

'Isis recruiter' fights deportation in court

A MAN accused of being the main Isis recruiter here has begun his full legal bid in the High Court to prevent his deportation.

The man, who cannot be identified by order of the court, has taken two judicial review proceedings, which are being heard together.

The first relates to his application for refugee status, and the second concerns an order to deport him to Jordan.

Danny Friedman QC said his client had been accused of being the 'foremost organiser and facilitator of the travel of Isis fighters from the State and around the world to the current Middle Eastern conflict zones'.

The barrister said the question

By Helen Bruce

of his client's safety, on his return, had not been properly and reasonably considered by the State. He also said there was systemic torture in Jordan.

Mr Friedman also argued that 'reputable medical evidence that the applicant was probably tortured in the past in the way he has described has been insufficiently scrutinised, subject to the wrong standard of proof and, in any event, unreasonably rejected'.

The man had first gone to the court in late December last year, seeking a temporary injunction to prevent his deportation.

The injunction was granted but

then set aside after the State said he was a risk to national security. That decision was brought to the Court of Appeal, which has yet to give its judgment.

During the injunction proceedings, the State said the man was consulted by, gave directions to and had consulted with senior violent extremist leaders outside Ireland.

He was alleged to be involved in recruiting and making travel arrangements for members of Islamic extremist group Isis. He denied he had acted on behalf of Isis or he posed a threat to national security.

The State has indicated it will oppose the proceedings, which will continue today.

Dr Mark Dooley



MORAL MATTERS

In caring for our gardens, we are reconnecting with the world

I KNOW it is earlier than usual, but I could not resist taking to the garden at the weekend. Perhaps it was election fatigue or merely the bright evenings that drew me outside. Either way, it was like returning home after a long period in exile.

Recently, I was asked on radio what significance gardening has for a philosopher. The interviewer had read my book *Moral Matters* in which I speak about the garden as our last link with the land.

We may have fled the farm, but in tending to our gardens we are still somewhat bound to the soil.

I told the interviewer that nothing is more important in our technological age than pruning, weeding and planting. It reminds us that we are creatures of the earth, that we are dependent on it for our survival. Without our gardens, the plugged-in generation would never know the source of our sustenance.

The garden makes us ecologically aware. In caring for creation, we see that we are part of it and that without it we cannot prevail. It roots us to reality, to life in all its beautiful abundance.

As I pondered our ragged and overgrown patch, I wondered where I should begin. New life was evident, but it was camouflaged by a thick blanket of 'winter wool'. Start from where you are, I said to myself, and you'll conquer it eventually.

Out came the gardening gloves and onto my knees I went. Weeding is such an unglamorous exercise, and yet it is one of the most satisfying. As you break through the wet soil, you can, quite literally, smell spring.

Slowly, I made my way across the bed, uprooting all unwanted weeds and wild flowers. As I did so, I remembered what it was that I missed so much over the winter. When elbow-deep in the muck, you are once again made whole and complete.

Not only do you forget about the trials and tribulations of life, but you also reconnect with the senses. So much of modern life is lived in the mind and filtered exclusively through the eyes. It is as though we are disembodied cyborgs with no real connection to anything but a screen.

Outside, you very quickly remember that you are not only a mind but also a body. What's more, the body doesn't dwell in the past or future, but is always fully in the present. In the garden, we become present to everything and everyone.

The moist bud on the hydrangea plant is surging with new life. It won't fully blossom until late summer, but you sense it cannot wait. Likewise, the rose bushes have already begun to spring, their leaves brightly beam-

ing in the evening sun. I tend the soil around them and find that I am totally absorbed in the task.

The silence of nature brings you into a deep silence of your own. It is a sweet harmony that unites you to the greater chorus of creation.

The insects, bees and spiders are still inside. Above, however, the birds are busy gathering and building. For the first time this spring, I heard a wood pigeon summon the creatures of the air to their familiar habitat.

There is so much to be done and it will take me until after Easter to get through it. By the time the sun had set, I had barely tackled the flower bed. However, even that short spell made my spirit soar.

Out the children came with their big plastic spades and proceeded to shovel mounds of sludge onto the grass. My first instinct was to grab the spades and send them packing. Our two youngest love gardening, but have yet to realise that tending the soil does not mean flinging it everywhere. For so long, they have been desperately seeking to return to their trampoline. They love mucking about just as much as I do. In an age when so many of their friends are stuck to a screen, I am the last person who will deny them these simple but necessary joys.

AND so I said nothing and let them carry on with their mud fest. Soon, you could see their complexion turn rosy red as the natural energy filled their lungs. In the garden, they had found their way back home to health and happiness.

Gardening is work and demands attention. Yet it is work that reaps its own reward. You get nothing out of it except the joy of seeing your blossoms bloom, your plot progress and all manner of wildlife make a home in yours.

In a world of so much material abundance, those are simple rewards. So too are the health benefits of immersing yourself in the soil and doing your bit to enhance our shattered environment.

They are, however, the greatest of rewards for those who realise what we risk losing when we disconnect from that vital source of life.

I came in, took off my gloves and felt a sublime sense of peace. A dark veil was descending across the sky, but enough of the garden was visible for me to see that a labour of love was underway. A little piece of nature had cast off its winter wool and was inhaling the fresh scent of a new spring.

In the background, the boys were running around and chuckling loudly. I looked at my hands still covered in soil and smiled at it all.

The world was finally awake and so were we.

—mark.dooley@daily@mail.ie—

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