

Joint Press statement: Doras Luimní & End Direct Provision Limerick, 24th March 2015

“Unanimous agreement on Limerick Council motion calling for closure of Mount Trenchard and an end to Direct Provision”

Limerick City and County Council unanimously agreed to support a motion proposed by Cllr Prendiville, calling for the immediate closure of Mount Trenchard and a commitment to end Direct Provision by end of 2015.

A former resident of Mount Trenchard and member of the End Direct Provision Limerick group said “We are very grateful to Cllr Prendiville and to the Council for supporting this call. Hopefully the nightmare of Mount Trenchard will soon come to an end. I was there for eight months and the experience damaged me as a person. I have been scarred and I will carry these scars with me for the rest of my life.”

Doras Luimní 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. Doras Luimní has been barred from entry to Mount Trenchard since September 2014 and despite repeated requests, the organisation has yet to receive any response outlining the reasons for same.

Karen McHugh, CEO Doras Luimní said “It is reassuring to know that we have unanimous support from the Council in our efforts to bring an end to the suffering of those trapped within the Direct Provision system. We have had incredible support from the general public and local media in Limerick, particularly since the controversial events in Mount Trenchard in August of last year and we must acknowledge their role in keeping these issues in the public domain and on the political agenda.”

End Direct Provision Limerick was established in response to the public support for the call to end Direct Provision and close Mount Trenchard. The group is comprised of residents of Direct Provision centres, activists, academics and individuals with an interest in the issue.

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.”

The work carried out by Doras Luimní and End Direct Provision Limerick has coincided with that of the Working Group on Direct Provision and Protection Processes, which was

established by Junior Minister O’Riordain and is tasked with reviewing the system of accommodating asylum seekers.

The motion passed by Limerick City and County Council calls on the Minister for Justice to make a commitment to end Direct Provision by the end of 2015 and is intended to encourage the Working Group to finalise and implement ambitions recommendations in a timely manner.

The Working Group on Direct Provision was initially due to produce a report for the Minister’s attention by September 2014, which has now been delayed until early April 2015. The 15th anniversary of the Direct Provision system will be marked on 10th April 2015.

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.
- [End Direct Provision Limerick](#) was established in September 2014, following a public meeting held in Limerick city to discuss the events in Mount Trenchard and to progress a local campaign to end Direct Provision.
- Cllr Cian Prendiville proposed the motion, which was discussed on 23rd March at Limerick County Hall at a meeting of the full Council.
- 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 it 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 14th 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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