

## **Refugee And Asylum Seekers Team Up To Challenge Local Community In Limerick's 'League Of Nations Trophy'**

Limerick, IRELAND, Thursday 21st June 07 -

An international soccer tournament aimed at integrating the mid-west's asylum seekers and refugees into their local communities will take place in the University of Limerick this weekend.

Teams from Brazil, Afghanistan, Albania, Morocco, Samoa and the Congo will challenge teams from An Garda Síochána and the Southill Outreach Centre, in a battle for the 'League of Nations Trophy' on Saturday. The contest will also feature participants from Iran, Iraq, Gambia, Nigeria, Sudan, Senegal and Somalia, as well as a team from the Tralee Asylum Seekers Network (TRASNET) in County Kerry.

Doras Luimní will host the tournament, with the assistance of League of Ireland club Limerick 37, as part of their second annual 'SummerFest'.

"We hope that this event, involving over forty teams from all over the world, will demonstrate how sport breaks through barriers of language, background and culture", commented Geraldine Dollard of Doras Luimní.

She added, "Many refugees and asylum seekers who are currently residing here have fled war and persecution. Many suffer from loneliness and even depression as they struggle to rebuild their lives in Ireland. This soccer tournament and, indeed, other events taking place during SummerFest can help them integrate into their new community and feel a real sense of achievement."

Doras Luimní was established in 2000 in response to the refugee situation in Limerick City and surrounding areas. It regularly hosts activities aimed at improving the experience and lives of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants.

Explaining the need to host events such as 'SummerFest', Ms. Dollard said, "In Limerick, we meet asylum seekers who have been waiting an average of three years for a decision on their application for refugee status. Some are known to wait up to seven years. Accommodated in hostels in Meelick in Clare, Limerick City and Foynes in County Limerick, their legal status in Ireland is uncertain while they await a decision on their status. During that time they must survive on EUR19 a week and they are not allowed to work. Coupled with the lack of any real contact with their local communities, many face isolation and depression. Likewise, refugees struggling to secure employment find themselves alienated from local community life."

"We are hoping to emulate the success of last year's 'SummerFest', which brought together refugees and asylum seekers with members of the local community. It is a day of celebration for the Region's refugees, asylum seekers, migrants and local people. It also presents an opportunity to the local communities to learn more about other cultures and traditions. I would appeal to the people of Limerick to show their solidarity with those people in a situation once faced by Irish people all over the world", concluded Ms. Dollard.

The 2nd annual 'SummerFest' takes place at the University of Limerick this Saturday 23rd June 2007. The day's events will include a soccer tournament, art exhibition, bouncy castles and face painting for children, as well as musical entertainment.

**Further information on Doras Luimní, Mount St. Alphonsos, South Circular Road, Limerick, is available form 087-7754160 or [dorasluimni@eircom.net](mailto:dorasluimni@eircom.net)**