

Micheál Martin T.D.  
An Taoiseach  
Department of the Taoiseach,  
Government Buildings,  
Merrion Street Upper,  
Dublin 2,  
D02 R583

Friday 8th April 2022,

**Re: Ireland's National and Local Response to People Fleeing Ukraine**

Dear Taoiseach,

We wish to acknowledge your personal leadership in responding so humanely to people fleeing Ukraine. We commend the government's humanitarian response and acknowledge the scale of the challenge, with nearly 20,000 people arriving in the state in the past six weeks.

Notwithstanding the responses to date, we write to urgently seek a meeting to discuss the coordination of national and local responses, and the role of civil society and community responses, to support the people fleeing Ukraine as a result of the ongoing crisis.

As groups fully engaged in the settlement and integration process, working on the ground nationally and locally, we are deeply concerned about the overall lack of coordination and coherence of responses across the country and communities are looking for leadership. We are concerned that the difference in standards, approaches, and support levels are largely dependent on the strength of community infrastructure and local communities.

From our interactions with many of those providing direct support to those seeking refuge, we believe that we are in danger of reaching a tipping point in public goodwill and community capacity. To ensure this does not happen, we call for the following.

1. National Lead: **The urgent appointment of a National Director of Ukrainian Response, an independent high-level coordinator, to lead the national response.** The National Director will have power to drive and coordinate the National and County response and will report directly to you, Taoiseach. We are happy to provide proposed names of individuals at our meeting.
2. National Taskforce: **Immediate establishment of a National Ukrainian Response Taskforce to include state and civil society actors at local and national levels, including representatives of people fleeing Ukraine.** The Task Force should be chaired by the National Director.
3. County Lead: Acknowledging the level of work already being undertaken by City/County CEOs, and the intensity of work required by this response, we call for the **appointment of a Senior City/County Lead** under the auspices but independent of the Local Authority. This person should report directly to the local authority CEO and to the National Director of Ukrainian Response. The Senior Lead should convene, chair, and direct the local Community Forum, be responsible for coordinating strategic approaches, responses, communications, and information flow at city/county level. **The Senior Lead should be supported by a dedicated team.**
4. Resources: **Additional resources will be required for implementation** of national and local strategies and plans, while ensuring the continuation of existing essential work being undertaken in local communities.

Please see attached a more detailed outline of these proposals. We look forward to hearing from you urgently on this matter.

Yours Sincerely,

Nick Henderson, Irish Refugee Council  
Brian Killoran, Immigrant Council of Ireland  
Rachel Doyle, Community Work Ireland  
Edel McGinley, Migrant Rights Centre Ireland  
Fergal Landy, National Forum of Family Resource Centres  
John Lannon, Doras  
Fiona Hurley, Nasc, Migrant and Refugee Centre  
Eugene Quinn, Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) Ireland  
Anatoliy Pymakov, Ukrainian Crisis Centre Ireland  
Noel Wardick, Dublin City Community Cooperative  
Jeanne McDonagh, The Open Doors Initiative  
Eilis Barry, Free Legal Aid Centres  
Shamika Dwarika, Public Interest Law Alliance  
Collette O'Regan, LGBT Ireland  
Reuben Hambakachere, Cultúr Migrant Centre  
Marissa Ryan, EPIC, Empowering People in Care  
Graham Clifford, The Sanctuary Runners  
Paul Kernan, Donegal Intercultural Platform  
Orla O'Connor, National Women's Council  
Anastasia Crickley, Former Chairperson, UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial  
Discrimination  
Niamh Phelan, Register of Pledges  
Mary O'Donoghue, West Clare Family Resource Centre  
Miriam Holt, Women's Collective Ireland  
Martin Collins, Pavee Point Traveller & Roma Centre.  
Sean Regan, SICAP Manager, Longford Community Resources  
Bernard Joyce, Irish Traveller Movement  
Cliona Saidlear, Rape Crisis Network Ireland  
Paul Ginnell, European Anti-Poverty Network Ireland  
Annie Rozario, Gort Resource Centre  
Tonya Myles, Cairde  
Wayne Stanley, Simon Communities of Ireland  
Pat Dennigan, Focus Ireland  
Damien Peelo, Treoir  
Dann Kenningham, ATD 4th World  
Mary McDermott, Safe Ireland  
Sarah Benson, Women's Aid  
Seán Ahern, Middleton Family Resource Centre  
Damien Walsh, Independent Living Movement Ireland  
John Kelly, Gateway Mental Health Project  
Seamus Boland, Irish Rural Link  
Brid O'Brien, Irish National Organisation for the Unemployed  
Maire Louise Byrne, Wexford Local Development Company

CC: Roderic O'Gorman; Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth  
Dara O'Brien; Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage  
Helen McEntee; Minister for Justice  
Heather Humphries; Minister for Rural and Community Development + Minister for Social  
Protection  
Joe O'Brien; Minister of State at the Department of Rural and Community Development  
Elizabeth Canavan, Assistant Secretary General, Department of An Taoiseach