

**NEWS RELEASE**  
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**Government Proposes Exile for Certain Irish Children**

The Children's Rights Alliance today criticised the Government today for seeking to exile certain Irish children.

"Earlier this week we asked the question, 'What about the rights of the child?' in reference to the Irish-born children of non-national parents the Government is seeking to deport," said Raymond Dooley, Chief Executive of the Children's Rights Alliance.

"The Government has now answered that question. Lawyers for the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform have argued to the High Court that the constitutional rights of these Irish citizens are best met through exile. The Government agrees that the children are Irish citizens and have rights under the Irish Constitution to be cared for by their parents, to have the company of their parents and to remain within their family - they just can't exercise those rights in Ireland.

"We also asked the question, 'Who will care for the children left behind?' According to published reports, the Justice Department calls that 'a hypothetical situation that has not arisen yet so we have no comment to make.' In court the Government says it will rely on the deported parents to discharge their 'duty' to take their Irish citizen children with them when they leave - in other words, to effectively deport them. Nothing has been said about what will be done with the children if the parental deportees fail to carry out their delegated responsibilities to enforce the relevant provisions of the Irish Constitution by taking their children into exile. Government lawyers did note, however, that the children would be entitled to return to Ireland after a period of exile lasting no more than 18 years.

"These statements reveal an almost breathtaking lack of regard for the rights and welfare of the children involved. In offering such arguments the Government has made it perfectly clear that it has given no real consideration to the rights of the children or to the question of who will care for them if they are left behind.

"Whatever the ultimate disposition of the cases before the courts, the positions and arguments advanced by the Government cast into serious doubt their commitment to children's rights and their concern for children's welfare. We again call upon the Government to stop treating these children with contempt and to explain how their rights will be protected, how their best interests will be served and how their care will be provided. As children and as Irish citizens they deserve nothing less."