



PROMOTING AND PROTECTING HUMAN RIGHTS

## **Doras Welcomes the Imminent Closure of Mount Trenchard but Says a Lot More Needs to Be Done for International Protection Applicants**

Media Statement: 11th January 2020

Doras welcomes the planned closure of Mount Trenchard Direct Provision Centre in Foynes, Co. Limerick at the end of February 2020. The organisation has been amongst the many voices highlighting the inhumane conditions in the direct provision centre, and after 6 years of calling for its closure they are relieved this is finally going to happen.

“It is regrettable that it has taken so long for this to happen. So many people have suffered in Mount Trenchard, both mentally and psychologically while the Department of Justice did nothing” said Doras Director John Lannon.

He added: “Closing Mount Trenchard is a positive move. But we hope the Department of Justice recognises the need to not only ensure that conditions in all Direct Provision and Emergency Accommodation Centres meet the minimum standards as soon as possible, but to prioritise the replacement of the for-profit, broken system of Direct Provision with a not-for-profit system which ensures that the human rights of International Protection Applicants are upheld at all times.”

While Mount Trenchard is generally seen to be an example of the worst of direct provision conditions in Ireland, there are many other centres across the country which in varying degrees have safety issues, sub-standard living conditions, inadequate management/staffing, and are in isolated locations. Doras calls on the Department of Justice to ensure that minimum standards are met in all forms of accommodation as a matter of urgency.

“The closure of Mount Trenchard is a positive development. It demonstrates all that is wrong with the system of Direct Provision. But it’s important that in highlighting issues with this system of accommodation we do not overlook the more serious issues with international protection system in Ireland. In particular, the time spent waiting for a decision is something that must be addressed as a matter of urgency” said John Lannon.

The lengthy amount of time spent waiting for international protection decisions means that many people who have fled in search of a safer and more secure life find themselves living in limbo for many years. Spending an indeterminate amount of time, often several years, effectively segregated from society, can negatively impact a person's mental health and wellbeing, and creates barriers to integration and inclusion. While a December 2019 report by Doras highlighted this to be the case in Mount Trenchard, there is compelling evidence to indicate that the same is true of many other centres across Ireland.

“We reiterate calls on the Department of Justice to ensure standards are immediately met in all accommodation centres” said John Lannon “At the same time it is essential that the Department works to implement an alternative to the inhumane system of direct provision. Every person seeking international protection in Ireland should be treated with the dignity and respect that everyone deserves.”

**ENDS**

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