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Press Statement, dated Monday 2nd April 2012  
Issued by CPPC in Cork South Central, 021-2428310

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A General Election (2011) candidate has demanded that the State proceed with prosecutions against him under the Standards in Public Office (SIPO) legislation.

Diarmaid Ó Cadhla (Cork South Central) is refusing to return SIPO Statutory Declarations arising out of participation in the election last year. He declares that the SIPO legislation is **discriminatory** and based on Electoral Acts which are **unconstitutional** and a denial of the rights of citizens to elect and be elected.

Prosecution of the alleged offence offers the opportunity to clarify this serious matter before a court of law. SIPO has already used Garda time in repeated visits to the home of the candidate, itself a misuse of valuable resources. All that is required is for a summons to be issued, which the candidate has told the Gardaí he is happy to answer in court. If the SIPO legislation means anything then prosecution should proceed as provided for, otherwise the law means nothing and the cost of the SIPO Commission is itself a waste of public funds.

The diligence of the State agencies in pursuing this matter is in stark contrast to the astonishing lack of accountability at Government and institutional level when it comes to protecting the rights of citizens. Reneging on the Nation's sovereignty, as occurred in accepting the shameful 'bailout' conditions, and the widespread abuse of power are all rooted in the betrayal of the people's mandate after every election.

The reality is that the political parties use the SIPO legislation to pretend that high standards and safeguards are in place, but they are not. The Mahon Tribunal has shown us the type of high standard that do exist.

Despite SIPO, loopholes are easily found to hide political donations and the Fine Gael party itself refuses to disclose any corporate donations at all. In addition, the political party system is funded directly by the State, that is to say, by the people. Political parties received over €90 million in the 6 year period to 2010. Accounting for these funds by either the political parties or SIPO is either not required at all or is so inadequate as to be non-existent and meaningless.

SIPO legislation treats individuals or any organisations of the people who wish to exercise their democratic and constitutional entitlements, with less rights than these private clubs who receive millions in State funding.

**The People's Convention** insists that the right of citizens to elect people to Dáil Éireann who "**represent constituencies**" must be protected by the courts. Article 16.2.1 of Bunreacht na hÉireann does not make any provision for TD's to represent either parties or themselves individually.

The usurpation of our right as citizens by self selecting private members clubs - political parties - must be ended and the unconstitutional laws enabling it repealed.

It is a matter of public duty to remove the smokescreen that masks the corruption and backroom dealings of the party system, including the fig leaf of SIPO.

**SELECT - ELECT - MANDATE - CHECKUP - RECALL**

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If the Mahon Tribunal tells us anything it underlines the importance of ending the special position of political parties and putting in place the means for citizens to directly select and mandate their elected representatives. This challenge to SIPO upholds this principle.

**END**

### **Some Background Information:**

Formation of The People's Convention was announced on 27th November 2010 on the occasion of the mass demonstration organised by ICTU against the mishandling of the banking system and the imposing of economic austerity measures. In the following few months meetings and public selection conventions were organised in many constituencies, resulting in 4 candidates contesting the General Election (2011).

Since then the ideas of The Peoples Convention have developed and are republished in pamphlet form under the title *"IRISH CITIZENS, WE MUST EMPOWER OURSELVES!"*. Printed copies of the pamphlet are available on request and PDF images can be downloaded from the website.

### **Basic position of CPPC:**

The basic standpoint of CPPC States that it is the will of the people which must determine the policy of our State. However, this right of citizens to decide the policy of our State has been usurped and instead we have a system of contending and collaborating political parties of vested interests ruling over us.

CPPC is proposing the method by which the citizens of our country can make a reality of our right, we can empower ourselves. Further, this empowerment of the citizens does not need any of the cosmetic reforms being promoted by the political parties either in Ireland or in Europe, reforms which will in fact result in less democracy, not more. Everything the Irish people need is already provided for in Bunreacht na hÉireann, but we must insist on its implementation.

Once the citizens are empowered, we will be able to make any other changes we wish. We won't have to protest or campaign against our own government or resort to breaking the law or wait 5 years for some election which takes place on a completely false basis as we have found to our cost over decades. And if we make a wrong decision, we can change it. If any elected representative fails in their duty to represent the constituency they can be recalled.

None of the reforms promoted by the political parties will result in the empowerment of the citizens, their reforms are another smokescreen to hide the reality - we are a people ruled over rather than ruling in our own State.

*(Attached: Image of the candidate, Diarmaid Ó Cadhla)*