



For immediate release

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### **30 Students Raped Every Day - Documentary Exposes**

The National Union of Students and the Council of International Students Australia are outraged by revelations in Al Jazeera's 'Australia: Rape on Campus' documentary.

The Human Rights Commission's 'Change the Course' report found that 5% (or 7665) of international students are sexually assaulted each year, with more than a quarter of incidents happening in a university setting.

"International students are more vulnerable to sexual violence because of cultural differences, isolation, and lack of understanding of their rights under Australian law." said Forough Ataollahi, CISA Women's Officer, "Some students come from cultures where there may not even be a direct translation for the words 'consent' or 'sexual assault'."

"These students are afraid to report sexual violence from fear they will be blamed for their assault and belief that their student visa will be cancelled. The threat of visa cancellation is often held over them by their abusers." adds Ataollahi.

Al Jazeera's Documentary also highlighted the results of a Freedom of Information investigation that found that 575 sexual misconduct complaints to universities had resulted in only 6 expulsions, with one case even resulting in just a \$40 USD fine to the accused perpetrator.

"Universities are failing to take meaningful action to prevent sexual assault on campus. \$40 fines are not going to stop students from raping their classmates," Says Mark Pace, NUS President.

"It is heartbreaking to have realised that cases of academic misconduct have been treated much more seriously than cases of sexual assault," says Remesha Abeyratne, International Student Representative at UNSW, "Installing brighter lights on campus is not a viable solution any more, bringing harsher penalties on sexual predators than plagiarists must be a priority of universities."

The documentary follows news that international student enrolments in Australia are at an all time high, with more than 500,000 students studying at Australia and contributing an estimated \$32.2 Billion annually to the Australian economy.

Kate Crossin, NUS Women's Officer says, "Vice-Chancellors care more about lining the pockets of their designer suits than they do about students being raped under their care. As long as the money keeps coming in they are happy to sit idly by and do nothing to stop sexual violence manifesting in classrooms."

"We must remember that the reputation of a university depends on the success of its students and that the success of its students depends on being provided a safe and viable environment for them to study and thrive in," adds Abeyratne.

The National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 requires universities to give overseas students information about living and studying in Australia, including information about safety on campus and while living in Australia. Education providers must comply with the National Code to maintain their registration to provide education services to overseas students.

"Universities are not giving this information to international students and are failing to meet basic legal requirements. It's time for the Federal Government to step in and take actions against universities who are failing to act on student safety. They cannot be allowed to continue breaking the law and ignoring student safety." Says Crossin.

"While this government is focused on a Royal Commission into the banks, they are ignoring the Human Rights disaster that is 30 students raped every day."

CISA has joined the National Union of Students, End Rape on Campus, Fair Agenda and The Hunting Ground Australia Project in calling for the Federal Government to establish an independent, expert led taskforce to track, assess and publicly report on university and residences' measures to prevent, and improve responses to sexual violence.

*For further comment;*

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