

THE MARCH FOR JUSTICE

“Every time we turn our heads the other way when we see the law flouted, when we tolerate what we know to be wrong, **when we close our eyes and ears to the corrupt** because we are too busy or too frightened, when we fail to speak up and speak out, **we strike a blow against freedom and decency and justice.**”

~ Robert F. Kennedy ~

BECAUSE JUSTICE IS WORTH MARCHING FOR

The famous words spoken by Robert F Kennedy in the sixties, when he called for the people to “*speaking out against the law being flouted*” and to stand up for “*freedom and decency and justice*” are being spoken once again, on the streets of Dublin.

The occasion is the March for Justice, where campaigners from around Ireland and even overseas will be drawing attention to the failure of Ireland’s judicial system to provide fair trials.

Lead organiser **Andy Agathangelou**, from the UK’s Transparency Task Force commented: “*The evidence shows that the people of Ireland are being short-changed when it comes to justice, with devastating consequences including unlawful repossessions, family break ups, even suicides. The human suffering being caused is horrific - miscarriages of justice are occurring in Irish courts as a matter of routine now because the law is being wrongly interpreted and applied. Something needs to change.*”

The campaigners are taking to the streets of Dublin, assembling at The Four Courts on the morning of Wednesday 18th September at 10:30AM, to protest about a long list of long-standing grievances, including:

- **Barriers to Justice** that include bans on Third Party Funding, Contingency Fees, the Right to Assign cases and retrospective Representative Actions.
- **The unlawful repossession of family homes, farms and businesses** by banks and vulture funds through fraudulent misrepresentation.
- **The weaponisation of the asymmetry of power** between big, powerful corporations and institutions including the State, when pitted against ordinary people, small

business owners and farmers, who are often acting alone in the Courts as unrepresented lay litigants.

- **The secrecy and corruption enabled by the in-camera rule** in the family courts.
- **The need for the appointment of Judges to be separated from Politics;** and the need for Judges to make Declarations of Interest properly.

The campaigners claim that **the law is being wrongly interpreted and applied; and that what is needed is a code of conduct fully supported by the political, regulatory and legal frameworks to ensure all participants in the judicial processes only follow the correct procedures**, including the correct application of EU Law.

They say that once the people of Ireland enjoy the same rights that are provided to the citizens of many countries around the world - rights such as legal aid, third party funding and retrospective representative actions - the reputational integrity of Ireland's courts on the world stage will begin to be restored.

Agathangelou adds:

“When politicians and respected members of Ireland’s judiciary are themselves stating that the laws are being wrongly interpreted and applied, in favour of, for example, big banks, vulture funds and huge corporations, against the interests of ordinary people, you know there’s something seriously wrong.

All we are asking for; no - all we are demanding is the most fundamental of human rights - the right to a fair and timely trial. Until then the reputational integrity of Ireland’s judicial system on the world stage will be in shreds.”

*In speaking to **Michael Fitzmaurice TD**, he said:*

“Many politicians are being contacted by constituents where they allege they are not getting fair procedure in courts in relation to vulture funds.

I see my job as being a messenger of the people that elect me and on that basis, I’ve been looking into the issues that have been raised, because based on what I’ve been told so far it seems that something may be seriously wrong and need fixing.

As a TD I have contacted relevant experienced and noteworthy people over the last few weeks to give me insight as I’m not a qualified person in this area, and I shall be putting together a synopsis based on what I discover.

I’ll then be writing to key stakeholders in relation to the concerns expressed.”

Award-winning Film Producer/Director Terry McMahon, who often speaks out against injustice, particularly when it results in people being made homeless and having to sleep rough on the streets of Ireland said:

“The taking of Apollo House to give shelter to our forgotten homeless eight years ago captured the heart and imagination of the nation. Promises were made by political liars and, eight years later, our vulnerable are worse than ever.

We have already proven that we can step up for what’s right.

Perhaps, it’s time to tap into that courage again and reclaim our broken spirit.”

Retired schoolteacher Anna Kavanagh, Co-Founder of the Alliance of Birth Mothers Campaigning for Justice shared her thoughts, warning:

“There’s been a huge outcry in Ireland in recent weeks following the publication of a report on historic sexual abuse in religious run schools and promises from the government to set up a tribunal of inquiry.

In years to come we will have inquiries into the present cover up of child sex abuse by Tusla and the Family Courts. The present government will be held to account eventually and won’t be able to claim ignorance on the matter.”

Seamus Maye, Chairman of the International Small Business Alliance added:

“Irish citizens and SMEs are being denied basic human rights in the Courts, facilitated by the Equality of Arms chasm between them and the State/large corporations. Article 47 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union is being completely ignored in many cases; it covers:

- *Everyone whose rights and freedoms guaranteed by the law of the Union are violated has the right to an effective remedy before a tribunal in compliance with the conditions laid down in this Article.*
- *Everyone is entitled to a fair and public hearing within a reasonable time by an independent and impartial tribunal previously established by law.*
- *Everyone shall have the possibility of being advised, defended and represented.*
- *Legal aid shall be made available to those who lack sufficient resources in so far as such aid is necessary to ensure effective access to justice.*

And the Bangalore Principles of Independence, Impartiality, Integrity, Propriety, Equality, Competence and Diligence are simply being ignored in many cases. All these issues are leading to widespread Miscarriages of Justice in Irish Courts.”

Adrienne Jenkins, who alongside her husband Byron runs The Hub Ireland which provides support to people having ‘David versus Goliath’ battles in the Courts, explained:

“Ireland enacted the European Convention on Human Rights Act in 2003 and is legally obliged to legislate and rule domestically in compliance with every provision of this Act. Under Article 6 of that Convention on Human Rights, citizens are entitled to a fair and impartial hearing within a reasonable time by an independent and impartial tribunal established by law.

But it’s clear that what should be happening isn’t; that’s why we are protesting.”

Brian Reilly of Access2Justice and Right2Homes referenced serious misconduct in the UK:

“In the UK they’ve just had the extraordinary example of ‘Mr Bates vs The Post Office’ while here in Ireland we have an even worse example of ‘the system’ doubling down, even though they know, or at least should know, that there is now widespread ‘fraudulent misrepresentation’ and ‘strategic lies’ being facilitated in our Courts.”

Subject-matter expert Cormac Butler, who has given expert witness testimony to the Finance Committee on related matters on numerous occasions added:

“Between 2005-2010 banks knew they were hiding losses, yet lent money to customers knowing that the loans were impaired at the date they were advanced. They withheld information from customers and must be cross examined in possession order court cases, rather than walking away from their responsibilities on the grounds that the loans are sold to new owners.”

Agathangelou concluded with:

“We are calling on the people of Ireland to stop and think about what Robert F Kennedy said all those years ago, and to recognise that we shouldn’t tolerate what we know to be wrong. Kennedy’s wise words calling the people to protest are as right now as they were when he first uttered them in such a passionate and powerful way back in the 1960s.

He’s right. We should stand up, not stand by. We should take to the streets to peacefully and potently protest against injustice.

And given the upcoming General Election in Ireland, regardless of anybody’s other political views, we should all be united in calling for only a Government that will commit to protect the people, not the powerful banks, vulture funds and others deliberately getting in the way of justice for their own selfish gain. Enough is enough!”

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END OF PRESS STATEMENT

Notes to Editors:

- 1) Click [here](#) and scroll down to see the artwork being used for the banners and placards for the march – they show very clearly the grievances that have caused Irish citizens to take to the streets to protest in Dublin tomorrow.
- 2) Full details of the march including the route from The Four Courts, to Dublin Castle, to The Bank of Ireland at College Green, to Leinster House are available [here](#).
- 3) For further information on Article 47 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union see [here](#).
- 4) For further information on The Bangalore Principles see [here](#).
- 5) For further information about ‘the taking of Apollo House’ see [here](#).
- 6) For further information please contact Andy Agathangelou FRSA through andy.agathangelou@transparencytaskforce.org or by calling +44 (0)7501 460308. Andy Agathangelou is a high-profile UK-based campaigner with several related roles, including being:
 - Chair of the Secretariat Committee to the UK-based [All-Party Parliamentary Group on Investment Fraud and Fairer Financial Services](#)
 - [Founder of Transparency Task Force](#), a UK-based Certified Social Enterprise.

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