



## **Media Statement: 15 Dec 2014**

### **Will this be the final Christmas in Direct Provision?**

As the Oireachtas winds down for the holiday period, the IRC and Doras Luimní ask TDs and Senators to reflect on those spending Christmas in Direct Provision centres across the country. For some it will be their first, for others this will mark their 10<sup>th</sup> Christmas in the Direct Provision system. Both organisations are asking for people in the asylum backlog to have their cases resolved in a one-off scheme that will draw a line under a system that has left people languishing for years.

It is widely acknowledged that the international protection system in Ireland, unique in the EU, has led to severe delays in the processing of applications and appeals for refugee status, subsidiary protection and leave to remain. With the introduction of a Single Procedure to rectify this, what of the people let down by the current asylum system?

Karen McHugh, CEO of Doras Luimní said, "This proposed one off scheme sets out the different categories that people fall under, and how and why each of them should be included in a scheme to grant them some form of status in Ireland as soon as possible."

McHugh went on to say, "Whilst preparations are made to bring in a new protection system to try to avoid delays occurring again, with the harm that is caused by being forced to live in idleness and dependent upon the state, people in the system now need to know that the end of this prolonged nightmare is in sight. That can only be done by those still in the system being given decisions that allow them to remain in Ireland and to get on with their lives."

Sue Conlan, CEO of the Irish Refugee Council said, "To do anything else would be a denial of the damage that has been caused to them and would put the blame on them for a system they did not create. It is time to face up to the reality that we have to draw a line under the old system before bringing in the new."

**END**

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## Notes to the editor

Sue Conlan, CEO of the Irish Refugee Council and Karen McHugh, CEO of Doras Luimní are both available for interview.

**Link to the full proposal:** <http://bit.ly/1uH4W9S>

**Shortened informational flyer:** <http://bit.ly/1uE0YOi>

**Doras Luimní** was founded in 2000 in response to the establishment of the 'Direct Provision' system by the Irish government, which dispersed asylum seekers to accommodation centres around the country. Originally the organisation was established as a Development Organisation for Refugees and Asylum Seekers. However, Doras now provide services open to all migrants living in the Limerick area.

Doras's vision for Ireland is a society where equality and respect for the human rights of migrants are social norms. Doras Luimní aims to promote and uphold the human rights and wellbeing of migrants through personal advocacy, integration development and collaborative advocacy campaigns at the local and national level. We work to change the lives of migrants, change legislation and change society.

The **Irish Refugee Council (IRC)** is Ireland's only national non-governmental organisation which specialises in working with and for refugees in Ireland. For almost 20 years, the IRC have observed the changes that have been made in response to the arrival of refugees in Ireland. Based on extensive experience working directly with those affected, we have seen the huge financial cost of a failed system and the untold damage that has and is being done to men, women and children in the asylum process.

The IRC's priorities are delivering high quality legal support to asylum seekers; supporting and protecting children and young people in the immigration system; public awareness; and capacity building among key players in the asylum system in order to bring about change to practice and policy. The IRC is committed to promoting an asylum system that will be beneficial for refugees, the decision-maker, and the tax payer.