

## **PRESS RELEASE**

**Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> July 2015**

### **Assisted suicide is not a human right, reaffirms European Court of Human Rights**

The national pro-life charity LIFE has welcomed a ruling by the European Court of Human Rights restating the opinion that European human rights legislation does not require the legalisation of assisted suicide. The widow of the late Tony Nicklinson and a paralysed man named Paul Lamb had wanted the ECHR to declare that the UK's prohibition of assisted suicide was a violation of human rights, but the court said that this was not the case.

LIFE spokesman Mark Bhagwandin said: "We have enormous sympathy with people who find themselves in terrible pain and suffering. But hard cases make bad law. Paul Lamb and the family of Tony Nicklinson were seeking a radical change in the law that would affect everyone. Changing the law to legalise some forms of intentional killing – thereby removing protection from all those sick, elderly and disabled people who wish to remain alive – cannot be regarded simply as a personal matter. It is a question of public safety and the common good.

"Once we have admitted into law the principle that killing is an appropriate treatment for certain people, it becomes very difficult to control the future application of that principle. We should look, for instance, in the Netherlands, where in just a few short years assisted suicide has gone from being an option for a few people in very severe pain to being offered to teenagers with depression and people who have nothing physically wrong with them but are 'tired of life', and non-responsive patients who have not made any request to be killed.

"We hope that this decision will slow the movement towards legal assisted suicide in Britain. This is not the first time that the ECHR has repeated its view that the so-called "right to die" is not found in, or implied by, European law. In recent years, Bills to allow forms of assisted suicide have been rejected several times by both houses of the Westminster Parliament, and by the Scottish Parliament, and it is opposed by almost all the major medical bodies, e.g. the British Medical Association and the Royal College of Physicians, and by groups which promote the rights of people with disabilities and the elderly."

**END**

**For further media comment please call the LIFE Media Hotline on 07867 744502**

**LIFE is a pro-life charity that supports anyone facing a crisis pregnancy, pregnancy loss or after an abortion, and strives to engage, inspire and inform the next generation.**