



WOMEN, Peace and Security



Ireland's Approach to Women, Peace and Security Newsletter

**Welcome to our spring 2023 newsletter where we share
how we marked Saint Brigid's Day and International
Women's Day, news from the 67th Commission on the
Status of Women and updates on Ireland's work on WPS!**

Saint Brigid's Day 2023



We had an auspicious start in 2023 as Ireland honoured Saint Brigid for the first time with a public holiday. This was marked through a number of events across the Missions network.





Embassy London organised a series of panel discussions on *Women and Peace*, *Women in Diversity and Inclusion*, and *Women in Children's and YA Literature*. The *Women and Peace* panel examined the role of women in securing peace in Northern Ireland and featured Anne Carr, Eileen Weir and Susan McCrory (pictured above).

Ahead of the 25th anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement, the Peace Heroines [exhibition](#) by visual artist FRIZ was launched at Embassy London on St. Brigid's Day, featuring portraits of women peace activists who played a central role in achieving peace in Northern Ireland.



Peace Heroines by FRIZ at Embassy London.



Embassy Helsinki hosted two events with [CMI](#) - **Martti Ahtisaari Peace Foundation** to celebrate the roles women play in peacemaking. The first event was a roundtable facilitated by Laura Hendry (CMI), where participants considered the attributes needed to be a peacemaker in the present day and the discussion reflected on themes of policy and operating environment; the broad nature of teams engaged in peacemaking; the mental health impacts of being engaged in a peace process and being a peacemaker; the psychology of trauma for those who have experienced conflict and working in a post-conflict environment; the process of decolonisation in global peacemaking; and the value in exchanging viewpoints between global and local practitioners.



Ambassador Ruth Parkin speaks at the Women and Trust-Building seminar on St. Brigid's Day.

On the same day, an interactive seminar on **‘Women and Trust-building’** was held at the Ambassador’s Residence. Ambassador Ruth Parkin’s welcoming remarks identified the celebration of St. Brigid’s Day in 2023 as a timely opportunity to recognise the contribution of women to peacemaking, in the context of the return of war to Europe and in reflection of 2023 as the year of the 25th anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement in Northern Ireland. The seminar was co-facilitated by guest speakers Shona Bell of [Corrymeela](#) and Johanna Poutanen of CMI, who held a fireside chat after an introduction to the work of Corrymeela in Northern Ireland. Questions prompted discussion on women’s leadership in peace processes, the tools of peacemaking and gendered dimensions with regards to trust-building.

Both Corrymeela and CMI are funded by the Department of Foreign Affairs.

Together for Gender Transformative Education in Emergencies

At the **Education Cannot Wait** pledging conference in Geneva (16-17 February), Development, Cooperation and Africa Division Policy Unit Director **Sarah Hunt** represented Ireland at the ***Together for Gender Transformative Education in Emergencies*** side event. The event focused on youth leadership in advancing gender-transformative education (GTE) in emergencies. Director Hunt mentioned particularly Ireland's support to the Plan/Purposeful girls' fund and its role in generating evidence from young people's leadership to drive innovation, as well as the need to 'hold the line' on gender-transformative education in times of crises. She also highlighted the positive opportunity to hear directly from young people, and the importance of young people's input to developing solutions to global challenges.



Policy Unit Director Sarah Hunt speaks at the *Together for Gender Transformative Education in Emergencies* event

The 67th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women



The 67th session of the **Commission on the Status of Women (CSW67)** started at the UN on 6 March and will end on 17 March. The priority theme of CSW67 is *"Innovation and technological change, and education in the digital age for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls"*. Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth Roderic O’Gorman TD represented Ireland at CSW67.

At the start of CSW67, the **Irish Consortium on Gender Based Violence (ICGBV)** and **Ireland’s Permanent Mission to the UN in New York** co-hosted a side event on technology-facilitated gender-based violence.

The event was an opportunity for ICGBV to present its [policy paper](#) on the intersection of technology and gender-based violence, which is rooted in case studies from local partners and explores how technology has exacerbated the pandemic of

Speakers included **Jennifer McCarthy Flynn**, ICGBV Coordinator; Minister **Roderic O’Gorman**; **Dr Jennifer Okeke**, Vice Chairperson of the National Women Council of Ireland; **Daniel Kettor**, Executive Director of Rainbo Initiative Sierra Leone; **Hon. Neema Lugangira**, MP from Tanzania; **Sarah Schlitz**, Federal State Secretary for Gender Equality, Equal Opportunities and Diversity of Belgium; and **Fergal Mythen**,

violence against women and girls, but also examines opportunities in the areas of prevention, mitigation and response in humanitarian and development contexts.

Ireland's Ambassador to the UN.



Panellists at the ICGBV event on technology-facilitated gender-based violence.

While in New York, Minister O’Gorman also met with representatives of the Women’s Forum on Afghanistan and heard their concerns regarding the silencing of women’s voices by the Taliban and the deteriorating situation for Afghan women and girls.



Minister O’Gorman and Ambassador Mythen with representatives of the Women’s Forum on Afghanistan.

UN Security Council Open Debate on WPS



Mozambique holds the Presidency of the UN Security Council in March and, on 7 March, organised an open debate on WPS under the topic ***Towards the 25th Anniversary of Resolution 1325***. Delivering Ireland's statement, Minister O'Gorman spoke of Ireland's efforts during our 2021-2022 term as an elected member of the Security Council to put WPS at the heart of our work across all of the Council's files, and reminded everyone of the urgency to fight back against the pushback on gender equality that has been gaining momentum around the world.

Ireland's record on driving forward the WPS Agenda, in particular on the WPS Shared Commitments, was recognised in this December 2022 [Security Council Report](#) titled ***Golden Threads and Persisting Challenges: The Security Council Women, Peace and Security Presidencies Initiative***. It takes a close look at the WPS Presidency Trio Commitments initiated by Ireland, Kenya and Mexico during their respective Presidencies

of the Security Council and carried forward by a growing number of Council members.

“Creative, cross-regional, and informal, the WPS presidencies initiative brought heightened visibility to the agenda at the Council, moving the focus away from understanding progress on the agenda through new WPS Council products in favour of creating momentum around implementation.

Golden Threads and Persisting Challenges: The Security Council Women, Peace and Security Presidencies Initiative



WPS-HA Compact Board Meeting

A meeting of the Board of the WPS-Humanitarian Action (WPS-HA) Compact took place in New York on 9 March. The objective of the meeting was to identify specific strategic actions that should be taken by Board and Catalytic members and Compact Signatories for effective implementation of the 2023 work plan and to respond to current situations of conflicts and

crises globally. **Jackie O'Halloran**, Director of the Human Rights Unit at the Department of Foreign Affairs, represented Ireland at the meeting and emphasised that the potential of gender equality to drive sustainable peace is not being sufficiently harnessed. While women and girls remain the hardest hit by the effects of extreme poverty, climate change and conflict, it is imperative that the Compact continue to drive the implementation of the WPS Agenda to support women's leadership and work for gender equality.



WPS-HA Compact Board members at the New York meeting.

International Women's Day



March

To mark International Women's Day, our colleagues in Policy Planning Unit organised an internal event titled ***Resilience and Courage: The Women of Ukraine, one year on.*** The speakers were **Dr Tanya Lokot**, Associate Professor in Digital Media and Society at DCU School of Communications - who is a native of Ukraine, and whose research focuses on threats to digital rights, networked authoritarianism, digital resistance, internet freedom and internet governance in Eastern Europe - and **Nadia Dobrianska**. Originally from Kyiv, Nadia has been living in Ireland as a refugee with her family since 2022 and has over 10 years of experience working in Ukrainian public policy and human rights. The discussion centred on the unique challenges Ukrainian women have had to face during the war, whether they are internally displaced or refugees, prisoners or combatants, working to provide humanitarian assistance or simply trying to survive. The two speakers also drew attention to the many instances of resistance and mobilisation by Ukrainian women whether in Ukraine or living abroad.



On 8 March, International Women's Day, the Department of Foreign Affairs announced that for the first time, in 2023 over half (53%) of Ireland's missions around the world will be led by women, up from 46% in 2021 and 36% in 2020 – a sign of recognition of women's leadership.

Our next newsletter will be out in the summer and will bring you updates on the domestic implementation of WPS through our third National Action Plan on WPS, which is currently undergoing its mid-term review. From all of us here in the Conflict Resolution Unit, have a great spring and a happy Saint Patrick's Day!



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