

PRESS RELEASE

“Report highlights opportunities for addressing institutional racism” says anti-racism watchdog, as latest iReport.ie data reveals a continuing steady rise in the numbers of violent crimes.

The latest 6 months report from ENAR Ireland (European Network Against Racism Ireland) “Shows evidence of extensive physical, financial, psychological and social impacts on those reporting, with Sixteen cases resulting in physical injuries and one case resulting in attempted suicide” according to report author Dr. Lucy Michael of Ulster University. The report charts increased levels racist crime, with the highest numbers being targeted against people identifying as ‘Black’, with Muslims experiencing slightly increased levels on previous periods. The most common types of incidents reported were patterns of ongoing harassment, followed by assaults and threats to kill or harm, and other forms of threats. Illegal discrimination against a range of minorities including Travellers was high across a range of institutions.

The report, made by Dr Michael from the information on racist incidents submitted to the iReport.ie racist incident reporting website, details the multiple impacts on the lives and wellbeing of people from minority ethnic backgrounds. “It’s difficult for white settled Irish people to appreciate how profoundly racism impacts on the everyday lives of minorities.” said Dr Michael “but contributors make it abundantly clear in this report that if you are from a minority background, your experience of neighbourhoods, workplaces, public spaces and of the institutions intended to protect people, is very different from the experience which the majority population have.” Shane OCurry, Director of ENAR Ireland added: “These real differences in your everyday experience of life in Irish society constitute the single biggest barrier to integration which you will face, and they are caused by a racism and discrimination which are embedded everywhere, including in our institutions. The data also shows clearly that having Irish citizenship doesn’t offer minorities protection from racism and discrimination. This raises the appalling vista of first and second class citizenship in our republic.” Said OCurry. Among the report’s findings are instances of discriminatory behaviour and hostility by staff in Intreo offices against claimants from ethnic minority backgrounds, and instances of assault and racial victimisation by members of An Garda Síochána. “The first duty of our institutions is to protect peoples human rights and equal access. Section 14 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Act (2014) places this obligation unambiguously on all public institutions, including An Garda Síochána. But the data clearly shows that having this Public Sector Duty on the statute books has so far not been enough to change our institutional practices” Said OCurry “the necessary changes need leadership to drive them through”

“In this context we are hopeful that the clear recommendations in the recent [report](#) on human rights policing by the Irish Council for Civil Liberties, and the authority provided by the [report](#) of the Commission on the Future of Policing In Ireland, will provide the new Garda Commissioner Drew Harris with the wherewithal to drive through the necessary changes to An Garda Síochána, making it a police service fit for serving our multi cultural society. We are hopeful too that the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission will be able to ensure that all of our institutions implement the Public Sector Duty in a meaningful way.” Said OCurry

“We need to be proactive in confronting racism at an institutional level. It is not good enough to blame minorities for the failure of society to integrate them when such high levels of racism are reproduced by our institutional failures. The responsibility must be on the state to first address the racism in its own institutions. We have a number of opportunities here to transform our institutions ability to protect human rights and guarantee equality” said Shane OCurry “let us seize them”

ENAR Ireland has been collecting reports on racist incidents through the online iReport.ie Racist Incident Reporting System since July 2013.