

TRAC UK Applauds Ireland for ground-breaking Law Targeting Buyers of Sex

TRAC UK (*Trafficking, Advocacy and Campaigning to end sex trafficking*) welcomes the news from the Republic of Ireland and applauds the government for the passage of the Criminal Law Bill (Sexual Offences) which decriminalises prostituted people and penalises the purchase of sex. Years of lobbying and campaigning by various bodies in Ireland has been successful as the Bill passed Ireland's Lower House, Dáil Eireann, on 7 February and approved by the Upper House, Seanad Eireann on 14 February, 2017.

TRAC has been campaigning for over a decade on the issue of DEMAND as the engine driving sexual exploitation. The new Irish law will help efforts to end demand by holding sex buyers accountable and will also ensure that prostituted individuals and survivors can access comprehensive support services. In addition, it strengthens National laws against sexual grooming, child pornography and sexual harassment in the Republic of Ireland.

Survivors of Prostitution and Sex Trafficking Lead Groundbreaking Campaign

Rachel Moran, founder and executive director of SPACE International (Survivors of Prostitution-Abuse Calling for Enlightenment), was a key Irish abolitionist activist who advocated for the law as part of the *Turn Off the Red Light* campaign, a coalition of direct service providers, survivor-led groups, women's rights organizations, labour unions, medical providers and other groups in Ireland.

"It's been six years almost to the day since I first spoke publicly in Dublin about the harm and damage of prostitution and the need for our government to do something about it," she said. Rachel Moran is author of *"Paid For: My Journey Through Prostitution."*

"Ireland is now a hostile territory for pimps and traffickers, and a place where men can no longer legally use women's desperation to buy their way inside our bodies. This is a historic day that sends a message of hope."

The Republic of Ireland follows the example of Sweden, the first country, almost 20 years ago, in 1999, to legally recognise prostitution as a form of violence and discrimination against women. Norway and Iceland followed in 2009, and Canada (with exceptions), Northern Ireland 2015 and, most recently, France. All have enacted demand-focused, abolitionist laws to combat the multi-billion dollar sex trade and its economic engine, sex trafficking. This legal framework is known as the 'Swedish' or 'Nordic' model.

Members of TRAC UK will continue to advocate and campaign with the UK Government to adopt a similar law that will follow Ireland's lead in criminalising buyers of sex.

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