

Where nature and history meet



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18 January 2025

Taoiseach Simon Harris, TD
Department of the Taoiseach
Government Buildings
Upper Merrion Street
DUBLIN 2

**Re: Threatened Eviction of Ukrainian Refugees from their accommodation at
The Avon, Blessington, Co Wicklow**

A Thaoisig,

Established in 2001, Blessington & District Forum is the united community-based body for the area. The Forum is a 32 member group representing Blessington and the surrounding area, and facilitates all matters in relation to community and societal development, planning, town development, and environmental issues in cooperation with Wicklow County Council and other Statutory Bodies. Blessington and District Forum would like to draw your attention to an emerging situation which is causing considerable upset and concern within our community

This week the 110 Ukrainian residents in The Avon (www.theavon.ie) have been given eviction notices and told to leave their houses no later than 7th of February. These residents have been there for over two years and are well integrated and embedded in our community. Many of them have children in the local schools, they are working in the town and the surrounding areas, and volunteer with local community and sports groups.

The Forum would like to express its deep concern at this. . We are concerned at the near-impossibility of securing new accommodation, we deplore the fact that the affected children may have to change schools mid-year and, indeed, may never complete their school-year. This treatment of people seeking sanctuary in their time of distress is at variance with the experience of the Irish people who themselves sought overseas sanctuary in their time of need.

This treatment is totally unacceptable, it is inhumane, and morally wrong and it is happening in your constituency.

Can it be explained to us what criteria were used in arriving at the decision to bring this change about and what benefits were seen as accruing from it and to whom? Was alternative viable accommodation, schools, medical support etc ever identified?

We look forward to hearing from you as soon as possible on this important matter.

Is mise, le meas

Catherine Kehoe
Chairperson

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Secretary

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