



**Press statement: 20<sup>th</sup> March 2015**

**“Limerick Council motion calls for closure of Mount Trenchard Direct Provision centre”**

Limerick City and County Council will consider a motion on 23<sup>rd</sup> March calling for the immediate closure of Mount Trenchard and a commitment to end Direct Provision by end of 2015.

Doras Luimni, Limerick-based human rights and migrant support organisation, publicly called for the closure of the controversial Mount Trenchard Direct Provision centre in Foynes, Co. Limerick, following the peaceful protest which was held by residents in August 2014. The call was quickly supported by the Irish Refugee Council and SPIRASI, a specialist organisation working with victims of torture, many of whom have lived in this centre.

The organisation has been barred from entry since September 2014.

Karen McHugh, CEO Doras Luimni said “We are no longer permitted to visit; hold outreach or legal information sessions at Mount Trenchard, despite our best efforts to resolve issues with management. Residents are now further isolated and have no access to advice or guidance on matters relating to their cases. We have repeatedly requested reasons for our exclusion and have taken the matter to the attention of the Minister for Justice, Frances Fitzgerald TD, who has also not directly responded.”

Concerns about the use of Mount Trenchard as a ‘punishment centre’ have been raised by NGOs working with asylum seekers for many years, while key figures such as Michael Noonan and retired high court Judge, Ms Justice Harding Clark, have also voiced their concerns. Ms Justice Harding Clark sought an inquiry into Mount Trenchard in 2011, which was refused by the then Minister for Justice, Alan Shatter, on grounds of separation of powers.

McHugh added “We remain deeply concerned about the well-being of residents in Mount Trenchard, many of whom require specialised care and support services. Private contractors and management have such power and responsibility over the well-being of residents. We have been raising our concerns with Mount Trenchard for almost a decade and despite our repeated calls for attention to the matter, no State-body has been tasked with investigating the centre.”

Local authorities around the country, including Meath, Louth and Monaghan, have recently passed motions calling for an end to Direct Provision, in line with increased public support and awareness of the issue. If successful, Limerick City and County Council will be the first local authority to call on the Minister to close an individual centre within its jurisdiction.

**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.
- 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. It has also been alleged that is used as a 'punishment centre'.
- 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](#).
- Former high court judge, Ms Justice Harding Clark, sought an inquiry in to Mount Trenchard in 2011 due to her concerns over it being used as a 'centre of last resort' ([Irish Times article](#)).

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