



Press statement - 21st September 2015

Limerick City Council pass motion on housing and refugee crisis

Limerick City Council passed a motion on Monday 21st September, calling on the Government to take urgent action on social housing shortages and calling on the local Council to work with local groups, such as Doras Luimní, to help provide support to people seeking refuge in Limerick. The motion was proposed by Cllr. Cian Prendiville.

Leonie Kerins, Director at Doras Luimní, said "Limerick City Council have shown leadership in passing this motion and sending a message to the Government that Limerick is ready and willing to support refugees. To date the Government's response to the crisis in terms of real action has been minimal and we urge local Councillors to take the lead in preparing to support the integration of people seeking protection in Limerick."

Kerins continued "There are currently over 450 people seeking refuge in Limerick, some of whom have survived the dangerous journey across the Mediterranean and through Europe. They are living in long-term institutional settings, socially excluded from community life in Limerick. We call on the local Council, local community organisations and the general public to extend their welcome and support to the asylum seekers and refugees who are already here and who have been isolated and hugely affected by the failed policy of Direct Provision."

Despite the increased awareness of the failures of Direct Provision and the Government's acknowledgment that the system is causing considerable damage to asylum seekers, no reforms have been implemented.

Kerins said "Doras Luimní are deeply concerned that the needs of current protection seekers in Ireland, many of whom have been living here for more than 5 years and some over a decade, are being swept aside. We must ensure that emergency measures taken by the Government to accommodate new applicants do not become long-term policies that do more harm than good."

"Without the necessary supports in place to enable effective resettlement and integration, we will face another shameful and avoidable tragedy such as the one we currently see with long-term residents of Direct Provision. The migrant Non Governmental Organisations sector is in real danger of extinction due to the lack of statutory funding to carry out this work. With 4,000 asylum seekers and refugees on the way to Ireland, the Government must start to recognise the damage that could be caused to both protection seekers and to local communities if the Government does not make the needed resources available. Ireland is fortunate to have avoided anti-immigrant party politics thus far but we fear this could change if integration policies and supports continue to be ignored."

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.
- Doras Luimní operates a drop-in centre on Monday; Tuesday and Friday mornings and afternoons at their office in Limerick City Centre. For more information, visit www.dorasluimni.org.
- [Irish Times article](#) (9th March 2015) claims 600 asylum seekers are currently unable to leave Direct Provision, despite having received status, due to housing issues.
- Recent [UNHCR report](#) claims Direct Provision system impacts negatively on refugee integration into Irish society.
- Vacant property statistics available here: <http://airo.maynoothuniversity.ie/external-content/table-45-permanent-housing-units-occupancy-status-location-and-statistic>

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