



**Tribunal of Inquiry into Issues Relating to the Processes within the Defence Forces for Dealing with Complaints of Abuse and the Culture Surrounding the Making of such Complaints
(‘the Tribunal’)**

Established under the Tribunals of Inquiry (Evidence) Acts 1921 to 2011 by statutory instrument signed by the Tánaiste and Minister for Defence on the 20th day of June 2024.

NOTICE IN RESPECT OF PUBLIC HEARINGS

As stated in the ‘*Notice of Commencement of Public Hearings*’ dated 18 March 2026, the Defence Forces Tribunal will commence public hearings on **Wednesday, 3 June 2026 at 10:00**. The first module of public hearings will concentrate upon paragraph (iv) of the Terms of Reference which requires the Tribunal to:

‘investigate whether Complaints of Abuse were actively deterred or whether there was a culture that discouraged the making of the Complaints of Abuse;’.

I. Evidence of ‘Abuse’ and the consequences of ‘Abuse’

The Tribunal is tasked with, *inter alia*, inquiring into the complaints processes in the Defence Forces in relation to complaints of abuse. It is required also to investigate whether complaints of abuse were actively deterred or whether there was a culture that discouraged the making of complaints of abuse. The Tribunal is not determining whether complaints of abuse were well-founded.¹ The Terms of Reference of the Tribunal provide that the Tribunal may permit evidence of abuse and the consequence of abuse to be led in the context of its investigation into Terms of Reference (i) to (v) but the Tribunal is precluded from investigating into, or making findings of fact upon any matters that

¹ See previous ruling of the Tribunal on the Interpretation of its Terms of Reference dated 30 June 2025.

would, if established in a court of law, be criminal in nature. The Tribunal considers that it must hear evidence of abuse because an understanding of the nature and extent of abuse is necessary to enable it to investigate properly the adequacy of the complaints processes designed to deal with that abuse.

II. Non-Identification of alleged perpetrators of 'Abuse'

The Tribunal recognises that hearing evidence of abuse against alleged perpetrators in circumstances where the Tribunal cannot make a finding as to whether the allegation is well-founded or not, could operate unfairly both as against the alleged perpetrator of the abuse and the complainant making the allegation of abuse. The alleged perpetrator would be denied the opportunity to vindicate his or her good name and reputation by a finding from the Tribunal that the allegation was unfounded. A complainant subjected to vigorous cross-examination designed to suggest that the complaint is unfounded would be denied the opportunity to vindicate his or her good name by having the complaint upheld.

In order, therefore, to ensure fair procedures are observed and to protect the constitutional rights of those involved in the making of allegations of abuse, the Tribunal intends to adopt the following procedures:

- (i) the names of alleged perpetrators of abuse will be redacted from the booklets of documents circulated to relevant parties for hearings before the Tribunal;
- (ii) witnesses before the Tribunal will not be permitted to name any alleged perpetrators of abuse during oral testimony;
- (iii) the Tribunal will not name perpetrators of abuse either in the course of its hearings or in its Report or Reports to the Taoiseach;
- (iv) alleged perpetrators of abuse will not be permitted to cross-examine a complainant with a view to suggesting or establishing that the complaint of

abuse is unfounded. They will, however, be entitled to put a denial of abuse and, if appropriate, a short summary of the basis for the denial;

- (v) in limited circumstances, alleged perpetrators of abuse will be called to give evidence before the Tribunal in respect of matters relevant to the Tribunal's Terms of Reference, and such persons will be given a pseudonym by which they will be referred and/or addressed at all times and by all parties throughout the course of the Tribunal's public hearings and, if it should arise, in the Tribunal's Report; and

- (vi) in respect of alleged perpetrators of abuse, if the identity of any such person is either deliberately or inadvertently revealed in the course of the Tribunal's hearings, the Tribunal, to preserve the confidentiality of such information, intends to impose reporting restrictions on all members of the media, all media organisations and any other person or persons, directing that no report of the proceedings of that particular day shall contain material likely to lead members of the public to identify a person as an alleged perpetrator of abuse, or likely to lead members of the public to identify a person as a person against whom a complaint of abuse is made, shall be published in a written publication available to the public or be broadcast.