



Press statement: 28 October 2014

Attacks on Roma community in Waterford a sign of increasing hostility and racist attitudes

Local migrant rights organisation Doras Luimní has condemned the recent attacks on members of the Roma community in Waterford, describing the confrontation as an act of “racially-motivated intimidation against a vulnerable group.”

Karen McHugh, CEO Doras Luimní, said “The situation in Waterford has been escalating over the past number of weeks with hate speech being directed at the Roma community via social media. We can see an obvious correlation between this online hate speech and the subsequent incident that occurred on Saturday evening.”

McHugh added “There is an urgent need for the introduction of additional measures to combat the increase in online hate speech in Ireland, which can clearly lead to organised violence and intimidation. We encourage everyone to record and report all forms of racism, including online racist language to An Garda Síochána and on ireport.ie (an online racist reporting mechanism supported by the ENAR Ireland - European Network Against Racism). We would also encourage people to challenge the widespread misinformation about migrants and minority groups that is often perpetuated online.”

The Roma community are being stereotyped as organised criminals because of the alleged criminal activity of a small number of people. Such stereotypes can have a profoundly negative effect on migrant integration and can lead to hate crimes against vulnerable minority groups. Doras Luimní’s Anti-Rumours campaign aims to counter the negative perceptions about migrants and minority groups, such as the stereotypes that have been perpetuated about the Roma community. The campaign is a preventative measure against racism and hopes to improve migrant integration by encourage open dialogue based on factual information.

ENDS

Notes:

Doras Luimní is an NGO based in Limerick which works to promote and protect the rights of all migrants. Our core areas of work include Direct Support, Advocacy and Campaigns, and Integration Planning.

The Anti-Rumours campaign is a Council of Europe initiative that is being implemented across 10 European cities, including Limerick. See www.antirumours.net for further details.

ireport is an online racism reporting mechanism, supported by the European Network Against Racism in Ireland, of which Doras Luimni is a member.

Contact Information:

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