**Motion *re* Accommodation For International Protection Applicants**

That Dáil Éireann

Expresses concern that:

* A humanitarian and public health crisis is intensifying because of the failure of the Government to provide accommodation to asylum seekers.
* There are now more than 1,200 international protection applicants without accommodation in Ireland.
* Hundreds of international protection applicants are sleeping in approximately 150 tents around Mount Street in central Dublin.
* There are no toilets, no running water and no sanitation facilities at this tent encampment on Mount Street.
* There have been reports of cases of skin disease and respiratory disease among the men living rough in tents.
* The men sleeping rough are being left in increasingly unsanitary and dangerous conditions, at risk of severe weather and violent attack.
* Tents at the same location were set alight in an arson attack by a violent racist mob in 2023.
* In a letter to the Irish Times on March 13 2024, infectious diseases registrar Dr. Ralph Hurley O’Dwyer said that in recent weeks he has “looked after multiple young men, international protection applicants, hospitalised with serious medical conditions as a result of sleeping outside in the cold”.
* Dr. Hurley O’Dwyer said “the management of these conditions requires lengthy, costly hospital stays”.
* On March 14 2024, Dr. Angy Skuse, Medical Director of SafetyNet Primary Care, told RTE the conditions on Mount Street were “inhumane” and said she had treated people at the site with multiple serious health issues.

Notes that:

* On February 18 2024, the Department of Integration confirmed to RTE that there were 2,151 vacant bed spaces in International Protection Accommodation and 2,801 vacant bed spaces in accommodation contracted for Ukrainians.
* On March 14 2024, the Department confirmed to the Irish Times that an audit of emergency accommodation capacity had found about 500 extra beds.
* The Department also revealed there were about 2,500 “potential vacancies” among beds contracted for Ukrainians.

Further notes that:

* In February 2021, Catherine Day published a White Paper which recommended providing six State-run reception and integration centres.
* In July 2023, Catherine Day published an update to her 2021 White Paper and stated six reception centres should urgently be provided.
* In her updated paper, Ms Day said three centres should be delivered by the end of 2023 and a further three by the end of 2024.
* None of these State-run reception and integration centres have yet been provided.
* There have been media reports that the Government may defer identifying locations for these centres until after the local elections in June 2024.

Agrees that:

* The State has domestic and EU law obligations to provide “material reception conditions” for asylum seekers.
* Material reception conditions include the basic needs of accommodation, food, clothing and access to personal hygiene facilities.
* In April 2023 the High Court found the State’s failure to provide these material reception conditions, to an international protection applicant, was unlawful.
* In December 2023, the High Court again found the State had a clear duty to provide material reception conditions.
* In his judgment, in December 2023, Mr Justice Ferriter said:

*“[A]s a matter of EU law (as transposed into Irish law) the State remains under a continuing, mandatory obligation to provide international protection applicants with basic needs including accommodation on an uninterrupted basis from the point at which qualifying persons apply for international protection”*

calls on Government to:

* Agree that its failure to provide material reception conditions to international protection applicants is unlawful.
* Publish its audit of IPAS and Ukrainian accommodation, identifying locations where beds are vacant, how long they have been vacant and the reason for the vacancy.
* Explain why an audit of vacant beds was only completed in mid-March, when the State has been failing in its duty to provide accommodation for many months.
* Publish the revised White Paper the Integration Minister is working on which details its short, medium and long-term plan to deal with accommodation for asylum seekers.
* Expedite plans to provide six State-run reception and integration centres.
* Ensure the International Protection system is adequately resourced so applicants receive decisions in a timely and efficient manner.
* Ensure there are adequate procurement controls and enhanced transparency when contracts for State-funded accommodation for asylum seekers are being awarded.