

Doras Luimní Press Release – US Trafficking in Persons (TIP) report 2013

20th June 2013

Doras Luimní welcomes the comprehensive US State Department Trafficking in Persons (TIP) report 2013. Ireland is a destination, source and transit country for women, men and children subjected to sex trafficking and forced labour.

Once again Ireland ranks as a Tier 1 country, indicating that it has met minimum standards to combat trafficking in human beings, including introducing legislation that outlaws all types of trafficking, a National Referral mechanism (NRM) for victims to liaise with state and non-state services and financial support for NGO's working in the in the area of anti-trafficking.

However, it also notes the lack of substantial prosecutions under the act, the inconsistencies in the victim identification process, the fact that child victims made up nearly half of all identified victims in Ireland last year (23), and the inadequate and often confusing cooperation between NGO's and authorities outside of Dublin.

As an organisation that works at a regional level, Doras is at the forefront of combating human trafficking in the Mid West region. We support trafficked persons through the often lengthy victim identification process, through interviews with Gardaí, and through immigration services.

According to Anti-Trafficking officer Patricia Stapleton: "Along with our Mid West partners we are concerned with the increase of migrant women in on street prostitution in Limerick city, many of whom are from disadvantaged areas of Central and Eastern Europe; the lack of labour regulations or labour inspections for those on migrant work permits and their subsequent vulnerability to forced labour and exploitation; and the abuse of migrants on student visas who often pay exorbitant rates to unscrupulous agents in origin countries".

Doras Luimní CEO Karen McHugh added: "As an organisation we have observed a worrying increase in the exploitation of migrants across a variety of sectors and social settings. We have witnessed an increase in the abuse of vulnerable migrants on work permits who are paid less than minimum wage and forced to work excessive work hours as they are tied to a particular employer or risk becoming undocumented. We have seen an increase of young migrant women being prostituted in Limerick city by dangerous and unscrupulous criminal gangs. And more recently we have cases of young and vulnerable men from Eastern Europe being trafficked into Ireland to engage in narcotics distribution."

She continued: "As part of our services we offer legal information, advice and support to all migrants living in the Limerick area. We perform outreach to all women involved in on-street prostitution in conjunction with the Red Ribbon Project. We also liaise regularly with local service providers, who provide a network of support to anybody experiencing abuse, discrimination or exploitation. We would encourage any migrant who is experiencing difficulty at work or who is being exploited to contact us immediately."

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Editor 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.

We 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 conjunction with the Red Ribbon Project, 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 (phone 061 310 328 or email p.stapleton@dorasluimni.org).

Doras Luimní is an active partner in the Turn off the Red Light (TORL) campaign which seeks to end prostitution and sex trafficking in Ireland. TORL is comprised of a coalition of NGOs, civil society groups, trade unions, political parties advocating legislative change to criminalise the purchase of sex. See the www.turnofftheredlight.ie for more details.

The Red Ribbon Project is a charity working in the area of Sexual Health Promotion, HIV and STI Prevention and Support Services in counties Clare, Limerick and Tipperary North. For more information on The Red Ribbon Project see their website on www.redribbonproject.com or contact the office on 061 314354 or email info@redribbonproject.com

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