



WOMEN, Peace and Security



Since our last newsletter in August, a lot has been happening on the WPS Agenda. In September, Ireland held the Presidency of the United Nations Security Council and placed a special emphasis on WPS across our work on the Council. In October, the Secretary-General of the United Nations published his annual report on the state of WPS globally. Detailed notes on both are included in the newsletter.



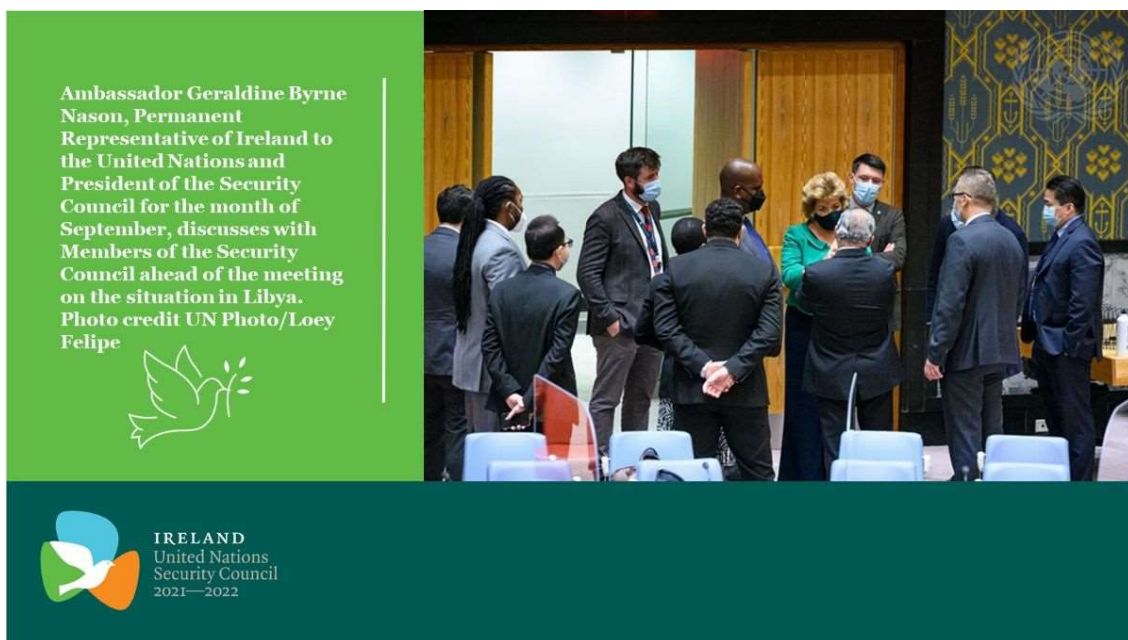
The team of Ireland's Permanent Mission to the UN at the start of the September Presidency.

Ireland at the UN: Highlights of Ireland's Presidency of the Security Council

Ireland, together with Kenya and Mexico, committed to making the Women, Peace and Security Agenda a central focus of their respective presidencies of the UN Security Council between September and November. The Presidency Trio statement of shared commitments included a comprehensive list of initiatives and ideas for how to take advantage of the rotating presidency to advance the implementation of the WPS Agenda and ensure it is integrated across all Council discussions and products.

Ireland's commitments to mainstream gender across our Security Council work and to amplify women's voices were translated into concrete actions: during our September Presidency, 16 of the 17 civil society briefers we invited to speak to the Council were women, setting a new record for women's participation.

Mandate Reports



Ireland maintained the focus on WPS during briefings and consultations on several Security Council mandates:

- The UNIFIL (Lebanon) mandate renewal (which incorporated WPS language on women's participation at all levels in decision-making),
- The UNSOM (Somalia) mandate extension (which included language on accountability for SGBV),
- The UNAMA (Afghanistan) mandate extension (Minister Coveney chaired a Security Council debate on Afghanistan on 9 September, following which UN Security Council Resolution 2596 was adopted on 17 September, which renewed the mandate of UNAMA for a further 6 months).



Ireland played a central role during the negotiations on UN Security Council Resolution 2593 on the situation in Afghanistan (adopted 30 August). The final text included language on the full, equal and meaningful participation of women:

“Reaffirms the importance of upholding human rights including those of women, children and minorities, encourages all parties to seek an inclusive, negotiated political settlement, with the full, equal and meaningful participation of women, that responds to the desire of Afghans to sustain and build on Afghanistan’s gains over the last twenty years in adherence to the rule of law, and underlines that all parties must respect their obligations.” (paragraph 4)

UN Peace Operations Transitions Resolution

On 8 September, Ireland presided over a Ministerial Level Open Debate on UN Transitions under agenda item United Nations Peacekeeping Operations. As one of the signature events of its presidency, Ireland organised and chaired this Open Debate on UN transitions to draw attention to the central role that the Security Council has to play in establishing the importance of transitions within the wider peacekeeping and peacebuilding agenda. UN Security Council Resolution 2594 (available [here](#)) was adopted on 9 September.



Resolution 2594 on UN Peace Operations Transitions was adopted unanimously on 9 September, making this a Presidential text. The Resolution emphasises the role of women in peacekeeping and in successful mission transitions and calls for the “full, equal and meaningful participation of women and the inclusion of youth” and for a “comprehensive gender analysis and technical gender expertise” to be included “throughout all stages of mission planning, mandate implementation and review and throughout the transition process”.

Ambassador Geraldine Byrne Nason chairs the Security Council meeting on the United Nations peacekeeping operations with a focus on United Nations transitions. Photo credit UN Photo/Manuel Elias



IRELAND
United Nations
Security Council
2021—2022

Meetings of the Informal Expert Group (IEG) on WPS

On 19 August, the IEG held a meeting on the situation of Afghanistan. At a press stakeout following the meeting, IEG co-chairs Ireland and Mexico announced that they had written to the President of the Security Council urging the Council “to place the utmost priority on protecting and vindicating the rights of Afghan women and girls in all decisions and action on Afghanistan’s future”. A summary of the meeting can be read [here](#).

On 29 September, the IEG on WPS met to discuss Haiti. The meeting was the first to take place in-person since the onset of the pandemic, and was also the first time the group had discussed Haiti. The principal briefer was SRSG La Lime, who described the extremely challenging context in Haiti, with deteriorating security, increased human rights violations and abuses, rising sexual and gender-based violence and growing humanitarian needs following the August earthquake and a political crisis in the aftermath of the late President’s assassination. SRSG La Lime stressed the need for women’s participation in political processes, outlining the intimidation and abuse faced by women leaders (read the meeting summary [here](#)).

UNGA High Level Week

On 21 September, An Taoiseach Micheál Martin participated in a panel discussion at a High Level Week event entitled ‘**Women in Conflict**’, organised by the EU, UN Women and the Dr. Denis Mukwege Foundation. A recording of the event can be watched [here](#).

The event featured interventions by Charles Michel, President of the European

Council; Pramila Patten, (then) Acting Executive Director of UN Women; Nadia Murad, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate and UNODC Goodwill Ambassador, Iraq; Dr. Denis Mukwege, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, DRC; Fawzia Koofi, first woman Deputy Speaker of the Afghan Parliament; Fátima Muriel, President of Alianza de Organizaciones de Mujeres (“Alliance of Women’s Organisations”) and former coordinator of “Tejedoras de Vida” (‘Weavers of Life’), Colombia. On the panel entitled *‘Testimonies and Women Leading the Way’*, the Taoiseach spoke with Fátima Muriel about the Colombian Peace Process and emphasised the challenges and risks that women peacebuilders, activists and human rights defenders are facing. He underlined the role of women peacebuilders working at grassroots level in communities and drew parallels between the Colombian and Northern Ireland peace processes.



The Security Council Annual Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security

The open debate, which took place on 21 October, was prefigured by the publication of the Secretary-General’s Annual report on WPS, which brought into stark relief the discrepancy between global military spending and spending on public health, or, as SG Guterres writes, the “privileging of warfare over welfare”. The report outlines several recommendations on ways to advance the implementation of the WPS Agenda (the full report can be read [here](#)) and concludes with this parting thought:

“After eight years leading UN Women and overseeing a significant increase in the entity’s investment on women, peace and security, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka summarized the partial progress to date on women’s participation in decision-making and the long way ahead with a simple statement: ‘One quarter is not enough. One

quarter is not equality.’ I will be guided by the same conviction during my second term. We cannot hope to turn the climate crisis around, reduce social divisions, and build sustained peace without shifting power toward equality and justice, and we cannot stop until we get there”.

The open debate was at Ministerial level and was chaired by Kenya’s Foreign Minister Raychelle Omamo. Briefers included the new Director of UN Women, Sima Sami Bahous; Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix; and Celia Umenza Velasco, an indigenous woman peacebuilder from Colombia. In his statement, Secretary-General António Guterres spoke of the power imbalance between men and women as “the most stubborn and persistent of all inequalities”. He underlined that today “women’s leadership is a cause. Tomorrow, it must be the norm”.



Ireland’s statement was delivered by Minister of State Colm Brophy, TD, who focused on three imperatives in peacebuilding and peacekeeping: empowering the right people, raising up the right voices and spending money on the right things. Fulfilling the Security Council’s mandate to maintain international peace and security requires recognising a fundamental aspect: that *“those who make war cannot and should not have a monopoly on the terms of peace”*. Ireland’s full statement can be read [here](#).

Meeting of the Oversight Group on Ireland’s third National Action Plan (NAP) on the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda

The third meeting of the Oversight Group (OG) was held on 6 October. The

main topic on the agenda was the situation in Afghanistan and Ireland's efforts to assist with humanitarian evacuations. The Group was briefed by Nick Henderson, CEO of the Irish Refugee Council (IRC), and by OG member Éibhlin Byrne, Director of the Irish Refugee Protection Programme (IRPP).

Nick Henderson outlined the activities of the IRC, emphasising its focus on influencing legislation and policy on international protection in Ireland. He spoke of the crucial legal support the IRC provides to international protection applicants at the initial stage of their application and mentioned the core programme which IRC is involved in - the Community Sponsorship Programme (CSP) - where communities in Ireland come together to support a refugee family.

Éibhlin Byrne of the IRPP presented an update on the Department for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth's ongoing work on humanitarian evacuations from Afghanistan and in assisting Afghan residents in Ireland with family reunification. She noted the strong support for those coming to Ireland received from existing networks, such as athletes' networks and the judicial and legal community.

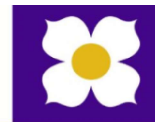
WPS Events

September/October were busy months for WPS events - a number of key events are outlined below.



As co-Chairs of the WPS Focal Points Network 2020-21, Canada and Uruguay invited the Focal Points to meet virtually on the margins of the 76th UN General Assembly. The meeting was an opportunity for members to share lessons learned and best practices, and for Canada and Uruguay to pass the baton to new co-Chairs South Africa and Switzerland.

Network members emphasised the salience of the WPS agenda in light of current global political developments, climate events and effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Along with these challenges, interventions focused on the support and lesson sharing within the network, and on the advancement of WPS implementation at national and regional level.



SEPTEMBER 16, 2021 8:30-11:00 AM EDT
WPS FOCAL POINTS NETWORK HIGH-LEVEL SIDE EVENT
76TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY



Bineta Diop, African Union Special Envoy on Women, Peace, and Security



Ulyana Bogdanska, General Director on Global Affairs, Bulgaria



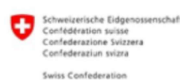
Helga Barth, Director on Human Rights, International Development and Global Health, Germany



Áine Hearn, Director, Conflict Resolution Unit, Department of Foreign Affairs, Ireland



Anne Goedert, Luxembourg's Ambassador at-large for Human Rights



Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores

Áine Hearn, Director, Conflict Resolution Unit, Department of Foreign Affairs, spoke of the increased threats to women's rights over the last few years, which have reiterated the importance of the WPS Agenda, and praised the strength and determination of women peacebuilders. Ms. Hearn emphasised Ireland's commitment to the WPS agenda through its work at the UN Security Council and as co-Chair of the Informal Expert Group on WPS, and mentioned Ireland's endeavours to mainstream gender across all Security Council products.



WPS-HA Compact Board Meeting

The Compact on Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action (WPS-HA) was successfully launched at the Generation Equality Forum in Paris on July 2. There are currently 155 signatories to the Compact.

On 10 September, members of the WPS-HA Compact Board met to discuss the progress to date on the Compact, on the proposed plans for the remainder of 2021, and on Compact governance. The discussion also focused on the Compact objective to strengthen coordination across existing WPS-HA mechanisms, systems, networks, partnerships and capacities. Ireland is a signatory to the Compact and a Board member. Conflict Resolution Unit Director Áine Hearn attended the meeting.



WPSF Side Event ahead of the UNSC 2021 Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security

On 14 October, Ireland co-hosted a UN Women’s Peace and Humanitarian Fund (WPHF) virtual event titled “***Investing in Local Women Leaders on the Front Lines: Accelerating a Global Movement for Inclusive Peace & Humanitarian Action***”.



WPHF
1000 WOMEN LEADERS

“Women’s groups remain underfunded and under-resourced. We have to step back and see where our priorities lie. Investing in women on the front lines is absolutely essential for the full implementation of the WPS agenda. We look forward to continue championing this cause with the WPHF.”

H.E. Geraldine Byrne Nason
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Ireland to the United Nations

#1000WOMENLEADERS

The event highlighted the diverse perspectives of local women’s civil society activists and Women Human Rights Defenders from Afghanistan, Lebanon, Palestine, and Nigeria. Ambassador Geraldine Byrne Nason spoke about the urgent need for extra funding for women’s civil society organisations. Ireland has committed \$1.5 million to the Women’s Peace and Humanitarian Fund over the next five years.

Side Event: ‘WPS: Human Rights-Based Responses to Human Trafficking in the Context of Terrorism and Conflict’

The Permanent Mission of Ireland to the United Nations, together with the office of the UN Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in persons, especially women and children, Professor Siobhán Mullally, and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime co-hosted a virtual side event on ‘**Women, Peace and Security: Human Rights-Based Responses to Human Trafficking in the Context of Terrorism and Conflict**’. The event took place during WPS Week and followed the Open Debate on WPS on 21 October, and offered a preview of key elements of UNSR Mullally’s report, which she presented to the Third Committee of the General Assembly on 27 October (read the full report [here](#)).

Ambassador Byrne Nason spoke about the disproportionate impact of human trafficking on women and girls, which is exacerbated in times of crisis. She highlighted the high levels of impunity for these crimes, emphasising the importance of holding perpetrators to account. Ambassador Byrne Nason also noted how binary gender stereotypes could inhibit anti-trafficking responses,

such as failing to also identify men and boys as victims. She stressed the need to think creatively about addressing human trafficking through peacekeeping mandates and violent masculinities in counter-terrorism approaches. Ireland, as co-chair of the Informal Expert Group on Women, Peace and Security, committed to improving understanding of how trafficking, conflict and WPS intersect.



Gender equality - a 'contested political issue' facing UN – Ambassador Geraldine Byrne Nason

On 28 October, Ambassador Byrne Nason spoke at the National Women's Council (NWC) All-Island Women's Forum about the uphill struggle to advance gender equality at the UN Security Council (this Irish Times [article](#) covered her intervention).

The All-Island Women's Forum aims to address the underrepresentation of women and further develop women's role in peacebuilding and civic society. Its objective is to provide a space for women on an all-island basis for cross border cooperation and dialogue. Funded through the Department of Foreign Affairs' Reconciliation Fund, the Women's Forum will also support building sustainable North-South links, provide a space for marginalised communities, and help to build better understanding and inter-community links.

One of Ireland's UN Youth Delegates, Diandra Ní Bhuachalla, also talked about the intersections of the Women, Peace and Security and the Youth, Peace and Security agendas, the crucial role of youth in peacebuilding and about the need to learn from their resilience.

Ireland's UN Youth Delegate Programme began in 2015 and is a joint initiative of the Department of Foreign Affairs and the National Youth Council of Ireland. Each year, two young people are selected as Ireland's UN Youth Delegates and they join Ireland's delegation to UN events and work closely with the Department of Foreign Affairs on a range of issues, including the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda.

Our next newsletter will be out in the Spring. The team in the Conflict Resolution Unit would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your interest over the past 12 months and (even if a little early!) wish you all the best for the festive season ahead.



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