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**The United Nations Decade for People of African Descent Ireland (IDPADI) Demands Justice and Reform following the Racial Discrimination of an African Child by an Official of Gymnastics Ireland.**

Dublin, Ireland – 27 September 2023

The United Nations Decade for People of African Descent strongly condemns the racial discrimination that manifested in the blatant denial of a young African girl a medal in a lineup with all of her apparently European teammates where given medals for their team's gymnastics victory.

Whereas this incident happened in March 2022, the video evidencing this discrimination is now circulating on social media. In this video, her teammates can be seen distressed as this African child was denied a medal that was awarded to every other teammate. No child should have to endure racial discrimination. Once again, racism rears its ugly head in Irish society raising questions as to the need for concrete legal actions to deter punish and deter racism. It emphasises the inadequacy of existing law and policy in addressing this embedded issue and necessitates a reform that particularises discrimination on the ground of race in Ireland.

While the Department of Sport and the official have rendered an apology on 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2023.<sup>1</sup> This apology alone does not suffice. Accountability must be taken and some penalty meted to reprimand the official who perpetuated this racist act. This will serve to deter any form of racial discrimination, particularly at state level. In addition, it is imperative to consider what concrete steps are taken to deter the assault and harassment of racial motivations such as appropriate, comprehensive and continuous racial and cultural training to stamp out racial discrimination. Indeed, at a policy level, regular anti-racism and cultural competency training should be delivered at multi-level organisations across the country.

The IDPADI stand with the family and community of the little girl who fell victim of this tragic racial discrimination at the hands of Gymnastics Ireland. To this end, the IDPADI, in collaboration with select civil society organisations in the community of Africans and persons of African descent in Ireland, have organised a protest at Sport Ireland, Blanchardstown on Thursday 28 September 2023. This protest is undertaken with the aim to demonstrate its intolerance towards racial discrimination in Ireland and call for a just and equitable society

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<sup>1</sup> Gymnastics Ireland, 'Gymnastics Ireland statement re GymSTART event March 2022'  
<https://www.gymnasticsireland.com/news/gymnastics-ireland-statement-re-gymstart-event-march-2022>

United Nations International Decade for People of African Descent in Ireland Steering Committee

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wherein such incidents are met with sufficing consequences or even absent altogether. Incidents like this only sabotage the state efforts for cohesive community integration. Only through an intrinsic redefinition of anti-racism policy and establishment of legislation can we hope to bring about a just and equitable society for all persons.

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