Dear [Insert TD]

**COVID-19 Pandemic and the Protection of the Lives and Health of Asylum Seekers in Ireland**

We, the people of Ireland, urgently call on you to press Mr Charlie Flanagan TD, Minister for Justice and Equality, to do everything in his power to safeguard the lives and health of asylum seekers in direct provision during the COVID-19 outbreak.

To date, 4 cases of Covid-19 in Direct Provision have been confirmed by MASI (Movement of Asylum Seekers in Ireland). There are more than 5,600 people living in the country’s 39 DP centres. Of these, more than 1,700 are children. No vulnerability assessment has been undertaken to date of residents.

There are a worrying number of DP centres continuing with use of high traffic areas, compulsory communal dining and inadequate hand-wash facilities. Asylum seekers are still sharing bedrooms with non-relatives, including with people who have tested positive for coronavirus. Self-isolation is impossible in all centres.

We request 3 critically urgent actions:

* Asylum seekers living in Direct Provision to be added to the high risk vulnerable group for priority testing and a dedicated phone number provided as for other priority groups.
* Self-isolation facilities for asylum seekers, separate to crowded Direct Provision centres, facilities to be identified and adequately staffed.
* The Department of Justice and Equality identifies and publishes the contact details of its staff who can receive and act upon information from asylum seekers and support groups about conditions in DP centres which are inadequate to curtail the spread of Covid-19.

This situation is critical. No time can be wasted, the Minister must act now to save lives.

Please see MASI Press Release, which I fully endorse, attached: <https://www.masi.ie/2020/03/27/statement-on-the-irish-governments-response-to-covid-19-in-direct-provision/>

Yours,

[Insert your Name & Address]

[Insert your Constituency]