

Press Release 30<sup>th</sup> June 2014

## **Adoption Rights Alliance (ARA) and Justice for Magdalenes Research (JFMR) Make Joint Submission to Terms of Reference for Commission of Inquiry into Mother and Baby Homes**

Adoption Rights Alliance (ARA) and Justice for Magdalenes Research (JFMR) today submitted a comprehensive briefing to inform the terms of reference for the Commission of Inquiry into Mother and Baby Homes. ARA and JFMR, who, along with representatives of Irish First Mothers and historian Sean Lucey, met with Minister Flanagan on Wednesday, 25 June 2014, and suggested that the Commission of Investigation should focus on the issue of children born out of wedlock in Ireland since 1922 rather than institutions *per se*. Communicated in that meeting and in the joint submission is the understanding that this issue gives rise to six distinct fields of inquiry:

- i. Infant mortality rates;
- ii. Adoption practices;
- iii. Vaccine trials and medical experimentation;
- iv. Forced labour and incarceration of unmarried girls and women who gave birth to babies or were seen to be 'at risk' of becoming mothers;
- v. Conditions in the institutions, including neglect, denial of adequate medical care and cruel punishment of unmarried mothers and their infants and children; and
- vi. Burials of unmarried mothers and their children who remained in recarceral institutions.

Both organisations believe all of these issues should be examined within a human rights framework, in that findings of fact should be reached and recommendations made regarding all potential violations of Constitutional, European and international human rights. The Commission must be capable of establishing, and must establish, the truth. Establishing the truth is the first element of the right to an effective remedy and is a pre-requisite to the other elements of an effective remedy – justice and reparation.

JFMR proposed and presented precedent for the idea that the Commission may wish to liaise with the Irish Research Council (IRC) to devise a competitive tendering process for a Principal Investigator who will bring together a team of scholars to analyse the archive compiled under Phase 1 of the Commission in a defined time period (max. 24-36 months). Both ARA and JFMR believe that this strategy will result in the most comprehensive, authoritative and cost-effective method of compiling reports to answer questions arising in the six key fields of enquiry.

**Links to the submission may be found at**

[http://www.adoptionrightsalliance.com/ARAJFMR\\_ToR\\_Briefing\\_300614.pdf](http://www.adoptionrightsalliance.com/ARAJFMR_ToR_Briefing_300614.pdf) and  
[http://www.magdalenelaundries.com/ARAJFMR\\_ToR\\_Briefing\\_300614.pdf](http://www.magdalenelaundries.com/ARAJFMR_ToR_Briefing_300614.pdf).

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