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High Court Challenge to Magdalene Redress Scheme Reveals Department of Justice Being Investigated by Ombudsman

A High Court challenge to the refusal by the Department of Justice to grant redress to women exploited as children in Magdalene Laundries today revealed that the Department of Justice had failed to disclose to the Court a pending investigation by the Ombudsman into the Department's administration of the State's redress scheme.

Two women who were forced to work in Magdalene Laundries as children commenced judicial review proceedings in 2015, challenging their rejection from the government's 'ex gratia' Magdalene redress scheme. One of the women was forced to work unpaid from age eight to eighteen. The other woman was forced into a Magdalene Laundry from the age of 12. Their exploitation occurred between 1971 and 1982.

The Department of Justice accepts that the women worked in Magdalene Laundries as children but has argued that they are not entitled to redress because they were not technically resident there. The Department is now under investigation by the Office of the Ombudsman, though this was not revealed to the High Court until today. The cases were adjourned to allow the Department to explain the omission.

JFM Research calls on the Taoiseach and the Minister for Justice to embrace an interpretation of the Magdalene redress scheme consistent with a spirit of healing and reconciliation and to ensure that all Magdalene Women – including those exploited as children – receive the redress they deserve.

Ends.

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