

S/M/5.005|2-20|

## MANDATE

### **Emergency Motion to MSU Student Senate on Campaigning against Image Based Sexual Abuse**

Submitted by: Kelly Rennick (MSU President)

Seconded by: Rebecca McGlynn (Arts, Celtic Studies, & Philosophy Faculty Assembly Member), Michaela Waters (HEAR Senator), Jordan Quinn (Independent Senator), Kealan Hilley (Gender Equality Senator), Ciarán Watts (VP Welfare & Equality), Katie Kennedy (Arts, Celtic Studies, & Philosophy Faculty Convenor), Sinéad Fitzgibbon (Oifigeach na Gaeilge), Luke Buckley (Independent Senator), Nicole Carr (Postgraduate Representative), Cáit McGovern (Campus Life Senator), Aaron Thornton (Clubs Council Member), Aoife Deegan (Community Senator), Laura Flood (Study Abroad & Erasmus+ Senator), Aoife Ni Mhuiri (Social Sciences Faculty Assembly Member), Gavin Fanning (DARE Senator)

#### **Background:**

Over the past week, hundreds of forums and files have been discovered with thousands of Irish girls, women and non binary individuals, who are victims of image-based sexual abuse (IBSA). IBSA refers to sharing of explicit or sexual images or videos, without the prior consent of the owner of the content, which causes deliberate harm to a person against their will. Sex workers have been the largest group of people affected by IBSA recently, sex workers can display images publicly online for their work but can be subject to IBSA if images are shared beyond their work place without consent. Many people also become victims of IBSA as they are coerced into sending explicit images without the knowledge that the person they are sending them to has the intent to share them to others. Victims of IBSA often have sent sexually explicit images to a person whom they trust who has chosen to breach this trust without their partner's/victim's prior knowledge.

#### **Student Senate is aware:**

The sharing of non-consensual images can impact an individual's mental health. This can lead to feelings of shame, degradation, embarrassment, self-blame, being devalued and lowered self-confidence. IBSA can also lead to victim blaming which can result in cyberbullying and job losses. Victims of IBSA often feel isolated and unsafe.

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**Student Senate notes with concern:**

Rape culture is very prevalent in Ireland. Rape culture is a sociological concept for a setting in which rape is pervasive and normalized due to societal attitudes about gender and sexuality. In Ireland there is much needed education with regards to sex work, consent and attitudes towards women and non-binary individuals.

**Student Senate notes:**

IBSA is currently not a crime in Ireland. There is no legislation that protects individuals who have been affected. This means people who commit IBSA cannot be penalised or convicted of a crime.

**Student Senate therefore mandates:**

Maynooth students' union to support the rally against IBSA on the 28 November. That the President of MSU attends the rally against IBSA to represent MSU. That the VP Welfare & Equality creates online campaign materials for students to share on the day.

**Student Senate further mandates:**

The MSU President lobby the Irish government for the Harassment, Harmful Communications and Related Offences Bill to be signed into Irish law. This includes lobbying for relevant amendments if needed to ensure this crime is deemed a sex crime and to ensure onus isn't on the victim to prove distress as this encourages victim blaming culture.