

## **ŻHN Press Release on Benefit Fraud**

ŻHN condemns fully and unconditionally all cases of benefit fraud – some of which have recently been reported in the local media.

It is our view that successive governments have failed to address this grave problem of claims to benefits by people who are not entitled, to the point where it has become an institutionalised practice. This practice undermines the health and well-being of those truly in need, and the confidence in key pillars of our society.

ŻHN also notes that the alleged practice of cajoling people into a false allegiance to individuals or a political group for favours is both undemocratic and disrespectful to the honest citizen who is robbed of their freedom of choice and thought.

We further note that this practice has rendered the worker, especially the lower earning worker, into a beggar and a thief. Those in need are rendered beggars having to turn to illicit means to make ends meet. This phenomenon is made worse when those who are in a position of ensuring a fair system to help those truly in need turn a blind eye and allegedly, albeit indirectly, benefit from it.

ŻHN condemns all benefit fraud in whatever shape or form, irrespective whether the claimant was in dire straits or not. However, we condemn more forcefully those fit and able workers that have resorted to benefit fraud to avoid working, or to avoid putting in the hours into their work. We remind that working is above all else a responsibility for all who are fit to contribute to society through their work activity, whatever that may be. We also remind that everyone has an obligation towards society to pay their tax and social security dues in full – after all these serve to ensure that those really in need can receive assistance.

ŻHN insists that the government establishes a truly independent and non-partisan body, that acts in complete transparency to assess past, current, and future benefit claims. We insist on the enactment of legislation to implement safeguard mechanisms to ensure that a stop is put to this practice of defrauding the honest taxpayer and undermining the nation's democratic credentials.

We need to ensure that people have confidence in our social welfare mechanisms as without these our society will be brought down to its knees to the detriment of the weakest in society.

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