

PRESS RELEASE—For Immediate Release, 29-03-2011

JFM presents "Restorative Justice and Reparations Scheme" to government

Justice for Magdalenes (JFM), the survivor advocacy group, has submitted a revised "Restorative Justice and Reparations Scheme" to Minister for Justice, Alan Shatter, T.D., updating the July 2009 proposed scheme, which began the group's current campaign.

The revised scheme reflects JFM's ongoing dialogue and consultation with individual survivors in Ireland, the US and the UK. The latter includes the Irish Women's Survivors Support Network located at the London Irish Centre, which is led by London based Labour Councillor Sally Mulready.

As outlined in the document forwarded to Mr. Shatter and key members of the Cabinet, in addition to a formal state apology, Magdalene survivors are now seeking a lump sum compensation scheme, a statutory pension reflecting their years of work in the laundry institutions, and complete access to their records. They are not interested in an extension of the current redress scheme, which would involve a stressful adversarial process incompatible with their age and vulnerable position in life.

Councillor Sally Mulready welcomed the new scheme, stating: "These women were forced to work in commercial enterprises run by Irish religious orders as an unpaid labour force in the most punishing of conditions and with no hope of escape. It is my fervent hope the new coalition government will find it in their hearts to be the political leaders that will at last bring justice to the Laundry women workers."

JFM also welcomes the news which emerged in Justice Minister Alan Shatter's response to recent Parliamentary Questions that he is considering "a draft submission for the government," prepared by the Department of Justice, in consultation with the Office of the Attorney General, in relation to the Irish Human Rights Commission (IHRC) *Assessment of the Human Rights Issues Arising in relation to the "Magdalen Laundries"*. Professor James Smith (Boston College and JFM Advisory Board Member) said: "We look forward to the submission to the government being made public. In pursuing restorative justice—an apology, reparation, and services—for the survivors we work with, JFM remains ever aware of the fact that the majority of these women are aging and elderly. This campaign, therefore, is time sensitive in the extreme."

The outgoing government had referred the IHRC *Assessment* report to the Attorney General for his "consideration" on 11 November 2010. The *Assessment* document, offered twelve conclusions underscoring the State's complicity in the abuse of women and young girls in the laundries. More importantly, the *Assessment* recommended that the government establish "a statutory mechanism...to investigate the matters advanced by JFM and in appropriate cases to grant redress where warranted."

In conclusion, JFM recently submitted a series of reports to the United Nations, the Irish State, the Irish Human Rights Commission and to the Irish Council for Civil Liberties' "Rights Now" campaign, all in relation to the United Nations' Universal Periodic Review which will assess Ireland's human rights record. The report to the United Nations includes new testimonies, which JFM has gathered from survivors.

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Notes to Editor:

For details on the "Restorative Justice and Reparations Scheme":

http://www.magdalenelaundries.com/JFM_2011_Restorative_Justice_Reparations_Scheme.pdf

Details of Parliamentary Questions available at:

<http://www.kildarestreet.com/wrans/?id=2011-03-24.526.0&s=magdalene>

For further information on JFM:

<http://www.magdalenelaundries.com/what.htm>