



WOMEN, Peace and Security



Ireland's Approach to Women, Peace and Security Newsletter - Winter 2022

Welcome to our end-of-year newsletter. In this issue, we bring you updates from WPS week at the UN Security Council in October, meetings of the Oversight Group on Ireland's third National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (WPS), and, as we approach the end of Ireland's 2021-2022 term on the Security Council, a reflection on our achievements in promoting the WPS Agenda.



United Nations Security Council
2021—2022

Ireland at the UN: Highlights from the Security Council

WPS Open Debate



Ambassador Fergal Mythen delivers Ireland statement at the annual Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security. Credit UN Photo

The WPS Open Debate on 20 October was held during Gabon’s presidency and the theme was ***“Strengthening women’s resilience and leadership as a path to peace in regions plagued by armed groups”***. Ireland’s statement was delivered by **Ambassador Fergal Mythen** and focused on four key elements needed to advance the

WPS Agenda: protecting those who defend women's rights; pushing for women to be at all decision-making tables; preventing violence against women and girls; and putting our money where our mouth is when it comes to prioritising peacebuilding over military spending.

Ambassador Mythen also highlighted lessons learned from our two years on the Council, including our **co-Chairing of the Informal Expert Group (IEG)** (with Mexico) and the **WPS Presidency Trio**.

WPS Week Events

From 17-21 October, **CRU Deputy Director Jason Robinson** and **Desk Officer Theo Ispas** travelled to Ireland's Permanent Mission in New York to assist colleagues with preparation and attendance for events during WPS week, including the UNSC Open Debate on WPS.



On 18 October, Ireland co-hosted a **WPS side event on SRHR in humanitarian settings: delivering life-saving care during emergencies**. This event was hosted in

conjunction with the **International Planned Parenthood Federation** (IPPF) and aimed to highlight **Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights** (SRHR) in humanitarian settings, a subject that often does not get much recognition in the WPS space. Ireland's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Ambassador Fergal Mythen, moderated the event, while the speakers were: Dr Galyna Mastruk, Head of the Women's Health and Family Planning (Ukraine); Dr Anjum Rizvi, Director Program Management Division Rahnuma-Family Planning Association (Pakistan); Dr. Hiba Ahmed Khalil Badr, Project Coordinator Sudan Family Planning Association (Sudan); Ms. Ammal Awadallah, Executive Director, Palestinian Family Planning and Protection Association (Palestine); Ms. Marta Royo, Executive Director, Profamilia (Colombia); and Mr. Ib Petersen, Deputy Executive Director (Management) of UNFPA.

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**Women's Leadership in
Humanitarian Action**

Join us for this hybrid panel event on

Wednesday 19 October

Location: 8th Floor, UN Church House Center, 777 United Nations Plaza, NY 10017 (RSVP for online link)

Time: 09:30AM ET | 15:30PM CET | 16:30PM EAT | 19:30PM Myanmar

Speakers

Jason Robinson, Deputy Director of Conflict Resolution Unit, Irish Government

Marta Lempart, Polish Women's Strike

Laura Albu, Romanian Women's Lobby

Daw May Sabe Phyu, Myanmar Gender Equality Network

Ghita El Khyari, Head of Secretariat Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund

More speakers to be confirmed.

Chaired by Niki Ignatiou,

Senior Policy & Research Specialist, ActionAid UK

For online registration & RSVP email Hannah.fletcher@actionaid.org

In partnership with



On 19 October, CRU Deputy Director **Jason Robinson** was a panellist in an event hosted by Irish Aid partner **Action Aid** on the topic of “**Women’s Leadership in Humanitarian Action**”. Ireland’s intervention focused on the key role of partnerships at the local level to ensure implementation of the WPS Agenda, touching on Ireland’s support to organisations such as the Women’s Peace and Humanitarian Fund (WPHF) and the International Rescue Committee (IRC). Two guiding principles framed Ireland’s intervention, namely that 1) *Gender*

equality is a fundamental human right; and 2) gender equality is a fundamental condition for sustainable global development. Jason noted Ireland has committed to scale up our engagement to integrate gender equality across all our interventions and in our wider foreign policy; while at the same time we have also committed to increasing allocations to interventions directly dedicated to achieving gender equality. In terms of the Humanitarian-Development-Peace nexus and humanitarian response, Ireland recognises the importance of supporting local women's organisations and leadership in humanitarian response, and the particular vulnerabilities faced by women, girls and boys in emergency settings. Ireland has committed to allocating specific funds for the identified needs of affected women and girls in all their diversity in conflict and crisis-affected settings. This includes ensuring that they are fully consulted and engaged in decision-making around humanitarian, development and peace efforts.

CRU officers also attended a donor briefing for the **Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund (WPHF)** where participants received an update on the various WPHF windows and detailed breakdown of the types of recipients and groups supported, the majority of whom have never previously received funding support from the UN.

In **Afghanistan**, WPHF support Women Human Rights Defenders (WHRDs) by providing them a flexible funding safety net to cover urgent costs related to security, and direct logistical support to enable participation in events/meetings. WPHF's response has focused on preventing and responding to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and humanitarian needs in both Afghanistan and neighbouring countries, as well as the inclusion of women in peace processes.

Presidency Trio Commitments

Throughout our two-year tenure on the Security Council, Ireland made WPS a priority. This included efforts to mainstream WPS across all statements and resolutions. Ireland is now recognised as a leading voice on WPS, which will be a key part of our legacy for our Council term.

Our Presidency Trio initiative, in which Ireland, Mexico and Kenya committed to prioritise and mainstream WPS across our respective Security Council presidencies (September-November 2021), was commended in the UN Secretary-General's Annual Report on WPS in October 2022 and described as a significant development that contributed to positive trends.

In particular, the Trio committed to a strong representation of diverse women civil society briefers in Council meetings. Across the three presidencies, 35 women civil society briefers participated in Council meetings, including a record-breaking 16 during the presidency of Ireland. These 35 women represented 49 per cent of all the women NGO and civil society briefers to brief the Council in 2021, the greatest number of civil society briefers ever invited by the Council in a single year, and an increase of 26 per cent on 2020.



Ambassador Fergal Mythen and WPS lead Fiona Broderick together with Kenyan and Mexican representatives met with UN Secretary-General Guterres

On 28 November, the Permanent Representatives of **Ireland, Mexico and Kenya** met with **UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres** to discuss Women, Peace and Security. This meeting was requested as a follow up to a similar one in August 2021, during which Ireland, Kenya and Mexico presented the idea of the WPS Presidency Trio to the SG and raised the issue of the UN's role in advancing the participation of women in peace processes. Ireland outlined the achievements of the Trio Presidency commitments, which has resulted in more women invited to brief the Security Council, and ensured greater gender analysis is included in briefings to the Council. Ambassador Mythen highlighted that 14 Member States have now joined the commitments, and expressed hope that this momentum would be sustained. Referencing our own experience from the peace process in Ireland, he stressed the importance of women's participation at all levels, and raised the question of how the UN and Member States could ensure this. SG Guterres assured his full support to seeing these

commitments move forward as the Trio leaves the Council.

Informal Expert Group on WPS



The **IEG on WPS** has continued to be a key platform for Ireland's leadership on WPS at the Security Council. In December, Ireland and Mexico co-chaired their last IEG meeting as both their tenures on the Council draw to a close. During these two years, the IEG held a record 18 meetings. This enabled Council members to hear detailed reporting and analysis in more country situations than ever before, including first meetings about the situation of women and girls in Somalia, Lebanon, Haiti and on the Situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question.

Since our previous issue, the IEG has held meetings on the situation in the Central African Republic, Iraq and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as well as the annual thematic meeting on conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) and Women Protection Advisers (WPAs).

Central African Republic

On 26 August, the IEG met to discuss the situation in the Central African Republic (CAR). Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the *United*

Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA)

Lizbeth Cullity briefed Council members on the situation of women in CAR and called for greater mobilisation and concrete investments from all. She recommended that UNSC Member States urge the CAR authorities to ensure the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in the peace process and in all key decision-making bodies; focus attention on the fight against impunity by systematically prosecuting perpetrators of sexual violence; ensure inclusion of survivors of sexual violence; urge CAR authorities to create a safe environment for women's participation in politics and the peace process and respect the minimum quota of 35%. The full meeting report can be read [here](#).

Iraq

The meeting in October focused on the situation in Iraq. Deputy Special Representative for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance of the *United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI)* **Claudio Cordone** was the briefer.

Discussions focused on the implementation by Iraq of its second NAP related to resolution 1325, strategies to advance issues related to WPS, accountability for attacks against women human rights defenders, and support by UNAMI for the adoption of a draft law against domestic violence, and legislation targeting LGBTIQ+ persons. Despite facing reprisals for their participation, at the Iraqi general elections held in October 2021, 946 of a total of 3,225 candidates were women (29.3 per cent) and Iraqi women won 95 out of 329 seats (28.9 per cent), an increase from 25 per cent in 2018 to 29 per cent. UNAMI implemented a range of activities to support women's safe and meaningful participation in the elections, both as candidates and as voters.

Read the meeting report [here](#).

Conflict-Related Sexual Violence (CRSV)

In November, the IEG convened for the annual thematic meeting on CRSV and WPAs.

Under-Secretary-General and SRSG on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Pramila Patten outlined that the [Report of the Secretary-General on Conflict-Related Sexual Violence \(CRSV\)](#) calls for urgent action on structural and operational prevention and fostering a protective environment to prevent sexual violence. The recently published [Framework for the Prevention of CRSV](#) will be a tool to enable MS, CSOs and the donor community to prevent this crime. The USG confirmed that WPAs play a vital role building strategic partnerships with frontline workers, human rights defenders and peacebuilders as enforcement multipliers for mandate delivery. Senior WPAs from DRC, Iraq, Mali, Somalia, South Sudan, and Sudan participated and provided an overview of the reality of CRSV in their respective contexts, outlined the challenges faced, progress made, and recommendations for UNSC Members.

There was also an IEG meeting on the situation in the **Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)** in December ahead of the **MONUSCO** mandate renewal.

Arria-Formula meeting on Youth, Peace and Security



On 12 December, Ireland (with co-sponsors Ecuador and Ghana) hosted an **Arria-Formula meeting** to mark the seventh anniversary of the **Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) Agenda**. The meeting was an opportunity for Member States to celebrate the achievements of the YPS Agenda, while engaging in frank discussion about the persistent gaps in implementation and how to best advance the Agenda in consultation with young people globally.

Ambassador **Fergal Mythen**, Permanent Representative of Ireland to the United Nations, moderated the meeting and briefers included **Dr. Natalia Kanem**, Executive Director of United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and **Nynar Koul**, a young Sudanese woman peacebuilder. The latter called for the inclusion of youth and diverse voices in peacebuilding processes. As young people are among the most impacted during conflict, their experience is critical. Ms Koul highlighted three key areas for action, namely: 1) the need for an inclusive, bottom-up approach to peacebuilding; 2) decentralised funding available at local levels; and 3) the protection of safe spaces for young people to engage in political processes.

UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2594 on Peacekeeping Transitions

On 9 September 2021, during Ireland's Presidency, the Security Council unanimously passed **UNSCR 2594**, the

first standalone resolution on **peacekeeping transitions** ever agreed at the Council. The resolution provides a shared definition for transitions and emphasises the need for transitions to be in line with security conditions on the ground. Notably, it 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 the inclusion of a “**comprehensive gender analysis and technical gender expertise**” throughout mission planning, mandate implementation and the transition process.

UNSCR 2664 to introduce a ‘humanitarian carve-out’ across all UN Sanctions Regimes

On 9 December, the UN Security Council adopted **UNSCR 2664**, which will introduce **an exemption for humanitarian activities from all UN sanctions regimes**.

Ireland worked together with the US to initiate and lead negotiations on this landmark Resolution. It was adopted with the support of 14 of the 15 members of the Security Council and with co-sponsorship by over 40 other States. The protection of the humanitarian space has been a priority for Ireland throughout our term on the Security Council. We have engaged regularly with NGOs and humanitarian actors to understand and respond to their concerns.

Resolution 2664 sees Ireland using our role as an elected member to deliver on one of the longstanding demands of the humanitarian community, ensuring that humanitarians can work in some of the most complex environments, without fear of inadvertently falling foul of UN sanctions regimes.

WPS and Disarmament

During the Tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the **Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons** in New York in August, Ireland was particularly active on gender. Ireland's suggestions on gender were reflected in the draft outcome including the full, equal and meaningful participation of women and men, disaggregated data and integrating a gender perspective. **Minister of State Hildegard Naughton** was Ireland's first woman Head of Delegation and one of 30 Ministers to attend. Minister Naughton hosted a Women Heads of Delegation breakfast with cross-regional and ministerial attendance. Ireland also hosted a side event on '*Operationalising Gender in the Review Cycle*' with the **Women's International League for Peace & Freedom** (WILPF). Ireland was heavily involved in work on a Joint Statement on Gender, Diversity and Inclusion. This was a joint statement of 67 states parties.



Minister of State Hildegard Naughton delivers Ireland's statement to the UN General Assembly on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

At the 77th session of the **United Nations General Assembly First Committee** in October, Ireland led on a joint statement on gender and disarmament. The statement expressed that gender perspectives provide key insights into how women, men, girls and boys can be differentially impacted by armed conflict, and weapons. The statement was co-sponsored by 78 states.



EXPLOSIVE WEAPONS IN POPULATED AREAS

Dublin Conference 2022

On 18 November 2022, a [Political Declaration](#) on strengthening the protection of civilians from the humanitarian consequences arising from the use of **explosive weapons in populated areas (EWIPA)** was adopted by 83 States in Dublin. The Political Declaration clearly recognises the unacceptable humanitarian consequences currently resulting from the use of EWIPA. It sets out actions to be taken in military operations to strengthen the protection of civilians.

The different gendered impacts of weapons use on women, men, boys and girls is a critical consideration. All kinds of weapons are often used to facilitate acts of Gender-Based Violence against women and girls resulting in long-term physical, psychological and socio-economic harm. Gender-Based Violence is a horizontal, cross-cutting issue and effectively addressing it is key to helping achieve gender equality, sustainable development, and lasting peace and security. The Political Declaration maintains specific provisions in relation to the topic of Gender. This includes: *“work to empower, amplify, and integrate the voices of all those affected, including women and girls”*; encouraging *“further research into the gendered impacts of the use of explosive weapons”*; and adopting a *“holistic, integrated, gender-sensitive, and non-discriminatory approach to [victim] assistance, taking into account the rights of persons with disabilities, and supporting post-conflict recovery and durable solutions”*.



Minister for Foreign Affairs Simon Coveney and UN Under-Secretary-General of Disarmament Affairs Izumi Nakamitsu with EWIPA Declaration signatories in Dublin.

At the recent **Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) Conference of States Parties (CSP-27)** in The Hague at end of November, Ireland led on a joint gender statement, which became the most-joined statement from the Conference with 70 co-sponsors.

NAP Domestic Agenda

Meetings of the Oversight Group on Ireland's third NAP on the implementation of the WPS Agenda

September

The twelfth meeting of the Oversight Group took place on 7 September. The Group was briefed by **Commander Roberta O'Brien**, Ireland's **Voluntary National Contribution to NATO** and member of the Defence and Related Security Capacity Building team there, who spoke

of her work in gender mainstreaming at NATO.

Commander O'Brien has over 27 years' experience in the Irish Naval Service, and was the first woman to take command of a naval vessel. In her own career, she has seen how issues of equity of opportunity link into the WPS agenda.

In NATO, Commander O'Brien is seconded to defence capacity building, which is within the operational division. Commander O'Brien noted that being on the operational side is a positive, to help with WPS in implementation, and as a complement to colleagues working on WPS on the policy side. There are gender focal points throughout all divisions.

The defence capacity-building initiative is demand driven, and Commander O'Brien's work covers Tunisia and Jordan, whose armed forces requested training and capacity building support. In the Jordanian Armed Forces (JAF), the implementation of the WPS Agenda has improved greatly in recent years, and there is a gender mainstreaming strategy for 2021 – 2024. A new women's military training centre was established, ten women pilots have been taken into the air force, and the Quick React Force is now open to women. Commander O'Brien will be helping in the development of career development plans for women in the JAF.

The Tunisian Armed Forces were the first to outline clearly in their defence capacity building package that they want assistance in WPS and gender mainstreaming. NATO is working with them to provide material support and assistance in further implementing UNSCR 1325.

During her presentation, Commander O'Brien also mentioned sometimes being "the annoying one in the room" by consistently raising gender issues at meetings but emphasised the value of this consistency over time. This experience was echoed by members of the Oversight Group.

December

The last Oversight Group meeting for 2022 took place on 7

December and focused on WPS on a domestic level. **Deaglán Ó Briain**, Principal Officer at the Department of Justice (DoJ), gave a presentation on the new DoJ **National Action Plan on Human Trafficking**. He underlined the hidden nature of human trafficking, which involves the deception and exploitation of the most vulnerable and stressed that the real number of victims is considerably higher than official figures. There is an inextricable link between human trafficking and prostitution, with 56% of trafficking in the EU being for sexual exploitation purposes, while Ireland's figures are higher than the EU average. On this backdrop, an Independent Review of the Sexual Offences Act 2017 is under way and, following a commitment in the National Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (DSGBV) Strategy, exit strategies for women involved in prostitution are being established.

Mr. Ó Briain emphasised the need to bridge the gap between victims of human trafficking and the State by expanding the National Referral Mechanism beyond An Garda Síochána to include other agencies and NGOs as trusted partners. The main priority of the new NAP is to make victims feel safe in coming forward and this will be achieved through awareness campaigns, making materials available in other languages, training for frontline staff, and collaborating with organisations such as the IOM to enlist the help of cultural mediators.

OG members welcomed the briefing and the victim- and survivor-centred approach of the NAP, stressed the preventative role of education and the urgency of changing attitudes among the population.



WPS Focal Points Network Meeting

CRU Director Cyril Brennan and **Deputy Director Jason Robinson** took part in an inter-regional meeting of the **WPS Focal Points Network meeting in Pretoria** on the theme of *“Taking Practical Action to Implement the Women, Peace and Security Agenda through Inter-Regional Cooperation”*. The meeting was an opportunity to connect with WPS focal points from 42 Member States and share insights into the implementation of the Agenda.

Director Brennan spoke at a plenary panel on *“Ensuring women’s participation in peace processes – the role of women mediator networks and national action plans.”* His intervention focused on how Ireland’s experience of conflict informs our approach to WPS, the essential role of women negotiators and mediators in the Good Friday Agreement, and the commitments in our NAP which reflect this lesson.

CRU also attended the **WPS-Humanitarian Action (WPS-HA) Compact** Board meeting and raised issues around forthcoming reporting deadlines for Compact signatories.



Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative (PSVI) Conference



CRU Director Cyril Brennan and Desk Officer James Hagan attended the UK's **Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative (PSVI)** conference in London on 28 – 29 November.

High-profile speakers included the First Lady of Ukraine Olena Zelenska, HRH Countess of Wessex, HRH Grand Duchess of Luxembourg Maria Theresa, ICC Prosecutor Karim Khan, Iraqi human rights activist Nadia Murad, and Dr. Denis Mukwege, founder of Panzi Hospital in Bukavu. Member States' national commitments, including Ireland's, can be accessed [here](#).

Ireland committed to maintaining its strong support for holistic and survivor-centred approaches to prevent and address sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), including conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV). This includes promoting access to, and providing funding for, comprehensive health services, including sexual and reproductive health and rights, for women and girl victims and survivors, and other protection needs.

WPS Events



On 9 September, **Embassy Cyprus** hosted a two-day workshop with **Mary Montague** and **Liza Wilkinson** of mediation group [Tides](#), which explored practical skills for trauma-involved Peacebuilding, with peacebuilders from around Cyprus.

Nobel Women's Initiative

In September, [Nobel Women's Initiative](#) launched a documentary titled "*Oh Sister*" that outlines the heroic role women are playing for peace in Ukraine. The [film](#) features six women facing the challenges of the ongoing Russian invasion, and fighting for peace, justice and freedom in Ukraine.

Oversight Group member **Maria Butler** is Executive Director of Nobel Women's Initiative, which is a joint initiative of Nobel laureates **Leymah Gbowee** (Liberia), **Jody Williams** (USA), **Shirin Ebadi** (Iran), **Tawakkol Karman** (Yemen) and **Rigoberta Menchú Tum** (Guatemala).

Beannachtaí an tSéasúir
Season's Greetings
from the
Conflict Resolution Unit!



Our next issue will be out in the spring. Until then, the WPS team in the Conflict Resolution Unit wish you a peaceful Christmas and a Happy New Year! Remember you can contact us any time at wpsconsultations@dfa.ie and follow us on Twitter [@DFAPeaceSupport](https://twitter.com/DFAPeaceSupport) for updates on all things WPS!



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