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Date: 13th May 2026

Ref: Africa Solidarity Centre Ireland (ASCI) Press Release on Recent Remarks by Former Taoiseach Bertie Ahern Regarding Immigration.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Africa Solidarity Centre Ireland Condemns Former Taoiseach Bertie Ahern Over “Vile and Dangerous” Comments on Africans, Muslims and Immigration

The Africa Solidarity Centre Ireland (ASCI) strongly condemns the *vile, reckless, and deeply divisive comments* made by *former Taoiseach Bertie Ahern* in a video circulating on social media, in which he stated that “*the ones I worry about are the Africans,*” objected to people coming from “*the Congo,*” and raised concerns about the next *generation of Muslims in Ireland.*

These remarks are *shocking, discriminatory, and entirely unacceptable* from any public figure, particularly from a *former Taoiseach* who once represented the Irish State at the highest level and who benefited from the *support, trust, and goodwill of Ireland’s increasingly diverse communities* throughout his political career.

The Africa Solidarity Centre Ireland (ASCI) considers these comments to be *inflammatory and dangerous.* They risk *legitimising racism, fuelling anti-immigrant hostility, deepening social divisions, and encouraging fear and suspicion towards African communities, migrants, refugees, and Muslims living peacefully in Ireland.*

Ireland’s Constitution, *Bunreacht na hÉireann,* guarantees *equality, dignity, and protection of the personal rights of all persons.* *Article 40* enshrines the principle that *all citizens shall be held equal before the law,* while Irish *equality legislation prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, nationality, ethnicity, or religion.* Therefore, public representatives have a *constitutional, democratic, and moral duty to uphold these principles and not undermine them.*

At a time when communities across Ireland are working to *build unity, inclusion, and peaceful coexistence,* it is profoundly *irresponsible for political figures to engage in rhetoric that singles out Africans or Muslims* as a source of concern or threat. Such language has real-world consequences. It creates fear, emboldens extremists, and places social cohesion and public safety at risk.

The Africa Solidarity Centre Ireland (ASCI) recognises that *immigration policy is a legitimate area for democratic discussion and public debate.* However, there is a fundamental difference between *responsible policy discussion and the scapegoating of entire communities* for political relevance or electoral advantage. Political discourse must never *descend into fearmongering, racial profiling, or attempts to divide society along ethnic or religious lines.*



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We are increasingly concerned by the *growing trend of exploiting immigration anxieties during political campaigns and public debates in ways that inflame tensions and undermine Ireland's long-standing values of solidarity, humanity, and respect*. Ireland knows too well the *pain of discrimination, exclusion, and forced migration through its own history of emigration*.

The African communities, migrants, refugees, and Muslims continue to make enormous contributions to Irish society every day, in **healthcare, education, business, transport, public service, culture, and community life**. They are part of modern Ireland and **deserve respect, dignity, and equal treatment, not vilification**.

The Africa Solidarity Centre Ireland (ASCI) therefore calls on all political parties, elected representatives, election candidates, media commentators, and public figures to:

- *Reject divisive and inflammatory rhetoric on immigration;*
- *Respect the principles and ethics of democratic elections and public office;*
- *Uphold the Irish Constitution and equality laws;*
- *Promote social cohesion, unity, and peaceful coexistence;*
- *Refrain from exploiting fear, race, religion, or migration for political gain.*

We further call on **civil society, faith leaders, trade unions, community organisations, and democratic institutions** to speak out firmly **against racism, xenophobia, Islamophobia, and attempts to normalise hatred or discrimination** in Irish public life.

Ireland's future must be built on **justice, equality, dignity, solidarity, and mutual respect and not division, fear, or scapegoating**.

The Africa Solidarity Centre Ireland remains committed to defending **human rights, strengthening intercultural dialogue, and promoting an inclusive Ireland** where all communities can live in **peace, dignity, and equality**.

For further information: Please contact **Lassane Ouedraogo**, Africa Centre Ireland's Chairperson at: chairperson@afriacentre.ie or **0833903848**.

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