Statement of Solidarity to Gisèle Pelicot
2024 Unite National Women's Conference

When Gisèle Pelicot took to the stand in French court room and said **"its not for us to have shame, but it's for them"**. Although she was giving evidence regarding her own horrendous case where multiple men had raped her, she was also sending a message and talking for every woman who has also been the victim/survivor of sexual abuse and sexual assaults.

Those few words capture and challenge the societal stigma when women come forward to report these crimes, and also explain why so many do not. Rape is one of the most under reported crimes with some of the lowest prosecution rates. When women do report, they have to endure intrusive examinations, perverse questions about their sexual history, choice of clothing; all the time wondering if the lack of consent means anything to the justice system.

Although rape and sexual violence towards women has been committed throughout the ages, this case and in particular Gisèle's testimony as an incredible survivor, put the focus of shame back to these 'ordinary' men. By staring down at the men who committed these acts, she reminded us that they were characters who occupied the community in her life, even ones she unwittingly greeted in her everyday life:

"I saw him now and then in the bakery; I would say hello. I never thought he'd come and rape me,"

Gisèle Pelicot

Our Unite National Women's Conference on 28th October 2024 resolved to:

- Send solidarity to Gisèle and all women who have experienced sexual assault or rape

- Demand greater awareness on active consent across our education institutions and society

- Circulate materials from campaigns on preventing rape and changing societal attitudes to stop victim blaming

- Work with organisations supporting women after rape or sexual violence and encourage affiliation by our branches

- Lobby for increased funding for all services providing vital support

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