



Sex Offences Bill a historic opportunity to curb pimps, traffickers and thugs

“The time has come to remove a vicious, brutal and exploitative crime from our communities”

Press Statement: 25th September 2015

The measures targeting sex buyers in the new Sexual Offences Bill is an opportunity to remove a vicious, brutal and exploitative crime from our local communities, according to Limerick based NGO, Doras Luimní. Local campaigners say the publication of laws against buying sex is an historic opportunity to bring our laws into line with Northern Ireland and the growing international trend to target demand for prostitution and sex trafficking.

It is important now that all politicians unite and ensure that the laws become reality before Christmas, according to Doras Luimní.

“As one of the 73 organisations with 1.6 million members who make up the Turn Off the Red Light Campaign (TORL) we welcome the fact that the Justice Minister Frances Fitzgerald, TD has acted upon the overwhelming evidence that organised crime runs Irish prostitution. However, our greatest concern still is that the Bill lacks to include protection for the most vulnerable in prostitution and to fully decriminalize the sex seller. The voices never heard in this debate are the victims of human trafficking, women and girls who cannot come forward and tell their stories for fear their abusers and pimps will identify or find them.

“In 2012 it was estimated that 4.5 million people globally were victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation.” Doras Luimní has supported women and men affected by prostitution and human trafficking since its inception. Service users include: women trafficked for sexual exploitation, women currently involved in or exiting from prostitution, male and female clients trafficked for forced labour, and women trafficked for forced marriage. Women and men affected by prostitution and human trafficking face multiple barriers to rights and entitlements, particularly if they are from migrant backgrounds. Their situations are extremely complex”.

Sex buyer laws bring Ireland in line with with Northern Ireland, among other States. By introducing this legislation we are restoring an All-Island approach to combat trafficking. Similar laws are already a reality in Sweden, Norway, Canada and are expected to be in force in France in the New Year. They are also supported by the Council of Europe and the European Parliament. Ireland must keep up with this trend if we are to avoid our local communities being used as a safe haven for prostitution and related crimes.

Sex buyer laws have already been the subject of extensive debate and review for several years and have had the unanimous backing of the Oireachtas Justice Committee since June 2013. Together with other members of the Turn Off the Red Light Campaign we are asking politicians to take action and make sure the laws are in force for Christmas. We will be seeking commitments in this regard as the measures are debated through the Dáil and Seanad. Ireland’s moment has arrived and we are ready to play our part to ensure pimps and traffickers will no longer be able to lurk in the shadows of our communities.

ENDS

Editor's Notes:

- Doras Luimní is an independent, non-profit, non-governmental organisation based in Limerick which promotes the human rights of migrants through personal advocacy, integration development and collaborative advocacy campaigns. They have a dedicated Anti-Trafficking Office which participates in local and national campaigns against forced prostitution and sex trafficking.
- Doras Luimní is a core member of **Turn Off The Red Light (TORL)** campaign which is a campaign to end prostitution and sex trafficking in Ireland. The campaign is being run by an alliance of civil society organisations, unions, non-governmental organisations and individuals throughout Ireland. This campaign aims to raise public awareness about the issues of prostitution and sex trafficking and to lobby the Government to introduce legislation to end the exploitation of women, men and children in the sex industry. The TORL believe that the best way to combat sex trafficking and prostitution is to tackle the demand for paid sex by criminalising the purchase of sex.
- Doras Luimní 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) or contact the Doras Luimní Anti-Trafficking Officer at the contact details below.

Contact Information:

Aideen Roche, Communications Officer, Doras Luimní.

Telephone: 061 310 328 **Email:** a.roche@dorasluimni.org

Patricia Stapleton, Anti-Trafficking Officer, Doras Luimní.

Telephone: 061 310 328 **Email:** p.stapleton@dorasluimni.org