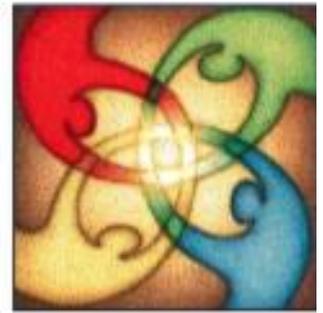


# Donegal Intercultural Platform

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*People in Donegal working towards Interculturalism, Equality and Human Rights*



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## PRESS RELEASE

25/11/2018

### Donegal Intercultural Platform condemns Merville Hotel Fire

The Donegal Intercultural Platform roundly condemns the fire that damaged the Caiseal Mara that has all the hallmarks of a racist arson attack.

We recognise that the hotel had been earmarked as a new Direct Provision facility that was expected to receive its first resident families in the next week or two. Whilst we are fierce critics of the unsatisfactory Direct provision system, we offered out welcome and support to the new residents, many of who have undergone a traumatic journey to arrive in Ireland to seek asylum.

Our steering group has supported the inclusive efforts of local people, particularly the Inishowen Welcomes group and Fáilte Inishowen whom have taken the lead in offering support and assistance to the refugee families.

This possible attack echoes the racist house burnings in previous decades in US cities like Boston, and the sectarian arson attacks of the troubles in town and cities in the North of Ireland. It also mimics the recent rise of racist fire-bombings in Belfast where properties earmarked for or occupied by Black and Minority Ethnic families were targeted.

Donegal is the home of Cead Míle Fáilte – the hundred thousand welcomes - and these actions do not reflect the views or intentions of Donegal people of all ethnic and faith backgrounds.

We hope there will be a speedy assessment of the damage caused and prompt repairs made so that the families can find a welcome shelter before the Christmas holidays. If the building cannot be easily repaired we call on local agencies to secure alternative accommodation in the area until such times as the fire damage can be made good.

If this was indeed a racist hate crime then we condemn it. Also we call on everyone to join together and say loud and clear – there is room at the Inn this Christmas and throughout the year.

If people would like to help support the families and provide a heartfelt welcome please contact the Donegal Intercultural Platform at [donegalip@gmail.com](mailto:donegalip@gmail.com) or ring or text 0860841433 and we will put you in touch with local organisers and support groups.

Paul Kernan & Billy Banda

Co-Chairpersons, Donegal Intercultural Platform