



STATEMENT ON SEXUAL VIOLENCE INCIDENTS

June 27th, 2020

Content Warning: Sexual Violence

The York Federation of Students would like to re-affirm its commitment to combatting sexual violence and actively working to build a consent culture that centres, supports, and believes survivors.

On June 26th, 2020, we were made aware of various separate incidents relating to sexual violence that have implicated a club member of the International Relations Student Association at York, and the Pakistani Students Association. We have also been made aware of incidents of sexual violence relating to the Tamil Students Association at UofT Scarborough, and the York University Tamil Students Association. Such incidents of sexual violence must be addressed and taken seriously - survivors of gender-based violence face the double-trauma of the original act of violence and of the subsequent denial and invalidation of that experience. Our response must believe and validate the survivor's experience, and provide meaningful support. While engaging with this content and the various social media posts that are circulating, we urge folks to maintain a survivor-centric lens. At this time, we have reached out to all three organizations at York to provide support and resources so that they are able to move forward accordingly.

Sexual violence and rape culture permeate every aspect of our society. This means that as individuals, as student leaders, and even as organizations such

as clubs and Student Unions, we are responsible for actively committing to dismantling rape culture and sexual violence. By committing to learning and unlearning, becoming active bystanders, and improving survivor-centric responses, we can collectively work towards promoting a consent culture that centres survivor support and restorative justice. As your Students' Union, the work to affirm our commitment to a survivor-centric response was, is, and will be an ongoing process as we listen to survivors and create policies drawn from best practices and professional training.

We acknowledge the weight that these disclosures carry. To any survivors who are reading this, or are seeing these posts - we see you, we believe you, and we support you. Conversations involving sexual violence can be difficult and emotionally draining, and even reading social media posts can be exhausting. If anyone is in need of support please do not hesitate to reach out to us, or The Centre for Sexual Violence Response, Support & Education <https://thecentre.yorku.ca/>

We have also compiled a list of resources specific to sexual violence via our Wellness Centre, which you can access here: <https://www.yfswellness.ca/resources#/resources/sv-resources>

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact your President, Kien Azinwi Saningong, at president@yfs.ca