

Press statement: 27th March 2015

“Doras Luimni applaud the Irish Refugee Council resignation from Working Group on Direct Provision and Protection process”

Doras Luimni applaud the Irish Refugee Council’s decision to resign from participation in the Department of Justice’s Working Group on Direct Provision and the Protection Process, due to concerns that the best interests of asylum seekers are not being fully considered.

Karen McHugh, CEO Doras Luimni, said “We have had serious concerns about the legitimacy of the Working Group since its inception, and the Irish Refugee Council’s resignation confirms our initial reservations. For the past six months, the ongoing effort of the Working Group has been used as an excuse for the Government’s inaction and now it is apparent that the Working Group is not being given the power to input effectively.”

McHugh added “The Working Group’s lack of communication and failure to keep all stakeholders fully informed of developments has been a major concern. We have supported residents in Limerick to engage with the Working Group by way of consultations but residents are becoming increasingly disillusioned by the process as no effort is being made to keep them updated or engaged.”

The establishment of the Working Group on Direct Provision and the Protection Process in October 2014 was initially welcomed as a significant step forward, but persistent delays in producing and implementing recommendations have led to increased frustrations among asylum seekers. Last month, residents of Hanratty’s Direct Provision centre in Limerick city centre held a protest highlighting these concerns.

A resident of Hanratty’s commented “This institutionalised living has dehumanised us. Our hopes and expectations have been raised with the introduction of the Working Group. They were supposed to deliver a report in December 2014 but it was delayed until April. Then we read in the newspaper that it will not be ready until May. What are they doing all this time? And what will happen then? This is my life they are playing with. Many people are suffering here and now we are losing hope.”

He added “It shows they are just buying their time and not considering the lives of the people who are victims of a system we didn’t create. It’s time for the Government to do the right thing and clear the backlog of cases stuck in the asylum system.”

McHugh concluded “Asylum seekers in Limerick and across the country, supported by organisations such as Doras Luimni and the Irish Refugee Council, have repeatedly called for the need to end the current system known as Direct Provision and to urgently address and clear the backlog of asylum cases. To do anything less is a wasted opportunity and an insult to those who have been damaged by this system.”

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 Working Group was established in October 2014 to “report to Government on improvements to the protection process, including Direct Provision and supports for asylum seekers”. Doras Luimni is not a member of the Working Group.
- The proposal for a one-off scheme to clear the asylum backlog is an Irish Refugee Council and Doras Luimni initiative, details of which are available here: <http://dorasluimni.org/clear-the-asylum-backlog/>

Contact details

- **Karen McHugh**, CEO, Doras Luimní
Telephone: 061 310 328 Email: k.mchugh@dorasluimni.org
- **Aideen Roche**, Communications Officer, Doras Luimní.
Telephone: 061 310 328 Email: a.roche@dorasluimni.org