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New figures reveal the extent of human trafficking in Ireland

New figures show that trafficking people – including children – into Ireland is an increasing problem. Yesterday the Government published its [Trafficking in Human Beings, Annual Report for 2015](#), recording an increase in the number of victims of trafficking detected in Ireland; it has risen from 45 victims in 2014 to 78 victims in 2015, an increase of 70 per cent.

Brian Killoran, CEO of the Immigrant Council of Ireland, said, “While various new forms of trafficking have been identified in this latest annual report, such as exploitative marriages, cannabis production and begging, it is evident trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation remains the most widely spread crime in Ireland (more than three in five cases in 2015 were trafficking for sexual exploitation).

“Of significant concern is the number of children trafficked for sexual exploitation. A total of 22 children were found in this situation, including 15 who were Irish. In light of these figures, we welcome again the enactment of the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 2017, which introduces improved protections for child victims of sexual exploitation and prevents grooming.

“In light of these harrowing figures, the Immigrant Council is repeating its call for improved identification procedures. Currently it is not possible to seek asylum and also be identified as victims of trafficking and so provided services on par with other victims. This discriminatory position has been repeatedly criticised by international monitoring bodies, including the US annual Trafficking in Persons report last year.”

Nusha Yonkova, Immigrant Council of Ireland Anti-Trafficking Manager, added, “Trafficking in Ireland continues to be a highly-gendered crime, with two thirds of the cases involving women. A key concern of the Council regards accommodation for these women once they have managed to escape their captors. The current accommodation conditions provided by the State do not take into consideration the fact the majority of victims are women primarily trafficked for sexual exploitation. The Immigrant Council is calling for improved accommodation facilities which provide sensitive and tailored support to these individuals who have faced such harrowing abuse.”

ENDS

Notes to editors

The Immigrant Council of Ireland is currently involved in two specific anti-trafficking projects pertinent to the issues raised in this report:

- **Identification of victims of trafficking:** The Immigrant Council is coordinating the Irish input into a transnational project examining the various issues facing the victims of trafficking seeking international protection (asylum). Among those involved with the project are the International Red Cross, Caritas and other EU organisations.
- **Accommodation for victims of trafficking:** Together with Doras Luimni, NASC and Business in the Community, the Immigrant Council, funded by the Department of Justice and in association with the HSE, is undertaking training for staff of Reception and Integration Agency and Direct Provision centres in sensitivity and improved awareness regarding the important service they offer to survivors of trafficking, especially those women who have been sexually abused.

Read the report [Trafficking in Human Beings in Ireland, Annual Report 2015](#) here.

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Notes to Editors:

About the Immigrant Council of Ireland:

The Immigrant Council of Ireland is the leading voice in securing improved rights and protections which benefit Irish citizens, migrants and their families. Founded by Sr Stanislaus Kennedy in 2001, the Immigrant Council of Ireland uses its frontline services to meet the immediate needs and counter the challenges faced by immigrants in Ireland. The organisation uses this experience to put forward clear, evidence based proposals to change Irish law. For more information, please visit www.immigrantcouncil.ie.

Our helpline is supported by the Scheme to Support National Organisations 2016-2019

