

**Address to the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights:  
The Socio-Economic and Cultural Rights of Asylum Seekers, Travellers  
and Roma in Ireland**

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**1. The ESC Rights of Asylum Seekers**

Asylum seekers in Ireland are subject to a prolonged period of core ESC rights violations in Ireland. In general barred from all social assistance payments, and denied the right to work, asylum seekers are placed in an administrative system known as direct provision ([Thornton, 2014](#)). Direct provision is a system whereby asylum seekers are accommodated in communal centres; meals are provided, limiting asylum seekers ability to prepare their own food. Asylum seekers are provided with an allowance of €19.10 per week per adult and €9.60 per week per child. There is no entitlement to child benefit due to the habitual residence condition. Asylum seekers can spend a very significant period of time in these centres, sometimes up to 7 years. There are significant concerns as regards mental health of those in the system. As is outlined throughout the *Our Voices, Our Rights* report, there are significant concerns that this system may violate the ESC rights of asylum seekers, in particular as regards:

- The right to work (p. 31, [Our Voices, Our Rights](#); p. 17, [2015 Update](#))
- The right to access social assistance (p. 45 & p. 54 [Our Voices, Our Rights](#))
- The right to adequate food (p. 63-64, [Our Voices, Our Rights](#))
- The right to adequate housing and shelter (pp. 75-76 [Our Voices, Our Rights](#); pp. 40-41, [2015 Update](#))

## **2. The Habitual Residence Condition**

The habitual residence condition impacts on the right to social security and social assistance. Victims of domestic violence, asylum seekers, returning Irish immigrants, Irish Travellers in Ireland all face risks of destitution, through non-access to core social assistance payments such as child benefit, one parent family payment, supplementary welfare allowance (See, pp. 45-49 & p. 54, [Our Voices, Our Rights](#); pp. 22-24, [2015 Update](#)).

## **3. The ESC Rights of Travellers & Roma**

The Irish Government have not recognised Travellers as an ethnic group. Travellers in Ireland suffer significantly from societal discrimination (p. 23, [Our Voices, Our Rights](#)) For Travellers and Roma, there are significant concerns as regards the protection of ESC rights across all of the rights grounds. Some particular issues, I wish to draw to the Committee's attention:

- Travellers and Roma face significant barriers to accessing the employment market (pp. 30-31 [Our Voices, Our Rights](#)).
- Health indicators highlight the inequity of outcomes for Travellers and Roma (p. 85, [Our Voices, Our Rights](#); pp. 50-51, [2015 Update](#)).
- Issues pertain as regards the lack of legal realisation of culturally appropriate accommodation for Travellers (pp. 72-73, [Our Voices, Our Rights](#); p. 40 [2015 Update](#)).
- Child Travellers have significant issues as regards realising fully their right to education (pp. 93-94, [Our Voices, Our Rights](#); pp. 54-55 [2015 Update](#)).