



Update on Ireland's National Action Plan (NAP) on Women Peace and Security (WPS)

The second meeting of the Oversight Group on Ireland's third National Action Plan (NAP) on implementation of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda was held on 26 May. The Group was briefed by Ms. Caoimhe Ní Chonchúir, who leads on WPS at Ireland's Permanent Mission to the United Nations in New York where we co-chair (alongside Mexico) the Informal Expert Group (IEG) on WPS as part of this role. Ms. Ní Chonchúir outlined the work the Mission has been carrying out at the UN Security Council on WPS and on the work of the IEG. The Group also discussed the upcoming meeting with the Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence (JCFAD) on 22 June (see below).

Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence (JCFAD)

As part of its monitoring and reporting requirements, the [third National Action Plan](#) (NAP) on the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda contains a commitment to present an Annual Report to the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence (JCFAD). The first Annual Report was submitted to the JCFAD on 11 February, 2021, and is publicly available on our [website](#) and [here](#). It is structured in line with the four key pillars of the NAP and includes the projects and programmes that were implemented in the first year of the NAP across Government. The report highlights the impact of the COVID-19 crisis in 2020 on WPS-related activities, and takes a detailed look at Ireland's implementation of the agenda both domestically and internationally. Finally, a Monitoring Framework, available in the annex to the Report, indicates progress made on each of the actions and indicators contained in the NAP.

Engagement with the Oireachtas is just one of the NAP monitoring and evaluation mechanisms intended to raise awareness of WPS issues and enhance accountability.

The Oversight Group (OG) for Ireland's third NAP on WPS presented its first Annual Report to the Oireachtas JCFAD on 22 June, 2021. The OG was represented by its Chair, **Nora Owen**, as well as **Áine Hearn**s (CRU Director), pictured below. The members of the JCFAD were engaged and posed questions to the group on a wide range of subjects, including: Ireland's work at the UN Security Council; women in the Defence Forces; Direct Provision; domestic violence; human trafficking; gender equality and cultural norms; girls' education; the impact of COVID-19 on women and girls; and women's participation in peace processes and peacebuilding. A number of countries and geographic regions were also raised throughout the discussion, such as Palestine, Tigray, Mali, and Yemen. You can watch the recording of the meeting [here](#).



Áine Hearn, CRU Director, and Nora Owen, Chair of the Oversight Group, in Iveagh House following their virtual presentation to the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence (JCFAD)



Behind the scenes of the JCFAD

Monitoring and Evaluation Internal Training

In compiling the first Annual Report, the Conflict Resolution Unit (CRU) became aware of challenges in gathering the necessary data from those tasked with carrying out the actions in the plan. Setting and monitoring baselines and gathering data on actions on a regular basis is an essential part of our NAP Monitoring and Evaluation work so that progress can be measured effectively and lessons can be learned. CRU is therefore in the process of developing training to ensure that units within the Department of Foreign Affairs, other government departments and relevant bodies are aware of their reporting requirements and have the necessary tools to make the information gathering as streamlined and effective as possible. Units with activities under the NAP are to appoint a WPS NAP focal point who will undertake the training; the training and tools to be provided will be essential to ensure that the reporting can continue effectively and consistently. More information will be provided in this newsletter as the training project gets rolled out.

Generation Equality Forum



Readers of [April 2021 newsletter](#) will have read about the [Generation Equality Forum](#) (GEF). The second part of the Forum, a Summit of Heads of State and Government, was hosted in Paris from 30 June to 2 July at which date the [Compact on Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian](#)

[Action](#) (WPS-HA) Compact was launched.

The aim of the Generation Equality Forum was to launch six multi-stakeholder Action Coalitions, and the WPS-HA, to drive progress on key issues relating to gender equality. The Action Coalitions and Compact comprise member states, international organisations, civil society organisations and the private sector.

The Compact seeks to advance a global inter-generational movement to drive implementation of existing commitments on WPS and humanitarian action through strengthening coordination, promoting financial commitments, and enhancing visibility on these issues.

Ireland was appointed a Board member of the WPS-HA Compact in March 2021 in recognition of its strong international profile in promoting the WPS agenda, and humanitarian work, including in the context of its current term of the UN Security Council.

In order to encourage other stakeholders, including UN member states, to become signatories to the Compact, Ireland will lead by example. In 2021, we will:

- Increase our investment in preventing gender-based violence (GBV), and pledge new commitments totalling approximately USD\$18 million to address GBV in emergencies as well as female genital mutilation.
- Step up our support to grassroots women peacebuilders through the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund (a key organisation in supporting women's participation in peace and security issues), pledging a total of USD\$1.5 million from 2021 to 2026.
- Continue to engage in country-specific projects promoting the protection of women in conflict-affected contexts such as Yemen, where we will announce funding of USD\$1 million over three years. Earlier this year, Ireland committed to a 60 per cent increase in funding to UN Women to support its work in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment, and its response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Minister Coveney also addressed the WPS-HA launch via [pre-recorded video message](#), and reiterated the commitment to investing in feminist and women's rights organisations, increasing funding to the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund, contributing to ending gender-based violence in emergencies and female genital mutilation and to the Global Partnership for Education.

The pre-recorded interventions and a playback of the event are available to view [here](#).

Website Update

As part of our National Action Plan on the Women Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda, the Department committed to stepping up our public outreach on the work done in implementing the Agenda. If you haven't already visited our updated [website](#), make sure to have a look as many helpful resources, as well as previous newsletters, are available there for download.

United Nations Security Council Updates

As we concluded the first six months of our two-year term, please see below a brief update on some aspects of Ireland's Women, Peace and Security (WPS)-related work at the UN Security Council

- **Meetings of the Informal Expert Group (IEG) on WPS**

As co-chairs of the IEG on WPS of the UN Security Council, Ireland and Mexico have now held a total of 6 meetings, including on South Sudan, Yemen, Libya, Mali, and, for the first time, on Lebanon (in May) and Somalia (in June). The IEG gives Council members the opportunity to discuss WPS in greater detail with the UN leadership and facilitates exchange on advancing WPS in the country and through Council activities. After each meeting, a summary and recommendations are circulated as an official document of the Security Council. You can consult the most recent published summaries [here](#).

- **Briefing with Palestinian Women Civil Society Leaders**

Following the outbreak of violence in the region in May, Ireland hosted an informal, closed briefing for Security Council geographic and WPS experts on WPS in the occupied Palestinian territories. The meeting was held jointly with the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security and featured five civil society briefers.

- **Arria-Formula Meeting on WPS in the Sahel Region**

On June 2, Ambassador Byrne Nason delivered Ireland's [remarks](#) at an Arria-formula meeting organised by the Mission of Niger and co-sponsored by Ireland and others. Ireland's remarks focused on the role of women in advancing peace and security in the region, the importance of education for girls, and the nexus between conflict, gender and climate change. The Arria marked the launch of a new Group of Friends for Women in the Sahel, which Ireland has joined.



- **Updates on Conflict-Related Sexual Violence (CRSV)**

The Permanent Mission of Ireland to the UN partnered with the Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security on an event focused on conflict-related sexual violence in Tigray, Ethiopia in April, to discuss the widespread reports of sexual violence in the region. Ambassador Byrne Nason delivered remarks. Also on CRSV, Ambassador Brian Flynn delivered remarks at a high-level event to mark the International Day to End Sexual Violence in Conflict on June 10,

emphasising the importance of ensuring a survivor-centred approach and achieving gender equality to end CRSV.

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Building back better from COVID means addressing society’s fault lines. Only then can we end conflict related sexual violence and establish a new social contract for all”

Ambassador Brian Flynn
at the UN observance of International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict



- **Conference of States Parties (COSP) Side Event on the Protection of Women and Girls with Disabilities in Armed Conflict**

On June 16, Ireland, in partnership with civil society and UN bodies, hosted a side event to discuss the impact of conflict on women and girls with disabilities, hosted on the margins of the 14th COSP to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). Remarks were delivered by Nujeen Mustafa, a Syrian refugee and one of the first women with a disability to address the UN Security Council, and the Special Rapporteur for Persons with Disabilities, Professor Gerard Quinn (NUI Galway).

- **Action for Peacekeeping (A4P) WPS Champions: Breaking Barriers for Women in Peacekeeping**

Ireland has long argued that in order to fully address the question of how to increase women’s participation in peacekeeping, there needed to be a move beyond numbers and quantitative targets. This why in the first half of 2021, Ireland, along with Germany, Namibia, South Africa, Bangladesh, Kenya, Indonesia, and Canada, initiated three panel discussions exploring the structural and institutional barriers to the full participation of women in peacekeeping and the means by which they might be addressed. The first event focused on barriers to women peacekeepers in the field, the second event on barriers at the national level, and the third related to the potential for progress on this issue in the new era of Action for Peacekeeping Plus (A4P+). The aim of the series was to draw on the insights of civil society, UN representatives, member states and women peacekeepers themselves, to look at what action could now be taken. As a result, an [outcome document](#), which highlights six concrete, actionable recommendations, was developed. On July 8, 2021, Minister Coveney, with Ministers from Indonesia, South Africa and other representatives from the series co-sponsors, presented the report and its recommendations to Under-Secretary General of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, Jean-Pierre Lacroix.

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We look forward to when we may next come together. We hope that when we do, we will be able to look together at how we have implemented these recommendations and, more importantly, see the positive difference they will have made to increasing women's participation in peacekeeping."



Minister Simon Coveney

Breaking Barriers for Women in Peacekeeping: A4P
WPS Champions Handover of Recommendations



Ireland continues to prioritize WPS while on the Council, ensuring that it is a consideration in all geographic conversations, and advancing the work of the IEG.

Previous Events

CRU Director Áine Hearn's participated in the Development Studies Association of Ireland's Humanitarian Action Study Group roundtable on **Peacebuilding and COVID-19**, held on the 16 June. The event featured a series of short presentations on new research and evidence on the impact of COVID-19 on peacebuilding from Swiss Peace, Saferworld, Christian Aid and Trinity College Dublin, followed by a facilitated discussion. Details of the event will shortly be available on the [DSAI website](#).

Ms. Hearn's also participated on 30 June in an event organised by the Irish Peace and Conflict Network entitled '**Ireland and WPS on the UN Security Council**'.

The discussion was guided by the question posed by the IPCN: '*How can Ireland influence, advance and strengthen the Women, Peace and Security Agenda in particular country contexts and key thematic areas within the current political realities of the Council?*'. Interventions covered a number of topics, with participants highlighting the work Ireland has accomplished on the Council to date, and in its role as co-chair of the Informal Expert Group on Women Peace and Security (WPS). Also stressed was the need for UN System coherence and coordination, the importance of integrating WPS language into mandates and resolutions, ensuring accountability and advocating for justice, and upholding the rights of women and girls in all conflict situations.

The discussion focused also on a number of geographic issues, including **Mali, Afghanistan and Colombia**, with women activists and organisers from each of these countries outlining what Ireland can do on the UNSC to empower and assist women in these areas.

The event also featured in an [RTÉ article](#) – '**Peace and women's rights left 'hanging in the balance' in Afghanistan**'.

Our next newsletter will be out in the autumn. The WPS team in Conflict Resolution Unit hopes that you will all have an enjoyable summer break.



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