

For Immediate Release
9th July 2010

NWCI urges women politicians to support Justice for Magdalenes

At their recent AGM, the National Women's Council of Ireland (NWCI) passed a motion supporting the survivor advocacy group Justice for Magdalene's (JFM) campaign to bring about (i) a formal apology and (ii) a distinct redress scheme for all Magdalene survivors.

This week Susan McKay, Director of NWCI, is writing to all women TDs, Senators, and Local Councillors to urge them to support JFM's call for justice. McKay's letter reminds women politicians that:

“Justice must be done and a clear and resounding message must emanate from Government that the treatment of these women and their children was a severe violation of their human rights.”

Mari Steed, Director of JFM's Coordinating Committee, welcomed NWCI's strong signal of support: “We are pleased that the NWCI is supporting JFM's campaign to correct an historic injustice, one that targeted women and young girls exclusively. We want to encourage Ireland's political representatives, but especially women in leadership positions, to help JFM achieve its twin objectives, namely a formal apology and a distinct redress scheme.”

Susan McKay stated, “The National Women’s Council of Ireland stands firmly behind those seeking justice for women incarcerated in the Magdalene Laundries and supports their call for the establishment of a distinct Redress Scheme for survivors.” She added, “Justice must be done and a clear and resounding message must emanate from Government that the treatment of these women and their children was a severe violation of their human rights,” she said.

Kathleen Lynch, Labour Party T.D., responded to the NWCI letter: “The issue of the Magdalene women is one of the last issues of the hidden Ireland and I believe that the vast majority of Irish people support justice and restitution for these women. I welcome the letter from the NWCI and I would urge all my colleagues to support the call and to join the efforts of Justice for Magdalenes in finally resolving this issue.”

Momentum is growing behind the JFM campaign. In recent weeks, the group has received the encouragement of Cardinal Brady. TDs from all parties (including Fianna Fáil) have tabled six parliamentary questions. The Irish Human Rights Commission (IHRC) is considering JFM's application for an inquiry into human rights violations. The Dept of Justice, who the government have nominated as lead-department on the issue, are considering an apology, but one vetted by the Attorney General's office to absolutely guarantee no financial liability for the State. The group's online petition addressed to Mr. Brian Cowen, T.D. now has 1,120 signatures.

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