

Press Release: 6 July, 2009

Justice for Magdalenes committee distributes draft language for a distinct redress scheme for survivors of Ireland's Magdalene laundries

The Justice for Magdalenes committee is urging politicians to issue an apology for the state's culpability and its failure to protect the legal rights of women who always remained citizens of the State in Ireland's Magdalene Laundries and also to introduce new legislation to provide redress for this marginalized population. While we recognize the key difference in the nature of the State's relationship to the Magdalene laundries, we challenge the current terminology that characterises women as 'voluntary' committals to Magdalene laundries. We assert that the State was an active agent in 'referring' many of these so-called 'voluntary' committals, and as such the State is complicit in and culpable for the abuses therein.

The committee has submitted a proposed draft of a new redress Bill for Magdalene women to Labour Party leader Eamon Gilmore and members of the party's front bench, and will be further distributing this proposed draft to the entire body of Dáil Eireann, to coincide with the private members' Bill which the Labour Party will propose in the Dáil from today.

The draft Bill proposes a distinct redress scheme for survivors of the laundries, to which girls were frequently transferred from residential institutions. It proposes an apology by the State to these women, and that the State maintains Magdalen burial plots, among other defined issues.

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Justice for Magdalenes seeks to promote and represent the interests of the Magdalene Women, to respectfully promote equality and seek justice for the women formerly incarcerated in Magdalene Laundries and to seek the establishment / improvements of support/advisory/re-integration services provided for survivors.