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IAEM demands urgent action to stop the carnage on our roads

In 2025, 190 people died as a result of incidents on Irish roads, the highest number in over a decade. The current trajectory so far for 2026 indicates that we are likely to exceed the 2025 figure. Of major concern, road deaths in Ireland rose by 31% since 2019 while the EU average actually fell by 12%. The Government's own target of no more than 72 deaths annually by 2030 is now frighteningly off course.

Nearly half of those killed were vulnerable road users (pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists). Cyclist deaths were at their highest since 2017 with motorcyclist deaths their highest since 2007. As the doctors staffing Ireland's Emergency Departments, we see at first hand this carnage. Every week we treat patients who sustain ultimately fatal injuries or have been seriously injured. Behind every death are many more who survive with catastrophic injuries that leave permanent disability and often require years of rehabilitation. The true burden of road trauma on the health system is far greater than the fatality count might suggest.

As doctors, we understand the difference between an unavoidable outcome and one resulting from system failures and sadly Ireland's worsening road deaths are as a result of such system failures. Responsibility for road safety in Ireland is deeply fragmented with the Road Safety Authority (RSA), a multitude of government departments including the Department of Transport, An Garda Síochána, Transport Infrastructure Ireland and 31 local authorities all having a role with no single body accountable for outcomes. The Cabinet-approved plan to reform the RSA was abandoned in December 2025 with no plan as to how to proceed. To underscore how far backwards Ireland has gone, speeding detections have fallen 43% in a decade. Ireland operates a mere dozen or so fixed speed cameras while Finland operates 1,164. Bizarrely, local authorities cannot access crash location data to identify dangerous roads thus incident black spots can remain unaddressed for years.

As an Association, we endorse the five key demands set out by the [Stop Road Deaths](#) campaign. These are not aspirational, they are specific, evidence-based reforms that our European peers have implemented:

1. A statutory road safety commissioner with the authority, budget and legal mandate to deliver the 2030 target
2. Automated speed cameras deployed on high-risk routes within 12 months

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3. Mandatory black spot redesign with a funded national programme to fix the 50 highest-risk road sections identified by crash data
4. Reversal of the enforcement collapse by restoring dedicated road policing numbers to at least 2014 levels
5. Parliamentary accountability requiring every TD to state publicly whether they support these reforms

The [Safe System Approach](#) adopted in principle by the Irish Government and endorsed by the World Health Organisation holds that no one should die or be seriously injured using the road network. That principle is meaningless without institutional mechanisms to deliver it. Norway, Sweden and Finland have demonstrated what is achievable. Norway now has the lowest road mortality rate in Europe (16 deaths per million, compared to Ireland's 33). Indeed, Helsinki went an entire year without a single traffic fatality. These are not countries with fewer cars or easier terrain, they are countries that decided road deaths were a governance problem and addressed them as such.

Ireland needs the political will to take the necessary steps our Scandinavian colleagues have taken. IAEM therefore calls on the government to stop regarding road traffic deaths as inevitable tragedies and instead do what is required to make Ireland's roads safe for all.