



Beyond McMahon – the future of asylum reception in Ireland

Wednesday 25th April 2018

Programme for the Day

9:00 Registration

9:20 Welcome – Fiona Finn, CEO of Nasc, the Migrant and Refugee Rights Centre

9:30 Keynote Panel – chaired by Fiona Finn, CEO of Nasc

Keynote Address – Dr. Bryan McMahon, Former Chair of the Working Group on the Protection Process and Direct Provision

Reception conditions for refugees in Portugal – Teresa Mendes, Presidente, Conselho Português para os Refugiados (Portuguese Refugee Council)

New Scots and Refugee Integration in Scotland – Sabir Zazai, Chief Executive, Scottish Refugee Council

From policy to practice – Eugene Banks, Principal Officer, Reception and Integration Agency, Department of Justice and Equality

(This session will be followed by a short Q & A)

11:10 – 11:30 Coffee Break

11:30 Futures Panel – chaired by Enda O'Neill, Head of Office, UNHCR Ireland

McMahon Recommendations: A Bridge to Future Reception System in Ireland – Stephen Ng'ang'a, Core Group of Asylum Seekers

Alternatives to Direct Provision: Envisioning a best practice model for reception of asylum seekers in Ireland – Luke Hamilton, Legal Officer, Irish Refugee Council

Exploring the Rights of Asylum Seekers in Ireland: After the EU Reception Directive – Dr. Liam Thornton, UCD School of Law



The Irish Asylum System: A Legacy of Delay and Dysfunction – Fiona Hurley, Legal Services Manager, Nasc

(This session will be followed by a short Q & A)

1:00 Moderated Panel Discussion: The future of asylum reception in Ireland – chaired by Chief Commissioner Emily Logan, Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission

All previous panel members to be joined by: Mr. Lucky Khambule, Movement of Asylum Seekers Ireland (MASI), and Adedeola Akinbote and Adebola Babalola, two current residents in direct provision.

The moderated discussion will bring together all of the above panel speakers, along with additional input from asylum seekers, to discuss and debate the possible alternatives to direct provision and what the future of reception in Ireland could look like. This discussion will be moderated by Ms. Logan and include input from the audience.

1:50 Closing – Dr. Dug Cubie, Lecturer in Law, UCC School of Law and Deputy Director, Centre for Criminal Justice and Human Rights (CCJHR)

MasterClass

3:00 – 5:00 MasterClass – hosted by Dr. Dug Cubie

As part of the collaboration between Nasc and the CCJHR speakers will participate in a 'MasterClass' for 20 undergraduate and postgraduate students in the UCC School of Law on the issue of asylum reception and direct provision. This one-hour MasterClass will provide students a unique opportunity to learn from and engage with international experts from different institutions and stakeholder groups. To register for the MasterClass, please contact Dr. Dug Cubie at d.cubie@ucc.ie.

This conference is kindly supported by the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Human Rights and Equality Grant Scheme.



**Coimisiún na hÉireann um Chearta
an Duine agus Comhionannas**

Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission



Biographies

Adebola Babalola is a Nigerian woman seeking asylum who is currently living in Millstreet Accommodation Centre. She is a single mother with 3 children.

Adedeola Akinbote is an asylum seeker from Nigeria and currently living in Millstreet Accommodation Centre. She is a single mother with 4 children.

Dr. Bryan McMahon is a retired Judge of the High Court and the author of textbooks on Irish law. Judge McMahon received his BCL and LLB degrees from University College of Dublin. He was subsequently awarded a Fellowship to undertake further postgraduate study at Harvard Law School. He returned to Ireland and joined the Department of Law at University College Cork. In 1987 Judge McMahon joined the law firm of Houlihan and McMahon, Ennis, Co. Clare, as a Senior Partner. While continuing to practise law he simultaneously held a part-time Chair of Law at the National University of Ireland, Galway. In 1999 he was appointed a Judge of the Circuit Court. In 2007, he was promoted to the High Court in recognition of his status as a leading Irish jurist. A noted and oft cited jurist, he is deemed to be an authority on the bench in relation to tortious matters. He was appointed Adjunct Professor of the Faculty of Law at University College Cork in 2004. He retired from the bench in 2011 having served for 12 years, 4 of which were as a Judge of the High Court. In late 2014, he was appointed Chair of the Working Group tasked with making recommendations for improvements to the protection process and direct provision, which published its final report in 2015.

Dr. Dug Cubie Originally from Scotland, Dug Cubie obtained his PhD from UCC analysing the right to humanitarian assistance in natural and human-made disasters in the School of Law, UCC, and subsequently was a lecturer in human rights law at Queen's University Belfast. Before returning to academia, Dug spent over 10 years working in refugee protection and humanitarian assistance for the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, International Organization for Migration, European Union, the Irish Red Cross and other organisations in Africa, Asia, Europe and North America. His research interests include legal frameworks for humanitarian action, the human rights implications of climate change, and the internalisation of international norms in domestic legal systems. His recent book, *The International Legal Protection of Persons in Humanitarian Crisis: Exploring the Acquis Humanitaire*, was published by Hart Publishing in 2017. Dug is the Deputy Director of the UCC Centre for Criminal Justice and Human Rights (CCJHR).

Emily Logan is the first Chief Commissioner of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission appointed by President Michael D Higgins on 31 October 2014, following an open competition. In the decade prior to her appointment, she served as Ireland's first Ombudsman for Children and was also appointed President of the European Network of Ombudsmen for Children, across 47 Council of Europe member states. Prior to this, she worked in senior public administration: Director of Nursing at Crumlin Children's Hospital and at Tallaght Hospital Dublin, following her time as Directorate Manager in Great Ormond Street Hospital London. Ms Logan graduated from Queens University Belfast with an LLM in



Human Rights Law, University College Dublin with an MBA, and from City University London with an MSc in Psychology. She was awarded honorary Degrees of Doctor of Laws (LLD) from University College Dublin and from the National University of Ireland, Maynooth.

Enda O'Neill is Head of Office with UNHCR Ireland. Prior to that he held the role of Associate Protection Officer (2013-15). He is a qualified Barrister from the Kings Inns and practiced at the Irish bar for five years primarily in the fields of Criminal Law, Immigration and Asylum Law, and Administrative Law /Judicial Review. Prior to that he taught at the faculty of law for one year at the Université Paris I - Panthéon-Sorbonne. He holds an LLM in European Law from Kings College, London. He also holds a B.A. in English and Philosophy from University College, Cork and a Diploma in Journalism from the Irish Academy, Dublin.

Eugene Banks has responsibility at Principal Officer level for the Reception and Integration Agency (RIA) in the Department of Justice and Equality. His responsibilities include: the accommodation of asylum seekers in RIA accommodation centres while their applications for asylum are processed; the coordination of the provision of services (e.g. health, education) to asylum seekers in RIA accommodation; the facilitation of the voluntary return home of destitute nationals from certain EU states; and the accommodation of suspected victims of human trafficking pending a determination of their case and during the 60 day recovery and reflection period.

Fiona Finn holds a Bachelor of Law degree (BCL) and a Master of Law (LLM) from University College Cork. She has a particular interest in International Human Rights Law and Public International Law. Fiona has over eighteen years of experience in the fields of social justice, human rights, asylum and immigration. Fiona joined Nasc in 2008 and became CEO in 2010. Prior to that she worked for fifteen years in London, initially with a homeless charity and latterly as a senior officer with in the London Borough of Camden. During her time with the Borough, Fiona worked at a senior level across a number of departments including the Welfare Rights Section and at an Independent Law Centre, dealing with access to social protection for asylum-seekers and refugees. She also headed up a policy unit working to promote social inclusion policies for Irish emigrants in the Borough. Fiona also holds a Diploma in Business Studies and Marketing and is a graduate of the Marketing Institute of Ireland.

Fiona Hurley holds a Bachelor of Law degree (BCL) and a Master of Laws (LLM) from University College Cork. Fiona completed her thesis on Judicial Deference and the Protection of Minority Rights. She is particularly interested in the area of human rights and international law. Fiona joined Nasc in 2010. She previously held positions as a Legal Information and Capacity Building Officer, delivering immigration, asylum and social welfare training to statutory and non-statutory bodies including NGOs and Citizens Information Centres and was later appointed a Senior Legal Officer with Nasc. She is Nasc's representative at the European Migration Forum, PICUM and the European Resettlement Network and was a former co-chair of the Migrant Consultative Forum (MCF). Fiona also holds a diploma in Leadership and Management. She is a board member and Honorary Secretary of the Cork City Centre Citizens Information Service.



Dr. Liam Thornton was awarded his BCL (International) degree and his PhD from UCC Faculty of Law. Since 2012 Liam has been an assistant professor in law in the School of Law, University College Dublin. Liam was previously the research and policy officer in the former Irish Human Rights Commission (2008-2009) and a lecturer in law in Ulster University (2009-2012). Liam researches and publishes on issues relating to asylum and refugee law, human rights law in Ireland and social security law. Liam's work has been published in leading legal and social policy journals. You can access Liam's previous publications, as well as his latest blog posts, on www.liamthornton.ie. Liam is currently on the Board of Directors of Nasc, the Refugee and Migrant Rights Centre, and was previously a council member of the Free Legal Advice Centres (FLAC) from 2009 to 2014.

Lucky Khambule is an organiser, campaigner and activist for the rights of asylum seekers, migrants and refugee communities in Ireland. He is one of the founder members of the group called MASI-Movement of Asylum Seekers in Ireland. He lived in Cork for three years and campaigned for the end of direct provision while living in Kinsale road DP centre. He is also a founder member of KRAC Asylum today based in Cork. He has been active for many years in anti-racism with Anti-Racism Network, Irish Housing Network and many others. Served in Cork City Council as PPN member on social inclusion in 2015. Ireland has been his home for the past five years and has been active in multiple struggles for social justice, dignity and equality in Cork, Dublin, Galway, etc. Has a passion in collective and suggestive dialogue. He lived in direct provision from 2013 to 2016. Lucky has since been granted status as a resident in the state in September 2016. He continues to be the voice of those trapped within the confinements of direct provision in Ireland and advocates for free education for asylum seekers. Was instrumental in negotiating with An Cosan to offer 70 scholarships to people living in direct provision in 2017. Lucky is currently working with MASI-Movement of Asylum seekers in Ireland on volunteering service as a coordinator of the group. The group is based at the Comhlamh offices in 12 Parliament Street, Dublin 2. Lucky has recently been elected to serve at the board of directors for Comhlamh in Ireland. He is also a member of Irish Housing Network as well as Dublin Tenants association.

Luke Hamilton is Legal Officer with the Irish Refugee Council's Independent Law Centre. Luke's role involves providing Law Centre clients with assistance at all stages of the international protection process and carrying out policy research on issues relevant to Ireland's international legal obligations to refugees and asylum seekers. He is currently leading the IRC's research projects on the issue of best practice in reception conditions for asylum seekers – work which is funded by the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission and the Tomar Trust. Luke is also undertaking an Irish Research Council-funded PhD at the School of Law at NUI Galway. His doctoral research is examining the impact of vulnerability in international protection status determination. Prior to joining the IRC, Luke worked with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in various roles and the United Nations University Headquarters in Tokyo, Japan.

Sabir Zazai was appointed as Chief Executive of Scottish Refugee Council in September 2017. Sabir's expertise in refugee protection and integration are informed by his personal



journey as a refugee from Afghanistan, and his research interest in social cohesion and intercultural dialogue.

Stephen Ng'ang'a has extensive knowledge of human rights campaigns, advocacy and policy research needed to promote social policy and inclusion especially for minority groups like migrants, asylum seekers and refugees. He has first-hand experience of Direct Provision where he lived with his family for nearly a decade. Stephen has been involved in consultation on legislative change of the asylum protection process in Ireland culminating in the publication of the Working Group on Protection Process recommendations in June 2015. Prior to that, he coordinated the Core Group of Asylum Seekers and Refugees under the auspice of the Irish Refugee Council and continues to work with and advocate for those in the system together with a group of others independently. He holds a B.A from the Catholic University of Eastern Africa and an M.A in Development Studies specialising in Human Rights, Globalisation and Movements for Change from Kimmage Development Studies Centre. He has digital marketing and multimedia training and a diploma in Community Development Practice from NUIG. He is passionate about minority empowerment, participation and involvement in all aspects of Irish community life.

Teresa Mendes is Board President and founder of the Portuguese Refugee Council (CPR) since 1991. Previously, she was deputy to the representative in Portugal of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and adviser for the public information of the UNHCR office in Lisbon for more than a decade. With a career dedicated to the cause of refugees, Teresa Mendes worked continuously to build a national agenda for refugee rights in Portugal, with the establishment of a legal framework in line with international standards, and with the organization and management of two reception centres. The inauguration of a third centre is scheduled for the end of 2018. Teresa Mendes leads a team of more than 70 people who daily seek durable and sustainable solutions so that asylum seekers and refugees can resume their lives in Portugal. During Teresa Mendes term, CPR has promoted 12 international congresses at the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, aimed at promoting a debate on asylum and refugees, and has been carrying out awareness raising work in schools and universities, encouraging analysis and critical thinking about the complex reality of the international protection system and the plight of the victims of persecution around the world.