

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE/

Better engagement with impacted communities paramount as hate crime and extreme hate speech legislation advances at the Oireachtas

27 October 2022

The Coalition Against Hate Crime Ireland welcomes the announcement that the Incitement to Violence or Hatred and Hate Offences Bill 2022 will be published today. We have been calling for this legislation for many years and the clarity it will provide to victims of hate crimes, offenders and criminal justice actors is long overdue.

The Coalition is calling for better engagement with impacted communities and civil society organisations as the Bill progresses through the Oireachtas. It's vital that the Bill responds to real needs on the ground, which can differ within communities. Earlier this year, the Coalition expressed its disappointment at the insufficient engagement with targeted communities during pre-legislative scrutiny with no representatives from key affected groups like LGBTI+ people or disabled people invited to participate. The Oireachtas must engage with representatives of all key stakeholders at future stages of the legislative process. This is particularly key as public consultations solely focused on hate speech.

The Coalition Against Hate Crime is led by the Irish Council for Civil Liberties (ICCL). ICCL's Equality and Hate Crime Policy Officer and Chair of the Coalition, Luna Lara Liboni, said:

“Hate Crimes send minorities the message they are not welcome in Ireland. Such crimes have a ripple effect, impacting individuals, communities and society as a whole. It's essential we introduce effective legislation to send an even clearer message: nobody should be targeted because of who they are. This Bill is therefore very welcome.”

The advancement of legislation is key to ensuring that all communities feel safe and valued in Ireland, but we need to get it right. The Coalition will be calling on Government to ensure that the Bill complies with international human rights standards, including on the protection of freedom of expression and that it complies with principles of proportionality and necessity.

The Coalition also emphasises that legislation is only one part of the necessary response to hate crime and extreme hate speech. That's why the Coalition is calling for a comprehensive national action plan alongside the legislation. This plan should include measures aimed at challenging the beliefs and attitudes underlying such crimes such as education and awareness raising; improved monitoring, reporting, and data gathering; and improved victim support.

The Coalition stands together as a unified voice in welcoming the legislation, and individual members are happy to give further comment on the specifics of the legislation.

ENDS/

Find the joint Coalition submission on the General Scheme of the legislation: <https://www.iccl.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Coalition-Against-Hate-Crime-submission-on-Hate-Crime-Bill.pdf>

Notes to editors:

- The Irish Council for Civil Liberties (ICCL) is Ireland's oldest independent human rights campaigning organisation. We monitor, educate and campaign to secure human rights for everyone in Ireland.
- The Coalition Against Hate Crime Ireland is made of 21 civil society organisations representing communities commonly targeted by hate crime and hate speech in Ireland: Age Action Ireland, Belong To, Doras, Dublin LGBTQ+ Pride, Immigrant Council of Ireland, Inclusion Ireland, Independent Living Movement Ireland, Intersex Ireland, Irish Council for Civil Liberties (ICCL), Irish Network Against Racism (INAR), Irish Traveller Movement (ITM), LGBT Ireland, LGBT Travellers, Nasc – Migrant and Refugee Rights Centre, National LGBT Federation, National Traveller Women's Forum, National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI), Outhouse, Pavee Point Traveller & Roma Centre, Sports Against Racism Ireland (SARI), Transgender Equality Network Ireland (TENI).

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