

**Press statement: 18<sup>th</sup> August 2015**

**Introduction of new measures to prevent ‘marriages of convenience’**

Doras Luimní cautiously welcome the new measures announced today to prevent so-called ‘marriages of convenience’, which extend the powers of marriage Registrars with immediate effect. Trafficking for forced marriage is a serious human rights concern in Ireland and we hope that these powers will be used to prevent victimisation of vulnerable migrants.

Leonie Kerins, Doras Luimní, said “The Government however must be mindful of couples that genuinely wish to start a family in Ireland. The practical application of these new powers granted to Registrars must be proportionate and clearly defined so as to ensure that interventions are not based on unconfirmed suspicion.”

Patricia Stapleton, Doras Luimní, added “While we welcome some form of regulation of the system, we would urge the authorities to put in place real and practical supports for those they suspect may be victims of trafficking. In our experience women who have been trafficked for forced or so-called ‘sham marriages’ are not given the benefit of the doubt by the investigating authorities and are left largely unsupported”.

Ms Stapleton continued “Despite the indicators of coercion and exploitation of vulnerable migrants, trafficking for forced marriage does not come under the remit of human trafficking legislation in Ireland. Consequently these cases are not properly investigated. While it is important to deter abuse of the system, greater protections are needed for vulnerable migrants abused in the process.”

**ENDS**

**Notes**

- Doras Luimní is an independent, non-profit, non-governmental organisation based in Limerick. Our mission is 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.
- The Department of Justice made the announcement on 18<sup>th</sup> august 2015, and is available here: <http://www.justice.ie/en/JELR/Pages/PR15000443>
- We have a dedicated Anti-Trafficking Office which participates in local and national campaigns against forced prostitution and sex trafficking. We provide a local street outreach programme in partnership with the Goshh, for women affected by prostitution in Limerick city.

- For more information about our anti-trafficking work, including training and resources, see our website ([www.dorasluimni.org](http://www.dorasluimni.org)) or contact the Doras Luimní Anti-Trafficking Officer at the contact details below.

**Contact Information:**

Aideen Roche, Communications Officer, Doras Luimní, Central Buildings, 51a, O'Connell Street, Limerick. **Telephone:** 061 310 328 **Email:** [a.roche@dorasluimni.org](mailto:a.roche@dorasluimni.org)

Patricia Stapleton, Anti-Trafficking Officer, Doras Luimní, Central Buildings, 51a, O'Connell Street, Limerick. **Telephone:** 061 310 328 **Email:** [p.stapleton@dorasluimni.org](mailto:p.stapleton@dorasluimni.org)