



Press Release

For Immediate Release

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## ONLINE RACISM UNREPORTED

Hotline.ie has announced that the Irish public are failing to report incidents of incitement to hatred online. The Irish internet watchdog combats illegal online material by investigating anonymous reports made by members of the public. The level of reporting of cases of incitement to hatred has been consistently low since Hotline.ie began in 1999, with less than a handful of cases each year. Exclusive research published by Hotline.ie today has revealed that 2 in 5 people are often startled by things that they come across on the internet while 40% of people in Ireland feel that we have simply become more used to graphic and offensive content online.\*

According to the 2012 report by the Irish Network Against Racism to mark International Day Against Racism, racist violence and crime currently accounts for 75% of racist incidents reported in Ireland, constituting 113 of the 149 reported incidents. With only one in six people reporting these incidents to the police, the report noted that this was due to fear or the fact they feel that nothing can be done\*\*

Commenting on this, Paul Durrant, Manager, Hotline.ie said:

*"The UK tube attack and the racist Fabrice Muamba tweets are not unique to our neighbours. We regularly encounter incitement to hatred against the travelling community and other minority groups in Ireland. The Internet is so vast that we can't know what is stored or travelling over the networks, so the public have to be our eyes and ears let us know if this content is there - it's no good ignoring it. As the figures reveal, members of the public are often startled by online content but based on the amount of reports of online racism we received in 2011, they simply aren't reporting this. Maybe as the INAR report suggests, people are afraid to report incidents in the real world but when it comes to the Internet, Hotline.ie exists to allow the public to anonymously report suspected racist content found online. If our Analysts confirm a case as breaking Irish law, we will then do our best to have it removed. This is of vital importance when you consider the direct targeting of advocates of racial tolerance in our society such as Aodhan Ó Riordáin the Labour TD who was sent hate mail after he spoke out in support of tolerance of ethnic minorities in Ireland.*

In its concluding observations in March 2011 the UN Committee on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD) noted with regret that the review of the Irish Incitement to Hatred Act 1989 had stalled. As Ireland struggles to monitor racist incidents and legal reform lags behind the changes in Irish society, Hotline.ie asks the Irish public not to ignore online racial incitement but report it using the web forms at [www.hotline.ie](http://www.hotline.ie).

Paul Durrant continued:

*"Our 2011 Annual Report reveals that reporting of suspect content to the Hotline.ie had increased by 25% from the previous year. This is a very positive reflection of the Irish public's willingness to take a personal stand against illegal online content. However, the reports of incitement to hatred were a very small percentage. The public can contact us regarding*

*Illegal online activity including child pornography, material causing incitement to hatred and fraudulent web sites that try to illegally obtain a user's banking or personal details."*

////Background

The Hotline, run by the Internet Service Providers Association of Ireland ([ISPAI](#)) since November 1999, is part financed by the European Commission's Safer Internet Plus Programme. It is supervised by the Department of Justice, Office for Internet Safety (OIS), in cooperation with An Garda Síochána and is a member of [INHOPE](#), the International Network of Hotlines. Hotline.ie provides an anonymous facility for the public to report suspected illegal content encountered on the Internet, in a secure and confidential way. The primary focus of the Hotline is to combat Child Pornography by having it removed expeditiously from the Internet and alerting police so they may investigate. Other forms of illegal content and activities exist on the Internet and may be reported using this service.

Ireland's Ethnic representation based on 2006 Census: Irish 87.4%, other white 7.5%, Asian 1.3%, black 1.1%, mixed 1.1%, unspecified 1.6% - <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/fields/2075.html>)

\* 1000 people surveyed in Ireland by Behaviour and Attitudes on behalf of Hotline.ie

\*\*The Irish Network Against Racism launched its annual State of Nation Report and the European Shadow Report on Racism during the European Week Against Racism (17-25 March 2012). See [www.enarireland.org](http://www.enarireland.org) for more information.

\*\*\*A summary of the live chat on Le Vif/L'Express, as well as comments, can be found [here](#). The death threat comment was removed by Le Vif/L'Express as soon as it was reported to them. URL for press statement: <http://cms.horus.be/files/99935/MediaArchive/pdfpress/2012-03-05%20death%20threat%20complaint-final.pdf>

\*\*\*\*Aodhan Ó Riordáin lodged a complaint under the Incitement to Hatred Act in November 2011, in response to comments made by Cllr. Darren Scully indicating that he would not represent "black Africans". He subsequently received hate mail – see Herald media article - at <http://www.herald.ie/news/well-put-a-bullet-in-your-brain-sick-hate-mail-to-td-3020046.html>

For media inquiries please contact Christine on 01 685 3450 or [Christine.dobbin@merrionbd.ie](mailto:Christine.dobbin@merrionbd.ie), Paul Durrant, Manager of Hotline.ie is available for interview on request.

