Twitter Thread by Lucy Michael #BlackLivesMatter #EndDirectProvision



Lucy Michael #BlackLivesMatter #EndDirectProvision
@drlucymichael

Today Gardaí pepper sprayed, tasered and shot dead a young Black man with mental health issues. There will be an ombudsman inquiry, as there always is in the case of a death at the hands of Gardai. Some thoughts...

There have been many such deaths at the hands of police in the UK over the years. So many of them involve mental health issues. The @IRR_News has recorded many of those.

Police are rarely disciplined for the use of lethal force in the case of mental health issues, because the decision is based on the balance of threat versus force.

Butp police are not mental health specialists, and they make a judgement on the perceived safety of officers. Those judgements on threat are often based in biases that perceive ethnic minorities, particularly people of African descent, as more aggressive.

Policing of Black communities worldwide suffers from this bias problem, as do investigations into lethal force by police. Police services rarely acknowledge these biases, nor do those bodies that investigate them.

No criminal offence in Ireland carries the death penalty, yet lethal force was used today against a single young suspect, in front of tens of Gardai, armed and unarmed.

The forthcoming inquiry into the death must take seriously the questions of bias which are raised by this incident, and whether Gardai acted appropriately - in light of the high risk of bias in favour of ethal force - in their findings.

Above all, we must remember that a community is grieving and fearful for their children tonight. An Garda Síochána must go above and beyond to demonstrate that they can be trusted to acknowledge and address bias, and police our communities fairly and transparently.

In the year of the death of George Floyd in the US, and #BlackLivesMatter discussions across the globe, it is imperative that we have an open discussion about this incident. To do otherwise risks creating deep seams of distrust here as in other countries.

https://t.co/6Ue3WwnNHU

Irish police reaction to white men with knives in the last few months:

KNIFE ATTACK Man, 20s, arrested and charged after elderly man stabbed in the leg in Dublin

Roisin Phelan
16 Jul 2020, 9:17 | Updated: 16 Jul 2020, 11:42

A MAN in his 20s has been arrested and charged following the stabbing of a man in his 70s in Dublin.

The elderly man received a stab wound to the leg yesterday morning in the River Road area of Ashtown, Dublin 7 and was rushed to hospital.

Footage shows moment brave Gardai tackle and disarm knife-wielding man on busy Dublin street at rush hour

The two male Gardai get him on the ground, but shouts of "give me the knife" can be clearly heard as the three struggled, while a female Garda tells worried onlookers "it's okay" and "we got him"

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Response to a few questions :

1. The intersection of race and mental health issues here is key. Racial stereotypes play into judgements of unpredictable behaviour in cases like these investigated elsewhere.
Racism is not one potential aspect.

2. Cases of lethal force tend to be more reflective of institutional trends and regional attitudes than psychology or behaviour of individual police officers. That should be taken into account here.

3. The focus here must be on building trust in policing, and in community, and accountability of organisations is part of that. Police officers act FOR the organisation when they use lethal violence. AGS must be prepared to be open.

4. This is also about preserving all our rights. Every person suspected of crime has legal right to arrest, investigation and fair trial. Lethal force removes all those rights on a subjective assessment by police who are not mental health specialists, prosecutors, judge or jury.

5. A lot of people are asking questions tonight about this case. My comments are an attempt to answer some of those, and aimed at the forthcoming inquiry.