



**Press release: 7<sup>th</sup> October 2014**

**Minister for Finance, Michael Noonan T.D., called for closure of Mount Trenchard Direct Provision centre in 2005**

New inspection report published for Mount Trenchard Direct provision centre does not reflect concerns of residents.

Minister for Finance, Michael Noonan T.D., raised concerns about the unsuitability of Mount Trenchard as an accommodation centre for asylum seekers as far back as 2005. As a resident of Foynes, with an address in Mount Trenchard, Noonan asked the then Minister for Justice, Michael McDowell T.D., if he was “satisfied” that it was suitable accommodation, given its isolated location, among other issues. Almost 10 years later, the facility continues to accommodate asylum seekers despite increasing pressure on the Government to discontinue its use.

The most recent inspection of Mount Trenchard Direct Provision centre was carried out in March 2014, the details of which have been published by the Department of Justice this week. Inspections were carried out by RIA, the unit within the Department of Justice responsible for the accommodation of asylum seekers, and fail to reflect the issues continuously raised by residents.

Karen McHugh, CEO Doras Luimní, said “Concerns about the unsuitability of Mount Trenchard Direct Provision centre have been raised since it first opened in 2005, including key issues such as its isolated location; sub-standard food, and shared bedrooms for up to 8 adult males from different cultural backgrounds. These issues were most notably raised throughout the protests by residents in August of this year. However, the inspections carried out by RIA fail to assess any of these concerns.”

McHugh added “Residents are not even asked their views during the course of inspections. We reiterate our call for an independent complaints mechanism to be established and for Direct Provision centres to be immediately brought under the remit of HIQA so that psycho-social factors are also considered in-line with inspections of residential institutions such as private nursing homes.”

Doras Luimní is coordinating a local group of interested individuals and organisations, Limerick Against Direct Provision (LADP), who are progressing the campaign to close Mount Trenchard and end the system of Direct Provision throughout the country. LADP are calling on the Government to establish a new system that respects human rights and meets Ireland’s international obligations with regard to the treatment of asylum seekers. The group propose that self-catering reception facilities should be offered during the initial 6 months, with specialised services for persons identified as having special needs. The group also advocate that asylum seekers should be permitted to work and live independently after 6 months of applying for asylum in Ireland.

Ireland is one of three countries in the EU who has not signed up to the EU Directive on Reception Conditions, which outlines common standards on the living conditions of asylum seekers across Europe.

## **Notes**

- Doras Luimní is an NGO based in Limerick which has worked to support the rights of asylum seekers since the introduction of the direct provision system 14 years ago. During this time, Doras Luimní has witnessed the detrimental impact of this system on men, women and children's lives.
- Mount Trenchard Direct Provision centre is located 5 km from Foynes village and has been described by many as the worst of the 34 centres nationwide. Three residents were removed from Mount Trenchard by the armed Garda response unit for acting as spokespersons during a peaceful protest held on Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> August.
- Michael Noonan, T.D., Minister for Finance, asked the Minister for Justice, Michael McDowell, about the suitability of Mount Trenchard as an asylum seeker accommodation centre in [May 2005](#).
- Mount Trenchard accommodated families, single females and single males until February 2006 when it was closed for the period of one year. The centre re-opened in 2007 to accommodate single males only.
- There are a total of 4 Direct Provision centres in the Limerick region accommodate close to 400 asylum seekers including approximately 50 children.
- Limerick Against Direct Provision (LADP) group is coordinated by Doras Luimní and comprises individuals and organisations from Limerick who support the call to close Mount Trenchard and end Direct Provision.
- Limerick Football Club has publicly supported the call for an end to Direct Provision, as part of the Limerick Against Direct Provision (LADP) campaign.

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