



UACHTARÁN NA hÉIREANN  
PRESIDENT OF IRELAND

**MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT MICHAEL D. HIGGINS**  
**COMMEMORATION OF THE TRAGEDY OF THE ARANDORA STAR**  
**TERMONCARRAGH CEMETERY, CO. MAYO**

**SUNDAY, 27 JUNE, 2021**

Mar Uachtarán na hÉireann, is mian liom seasamh le phobal Iodálach na hÉireann agus muid ag cuimhne ar an 446 Iodálach i measc 804 duine san iomlán a bhásaigh de bharr an tubaist a tharla ar 3 Iúil 1940 nuair a cailleadh an Arandora Star.

As President of Ireland, I wish to join with our Italian community and all their friends on the occasion of the unveiling of a commemorative plaque at Termoncarragh cemetery to honour the memory of the 446 Italian victims of the Arandora Star tragedy on 2 July 1940, in the first year of the Second World War.

This plaque will join a number of memorials in Britain and Italy which mark the loss of the Italians on board the Arandora Star. We recall too the 358 other victims, mainly of German and British nationality, who were also lost that day.

Some of the Arandora Star victims found a resting place in Ireland, and others elsewhere in these islands, after their bodies were washed ashore in the weeks after the tragedy.

The circumstances which led to the appalling loss of life after the Arandora Star was sunk by torpedo were truly tragic. In recent years historians have perhaps been able to shed more light on the sequence of events that led to the disaster and this is to be welcomed by all of us who wish not only to commemorate past events but also to better understand and learn from the past. More importantly still, is that keeping alive the memory of victims such as those we commemorate today, reminds us all of the calamitous consequences of untempered militarism, the hubris of conquest and the destructive desire for domination that has blighted our civilisations for so long. The memory of loss should be kept alive, lest we allow ourselves to forget the horror, the death, the grieving and the shattered lives that armed conflict leaves in its wake.

I would like to commend all those involved in the laying of this plaque and, in particular Francesco Morelli, President of the National Association of Carabinieri Ireland, for inviting me to attend.

While I could not join you in person today, I am with you in spirit to remember all the Italian and other victims of the Arandora Star Tragedy.

I would like to express on this occasion solidarity and friendship with all Italians living in Ireland, both longstanding communities, such as those originally from the Val di Comino, and the more recent arrivals who contribute so much to life in Ireland.

MICHAEL D. HIGGINS  
UACHTARÁN NA hÉIREANN  
PRESIDENT OF IRELAND

24 JUNE, 2021