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Report left chief of staff feeling 'ashamed'



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The chief of staff of the Defence Forces has spoken of being “ashamed” at a **new report** which exposed widespread bullying and sexual abuse amongst members.

Lieutenant General Sean Clancy said “I am ashamed, there’s no question about that”.

Speaking ahead of a commencement ceremony for new cadets in Dublin, Mr Clancy said he welcomed the coming statutory inquiry regarding the findings of the report of the Independent Review Group (IRG) of the Defence Forces.

Mr Clancy commended the Women of Honour group for “speaking truth to power” in terms of the allegations they had brought to light which led directly to the review.

He said that while he found the report “stark” and



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the verbal, physical, sexual, and psychological abuse of women within its ranks.

Shocking findings

Some 88% of female respondents in the IRG's perceptions and experience survey reported that they had experienced one or more forms of sexual harassment, compared with just 17% of male respondents.

Mr Clancy was scathing in his assessment of the perpetrators of the abuse detailed in the IRG report.

“The men and women of Óglaigh na hÉireann, the good men and women that work hard every day, do not accept the inappropriate behaviours that exist in our organisation,” he said.

“We have this, which is an intolerable situation, abhorrent to most members of the Defence Forces today, something



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However, the lieutenant general stopped short of saying that he would be in a position to remove members of the forces who may have perpetrated abuse and remain in their positions, saying instead he was “looking forward to the legislative changes” which would give him the “command and control and the authority” which would enable him “to exercise that to its fullest extent, which I do not have at this point”.

He said in welcoming the report he was particularly keen to see the legislative changes needed to bring the Defence Forces into the modern era.

“We are an institution that has existed for over 100 years, operating under an act of 1954,” he said, acknowledging the need to bring the “legislative process into the 21 st century”.

He said the controversy surrounding the report makes the “huge challenge” of recruiting for the Defence Forces “even harder”.

The chief of staff insisted that, despite having spent 40 years working within the culture of the Defence Forces, he is regardless the right person to drive through the changes the organisation requires.

“I’ve made it very clear my determination and my commitment to drive this myself,” he said, adding that that change can be achieved “with the support of the strong team around me”.



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at just the flick of a switch.

“It takes drive, determination and resilience, and I’ve made my commitment very clear to the Tánaiste,” he said.

He insisted that he is “not afraid of this opportunity”.

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