



Press Statement: 10th December 2015

“International Human Rights Day: Refugees and Migrants in need of Protection and Respect for Basic Human Rights”

Each year, the 10th December marks International Human Rights Day, the anniversary of the signing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: an opportunity to raise awareness of our rights and obligations under international law and to highlight the areas in which further advocacy work is desperately needed.

Throughout 2015 the basic human rights of refugees and migrants have been highlighted extensively but protection remains an enormous challenge. Doras Luimní remain deeply concerned that the realisation of basic human rights for migrants is still a long way off.

Leonie Kerins, Director of Doras Luimní, said “Throughout 2015 we have watched the largest refugee crisis since World War II unfold as millions of refugees attempt to seek refuge in Europe. While there have been some positive developments, such as Ireland’s commitment to resettle a much greater number of refugees relative to previous years, and a general increased awareness of refugee and migrant issues, Ireland still has a long way to go in realising the basic human rights of refugees and migrants.”

Kerins continued “In 2015, Doras Luimní has continued to work with and advocate on behalf of refugees and asylum seekers in Ireland, including support to Syrian refugee families who arrived in Ireland seeking protection earlier this year. While there has been progress and many successes in our work this year, such as a noticeable increase in positive decisions for long-term residents of Direct Provision, we remain deeply concerned that thousands of men, women and children continue to be denied their basic rights, many of whom will spend yet another Christmas in institutions throughout Limerick and Ireland.”

“Despite the increased awareness and the establishment of the Government’s Working Group to investigate and review the violations inherent within the protection and reception system in Ireland, regrettably there has been little change or action taken to date. The Government’s attempt to rush through new refugee protection legislation, which ironically is being considered today before the Dáil, could have a profound

impact on people seeking protection in Ireland and could further limit the rights of present and future refugees if it passes in its current form without amendments.”

For the first time, this year the issue of Direct Provision received considerable and frequent mainstream attention and the Government acknowledged that the system was unfit for purpose, causing damage to the people who have been forced to live in these conditions for up to 10 years and counting.

Leonie Kerins commented “This year we have heard so many empty promises of change and reform but the practice of isolation and exclusion continues. The ongoing refugee crisis should push Ireland to promptly address the problematic protection and reception system that has caused so much damage over the past 15 years. Now is the time to right the wrongs and prevent the same mistakes from happening again.”

This year on International Human Rights Day, Doras Luimní would like to thank all who have supported our work throughout 2015 - we greatly appreciate the generosity and goodwill of the people of Limerick who have helped us to raise awareness and advocate for a better future for the refugee and migrant population of Ireland.

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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.
- Doras Luimní advocates for an end to Direct Provision and a stronger international protection system in Ireland that upholds basic human rights principles in line with international and EU standards.
- The report of the Working Group on the Protection Process was published in June 2015 and outlines 170 recommendations for reform of the protection and Direct Provision system. The report is available here: [Working Group report](#)
- UN International Human Rights Day is celebrated on 10th December annually, see here for more information: <http://www.un.org/en/events/humanrightsday/>
- For more information about Doras Luimní, please visit www.dorasluimni.org

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