that upholds basic human rights principles in line with international and EU standards.
- The International Protection Bill is available to view here: [IP Bill](#)
- The single protection procedure, welcomed by Doras Luimní, will streamline the application process and may significantly reduce the length of time applicants await decisions on their protection claims.
- The report of the Working Group on the Protection Process was published in June 2015 and outlines 170 recommendations for reform of the protection and Direct Provision system. The report is available here: [Working Group report](#)
- EU standards and a legal framework for reception conditions for international protection applicants, including provisions relating to the right to employment, are contained in the EU recast Reception Conditions Directive, available here: EU [Reception Conditions Directive 2013/33/EU](#)
- The vast majority of EU member states have opted-in to this Directive. Only Ireland, United Kingdom and Denmark are not bound by these provisions.

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