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For Immediate Release

Press Release: The Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities (NICEM) and the Migrant Centre NI appalled by racist video posted on Facebook.

A video, which was posted on Facebook at the weekend appearing to show a racist incident in Antrim involving a Romanian victim and a number of perpetrators, raises concerns about the continuing need for community development and support for victims. We are saddened to see that the current rhetoric at all levels of our society around migrants in the aftermath of Brexit is clearly influencing our young people negatively. *We therefore call for a strong statement by both central and local government, in particular our local MLAs and councillors to highlight the positive contributions that BME and migrant communities make to NI society and that actions like these against any member of our community regardless of nationality, ethnicity or background will not be tolerated.*

Patrick Yu, Executive Director of NICEM

“This behaviour is not acceptable in our society and it is particularly worrying due to the timing of this incident and the ongoing Brexit debate at the Conservative Party Conference on the timetable of Brexit which is a hard landing one that called upon to control the migrants and the country. We call upon all local communities in NI to report all racist incidents to PSNI.”

Jolena Flett, Manager of the Migrant Centre NI

“We all need to take responsibility for creating a more positive and constructive dialogue. Verbal abuse incidents are the most underreported because victims often do not believe anything can or will be done. It is important to take notice of these incidents and create an environment where victims or witnesses are confident to report them.”

END

Notes to the Editor:

1. The issues of racist hate incidents and hate crime in Northern Ireland appear in the public domain intermittently and once again has been brought into focus again after the recent decision of the United Kingdom to leave the European Union. In Northern Ireland we did not have upsurge as in England and Wales following on the Brexit result. The number of incidents and hate crime is almost the same as the year before. NICEM continues to monitor the impact of Brexit on the communities and has held several events across Northern Ireland with BME communities to gather their feedback and issues of concern in order to call upon the government to address these as the process of Brexit unfolds. A report is available with the results of this.
2. According to research, incidents like this occur more frequently than physical attacks but continue to be under reported by communities. There are currently a number of initiatives happening across Northern Ireland to try and increase confidence in the PSNI. The Migrant Centre NI manages the bilingual advocacy scheme that is part of the larger advocacy scheme that is in place in partnership with the PSNI, Victim Support NI, Leonard Cheshire NI and the Rainbow Project. The scheme was recently highlighted as an example of good practice in the EU as a response to support for victims of race hate crime and incidents.

FOR FURTHER INQUIRY OF THIS PRESS RELEASE, PLEASE CONTACT:

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working together against racism

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