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Rates of gender-based violence are increasing due to conflict and climate change. What can Ireland do?

Ladies and gentlemen, and fellow citizens,

Rates of gender-based violence are significantly increasing due to factors such as climate change and conflict. In these turbulent times, it has become apparently obvious that Ireland needs to make more of an effort to tackle this crisis. This stark situation affects all of us, men, women and children alike. There are many roots to this issue, which need to be dealt with swiftly before any progress can be made to appease this "global public health pandemic" as it has been referred to by the United Nations.

Firstly, the concentration of power and resources in northern countries plays a major role in the increase of these rates, and still continues to impact the lives of people in the Global South, in areas such as Chad, Libya and Tanzania.

These countries are situated in close proximity to the equator, and as result of the audacious actions of wealthy northern countries, such as America, and their use of finite and natural resources - these impoverished states are bearing the brunt of their actions in the form of extreme climate change. For example, Libya is vulnerable to desertification due to climate change, and this leads to migration - as people are forced out of villages and their homes. As a consequence of this, 87% of women and 77% of children are exposed to gender-based violence in the form of human trafficking - when transiting Libya, leaving Libya as the country with the highest human trafficking rates in Northern Africa.

These, as I'm sure we can all agree, are shockingly high statistics, that alone should urge our nation to take more steps to help solve this crisis. There are many adequate solutions for Ireland to come up with in order to prevent the rates of gender-based violence from soaring any higher and to ultimately wipe out its existence. As a nation, we do not stand innocent amidst all of this chaos. Our Taoiseach has stated that Ireland seems to be suffering "an epidemic of gender-based violence" after the death of 23 year old teacher and musician, Ashling Murphy, on the 12th June 2022. So, what can Ireland do to rectify this calamity ?

Ireland needs to place more of an emphasis on supporting international efforts for peace against GBV , such as the UN Women campaign to "End Violence against Women". This needs to become an immediate priority for our government, and governments all over the world. How are we, as a country, ever supposed to feel united if there is such an apparent unequal power dynamic between genders ?

It is evident that our current legislation and juridical systems in place, need to be improved significantly. We need more laws against gender-based violence and tighter consequences on anyone who commits this heinous act. Our aim should be to invest in foreign aid programmes to

assist victims of violence in impoverished states, such as in South Africa, where this pandemic has become so dire that every four hours a woman is murdered.

As a young Irish citizen, I feel as though I am part of a nation that strives for positive change to be brought about to any horrific situation, such as the one currently at play. As citizens of Ireland, we all have a vital role to play in ensuring the safety of our men, women and children alike. We must work together to change the path of our future to ensure future social growth. Unfortunately, this gender-based violence pandemic has become part and parcel of life in many societies and there is little or no pressure on governments to address it at the minute. This needs to stop now.

By addressing this issue, we will bring our people together as a nation and we can then work united to fix this epidemic once and for all.

As John F. Kerry once said, "Gender- based violence anywhere is a threat to peace and security everywhere".

Thank you for your attention.