



# WOMEN, Peace and Security



## Ireland's Approach to Women, Peace and Security Newsletter Spring 2022

Welcome to our spring newsletter, the first in 2022, at a time that we hope marks the beginning of the end of the COVID-19 pandemic and the return to in-person meetings, discussions and events on how best to advance the Women, Peace and Security Agenda. While we are slowly exiting one pandemic and our battle with COVID-19, we are all too conscious of how another new war has emerged which will also have global consequences.

The war in Ukraine and the large numbers of displaced persons, mostly women and children, remind us how fragile the gains on gender equality and women's rights are and how vital it is that we continue to defend them. Here, in the Conflict Resolution Unit, we continue to work hard to ensure that the rights of Ukrainian women and girls are protected.

Read on for updates on our work on WPS, events for International Women's Day, reports on Saint Brigid's Day

activities, news from the Security Council and the Oversight Group on Ireland’s Third National Action Plan on WPS and more.



International Women’s Day is marked annually on 8 March. The origins of the day date to the campaigns for female suffrage in the early years of the twentieth century. The UN began marking International Women’s Day for the first time in 1975. The UN has chosen “Gender equality today for a sustainable tomorrow” as the theme for [IWD 2022](#), “recognizing the contribution of women and girls around the world, who are leading the charge on climate change adaptation, mitigation, and response, to build a more sustainable future for all.”

## IWD 2022 Events

An event poster with a red background. At the top left, the text reads "Women's full, equal, meaningful and safe participation in parliament" in white, bold font, followed by "A panel discussion to mark International Women's Day 2022". On the left side, there is a silhouette of a woman in profile, colored in shades of blue and pink. On the right side, there are several circular portraits of the event's participants. At the top right, there is a harp icon, the word "Ireland", and the logo of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPIU) with the year "1889".

**Women's full, equal, meaningful and safe participation in parliament**  
A panel discussion to mark International Women's Day 2022

**Chair:**

- Dr. Walt Kilroy, DCU

**Participants:**

- Ivana Bacik T.D.
- Jennifer Carroll MacNeill T.D.
- Zeina Hilal, Inter-Parliamentary Union
- Fawzia Koofi
- Hon. Millie Odhiambo

**Time: 8 March, 12.30pm**  
**Register via Eventbrite**

The Conflict Resolution Unit (CRU) and Development Cooperation and Africa Division (DCAD) Policy Unit have partnered with the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) to organise a panel discussion to investigate the barriers to women's political participation and the actions necessary to ensure that women can participate fully and safely in political and parliamentary processes. The event will be chaired by Dr. Walt Kilroy and panellists include Ivana Bacik T.D., Jennifer Carroll MacNeill T.D., Zeina Hilal (IPU), Fawzia Koofi (Afghanistan) and Hon. Millie Odhiambo (Kenya). You can register for ***Women's full, equal, meaningful and safe participation in parliamentary processes*** via [this link](#).

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Another [event](#) of interest on the day is ***Collaborating for Change-sharing national and international lessons on addressing gender-based violence***, organised by the Consulate General of Ireland and the Consulate General of Mexico in Los Angeles. Ireland and Mexico co-chair the Informal Expert Group (IEG) on Women, Peace and Security at the UN Security Council and are working closely to advance implementation of the WPS Agenda. CRU Director Áine Hearn will be one of the panellists and will speak about the domestic aspects of Ireland's third National Action Plan on WPS. Other speakers include the Consul General of Mexico Marcela Celorio, Deaglán Ó Briain of Ireland's Department of Justice and Ambassador Nina Hachigian, L.A. Deputy Mayor of International Affairs.



## International Women's Day

### Online Event

Collaborating for Change-sharing national and international lessons on addressing gender-based violence

8 March 9am (PST)



Ard-Chonsalacht na hÉireann | Los Angeles  
Consulate General of Ireland | Los Angeles

Eric  
Garcetti  
@MayorOfLA



MÉXICO  
CONSULADO GENERAL  
EN LOS ÁNGELES

#### Collaborating for Change-sharing national and international lessons on addressing gender-based violence

Gender-based violence is a pervasive, global challenge. It is estimated that 1 in 3 women globally will experience physical or sexual violence in her lifetime. No country is unaffected and as such it demands a global, collective response.

Studies show that comprehensive long term strategies, policies and programmes which centre and promote the rights of women and girls, address the underlying causes of violence and hold perpetrators to account will lead to positive change. There is now an opportunity to consider where and how such policies and programmes have worked, and share those lessons.

**On the 8th of March, the Consulates General of Ireland and Mexico, and the Office of the Mayor of Los Angeles, will come together to discuss this issue, bringing forward the lessons learned at the international and national level.**

Ireland and Mexico currently sit on the UN Security Council, working together on gender equality and women, peace and security issues. As co-chairs of the UN Security Council Informal Expert Group on Women, Peace and Security (WPS), Ireland and Mexico are working to ensure that women's rights are placed front and centre of the deliberations and negotiations of the Security Council. Nationally, both Ireland and Mexico have developed National Action Plans on UN Security Council Resolution 1325 for the implementation of the women, peace and security agenda which are linked to national plans of action to address domestic, sexual and gender based violence.

Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti chairs an international coalition of cities committed to advancing gender equality. The City Hub And Network for Gender Equity - known as CHANGE, whose membership extends from Barcelona, to Mexico, to Sierra Leone, is committed to advancing policies and programmes on gender equity which include a focus on gender based violence (GBV).

The online event, open to the public, will consist of a panel discussion, followed by a moderated question and answers session with the panellists. Speakers include:

Consul General of Mexico Marcela Celorio  
Áine Hearn, Director, Conflict Resolution Unit, Ireland's Department of Foreign Affairs  
Deaglán Ó Briain of Ireland's Department of Justice,  
Ambassador Nina Hachigian, L.A. Deputy Mayor of International Affairs,  
Dulce Colin, General Coordinator for Equality and Attention to Gender Violence, Government of Mexico City

The panel will be moderated by Elizabeth Cafferty, former UN Gender Advisor and Global Women's Rights Expert.

## Ireland at the UN: Highlights from the Security Council



**IRELAND**  
United Nations  
Security Council  
2021—2022

## Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security

An open debate on WPS, on the theme of ***‘Protecting Participation: Addressing Violence Targeting Women in Peace and Security Processes’***, took place on 18 January under Norway’s Presidency of the Security Council. The meeting emphasised the need to address violence targeting women in peace and security processes and focused on human rights themes, including the question of reprisals against women human rights defenders who engage with the Security Council. The briefers were the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, an Afghan woman peacebuilder, Zarqa Yaftali, and the Executive Director of the NGO Working Group on WPS, Kaavya Asoka.

**Ambassador Geraldine Byrne Nason** delivered Ireland’s statement, which highlighted the importance Ireland places on upholding women’s participation and ensuring the protection of women human rights defenders (HRDs) and peacebuilders. The statement detailed a number of key actions taken by Ireland to advance those policies including through the IEG on WPS, our work on reprisals and our support for the OHCHR, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of HRDs, and organisations like Frontline Defenders. Ambassador Byrne Nason emphasised the priority Ireland placed on giving a safe platform to women HRDs during Ireland’s Council Presidency when 16 women briefed the UNSC.



“Simply put, it is not acceptable that women are silenced by the threat of reprisal. Neither should we, as Council members, collaborate in their silencing by not inviting them to speak (...) there is no substitute for women, I say it again, being in the room and at the table: that applies here, and to every peace and political process, wherever that may be.”

Ambassador Geraldine Byrne Nason



IRELAND  
United Nations  
Security Council  
2021—2022

Another WPS Open Debate will also be taking place on **March 8, International Women’s Day**, under the Presidency of the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The topic of this debate is *‘Advancing the Women, Peace and Security agenda through partnerships: Women’s economic inclusion and participation as a key to building peace’*. The debate will be broadcast live on [UN Web TV](#) and more information will be shared on [@DFAPeaceSupport](#) on the day.

## Meetings of the Informal Expert Group (IEG) on WPS

**In November, co-chairs of the IEG on WPS, Ireland and Mexico, convened a meeting on Women’s Protection Advisers (WPAs),** centred on implementing the mandate to prevent and address sexual violence in conflict. This was the first time the IEG focused on a thematic rather than a country-specific topic.

Starting in 2008 with Resolution 1888 and through a series of subsequent resolutions, the United Nations Security Council has developed a robust normative framework, which recognises that conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV), when used or commissioned as a tactic of war, terror, torture and/or political repression, is an exacerbating factor in armed conflict and may impede the restoration of international peace and security. The resolutions call for, among others, the timely deployment of WPAs to strengthen monitoring, analysis and reporting on CRSV; to enhance efforts to prevent and respond to instances of CRSV against civilians; and to integrate CRSV considerations into mission policies, operations, and training, as part of broader gender mainstreaming efforts.

**WPAs are currently deployed in six United Nations field operations - MINUSCA (Central African Republic), MONUSCO (Democratic Republic of the Congo), UNAMI (Iraq), MINUSMA**

**(Mali), UNMISS (South Sudan), and UNSOM (Somalia) - where they conduct crucial work in gathering evidence of CRSV against civilians to be used to hold perpetrators accountable.**

The recommendations of the IEG can be read [here](#).

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**On 18 February, the IEG held a meeting on Afghanistan** to discuss recent developments and the ongoing deterioration of women's and girls' rights. Member States discussed the **upcoming UNAMA mandate renewal** and ways to include strong language on women's rights and gender equality in the resolution, the current trends on violence against women and girls and reprisals against women activists and protesters, and the challenges of engaging women activists without further endangering them.

Among the **recommendations from the meeting** is that Member States should ensure that delegations engaging with the Taliban have a strong representation of women at senior level and support direct negotiation opportunities between Afghan women leaders and the Taliban; support and advocate for the full, equal and meaningful participation of women, without any restrictions, and the consultation of women civil society organisations on the design, delivery and monitoring of humanitarian assistance in Afghanistan; and support the establishment of an independent human rights monitoring mechanism to conduct investigations and gather evidence on violations of women's and girls' rights and sexual and gender-based violence, including conflict-related sexual violence.

**On 4 March, the IEG held a meeting on the situation in Myanmar**, where there are increasing reports of sexual and gender-based violence and women civil society activists and women human rights defenders are facing violent repression from the authorities. Details of the discussions and recommendations following the meeting will be shared in our next issue.

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

The last meeting of the Oversight Group (OG) in 2021 was held on 8 December. The main topic on the agenda was the Protection pillar of the NAP on WPS, with a focus on efforts to end sexual and gender-based violence against women and girls and an overview of activities to mark the **16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence (GBV)**.

**Ambassador Claire Buckley, Embassy Freetown**, briefed the OG about the Mission's engagements with the Government on the issues of gender

governance in the development plan for Sierra Leone and on the country's Gender Empowerment Bill, as well as providing support for the implementation of the country's second NAP. The Sierra Leonean army has been progressing the Gender and Equal Opportunity Policy and gender parity within its armed forces. Developments to date include the recruitment of a gender adviser and the creation of a family support unit, with the intention of increasing the number of women within the army.

**Kate O'Donnell, Head of Development, Embassy Monrovia,** emphasised the role the WPS agenda can play in peacebuilding efforts in Liberia. In December 2020, rape was declared a national emergency by the Liberian president and the Mission is planning to focus its efforts on preventing violence against women, improving accountability for sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and increasing women's participation.



**Irish Aid**

Rialtas na hÉireann

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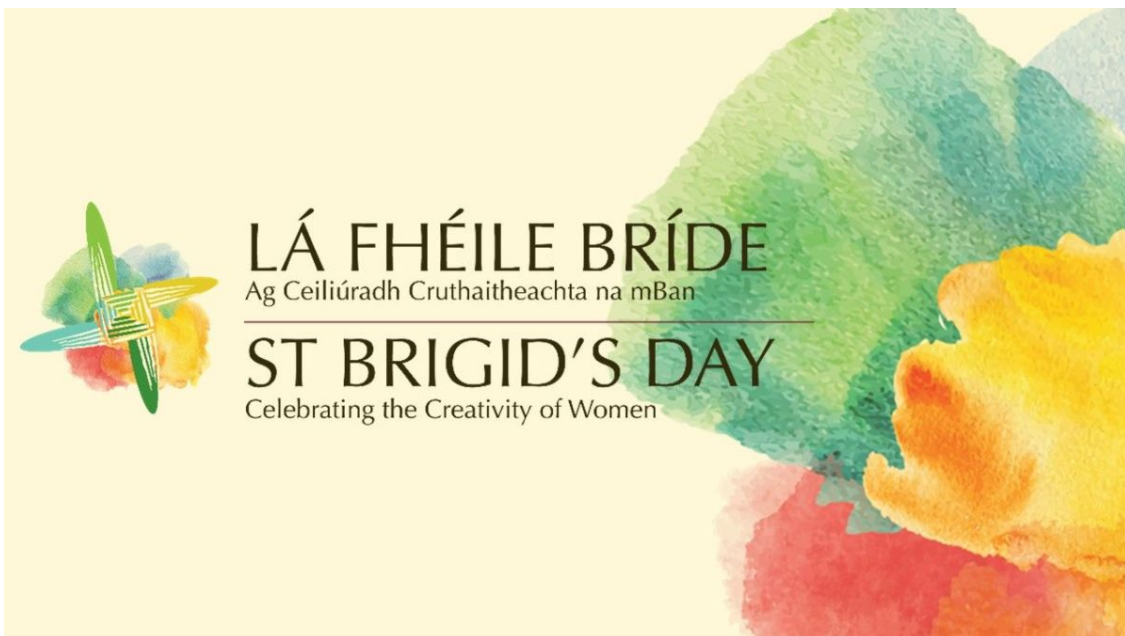


Representatives of **The International Rescue Committee (IRC)** were invited by the OG to speak about the work IRC is conducting with support from Irish Aid. The partnership goes back more than 15 years, particularly in the area of protection of women and girls in humanitarian crises. IRC's work under the current partnership with Irish Aid has the overarching objective of protecting women and girls in acute emergencies and protracted crises, with a focus on Burundi, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia and South Sudan. **IRC's GBV Response, Preparedness and Recovery programme** ensures survivors of GBV can access quality and timely care and are provided with training to increase their skills and knowledge on GBV responses. Thus, women and adolescent girls are empowered to organise and take active public and private roles to advance gender equality.

With support from IRC, local women-led organisations have increased their advocacy on issues around women's protection and empowerment and are engaging with national leaders on legislation. This partnership with local women-led organisations has not only increased access to quality GBV services, but it also created opportunities for strengthening women's leadership and amplifying the voices of women and girls from grassroots level.

## **Saint Brigid's Day Events**





St Brigid's Day (Lá Fhéile Bríde) was marked with a programme of over 75 online and in-person events around the globe and across Ireland celebrating the leadership, creativity and the talent of women.

**The Embassy of Ireland in Poland together with the United Nations Association Poland (UNAP) organised a Roundtable on Women, Peace and Security.**

The aim was to help promote awareness of the WPS agenda locally and to draw in the perspectives of experts from Ireland, Poland and Mexico (with whom Ireland co-chairs the Informal Expert Group on WPS in New York). Panellists shared perspectives on developing National Action Plans (NAPs) on WPS, the approaches adopted in different countries, and the successes and challenges of implementation.

**Conflict Resolution Unit Director Áine Hearn**s shared lessons from the development of Ireland's third NAP and focused her intervention on the open, transparent and rigorous public consultations with diverse stakeholders – civil society, women's organisations and women from migrant, rural and diverse backgrounds – which informed the design of the NAP. She stressed the importance of ensuring a transparent, balanced and participatory process when developing the NAP and the crucial role of the Oversight Group in ensuring that implementation of the actions in the NAP is progressed.



Also on Saint Brigid's Day, **the Embassy of Ireland in Ethiopia** organised an event with the theme '**Role of Women in Peace Building**'. This mainly focused on two pillars of WPS: participation and

promotion. The event highlighted women's greater contribution to the sustainable peaceful coexistence in Ethiopia and emphasised their continuous role in restoring peace in the country; advocated for enhanced women's participation and active role in ongoing national dialogues and to sustainable peace-making efforts in the country; and aimed to create a learning opportunity from experiences and best practice from across the African continent.

Speakers included the African Union Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security Mme Bineta Diop, Dr Rahel Batie, Chair of the Ethiopian Political Parties Joint Council, and Ms Bronagh Hinds, senior associate with DemocraShe in Ireland.

## WPS Events

On 6 December, **the Irish Embassy in Riyadh** co-chaired together with Search for Common Ground a virtual event on ***“Women, Peace & Security: Through the Prism of Grassroots Initiatives in Yemen”***, organised by the EU Delegation to the Republic of Yemen and UN Women. This was an opportunity to discuss the often overlooked contributions of Yemeni women in building peace from the grassroots. Despite the resistance of the main parties in Yemen to including women in their delegations in the form of Track 1 Diplomacy, many Yemeni women mediators and women's groups play key roles in Track 2 and Track 3 diplomacy. This includes a range of settings from peacebuilding at all levels of society including local ceasefires, mediating to end conflicts over water and land resources, negotiating humanitarian access, and prisoner release and protection.

Participants included **Ruqaiya Rubaeh**, local woman mediator and Head of Conflict Resolution Committee in Lahj; **Adela Alkhader**, Deputy Governor for Women's Affairs in Abyan; **Rumailah Al Aghbari**, Women & Peace Advisor, Search for Common Ground-Yemen; and CRU Director **Áine Hearn**s. Ms Hearn spoke of the crucial role of grassroots women peacebuilders in the Northern Ireland peace process and reiterated Ireland's support for the leadership of women in grassroots peacebuilding initiatives in Yemen.

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On 8 February, **CRU and its partner Interpeace** organised an internal webinar to present to colleagues in the Department of Foreign Affairs a policy brief entitled ***‘Voices from the Margins: Young men and post-conflict masculinities in Northern Ireland’***. The panellists were the authors of the brief, Professor Brandon Hamber and Dr. Conor Murray of Ulster University, and Emma Johnston, a young peacebuilder from Youth Action Northern Ireland, who also sits on the Oversight Group of the NAP on WPS.

Irish Aid  
Rialtas na hÉireann  
Government of Ireland

Interpeace  
INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION  
FOR PEACEBUILDING

**Voices from the Margins:  
Young Men and Post-  
Conflict Masculinities in  
Northern Ireland**

with Brandon Hamber, Conor  
Murray and Emma Johnston

@DFAPeaceSupport  
@InterpeaceTweet

The panellists discussed the topic of masculinities in the Youth, Peace and Security context by drawing attention to *The Missing Peace: Independent Progress Study on Youth, Peace and Security* report (authored by Graeme Simpson of Interpeace) which called for, among other things, research to ‘systematically apply a gender and age lens to all conflict assessments and peacebuilding programming’ and to explore ‘positive, non-violent and gender-equitable masculine identities that challenge restrictive social norms’. Participants heard about the gendered dimensions of violent masculinities and the impact they have on perpetuating gender inequalities and marginalising youth across Northern Ireland’s communities. The paper can be accessed on the Interpeace [website](#).

On 16 February, **CRU Director Áine Hearn**s was invited to share **lessons from Ireland’s development of our third NAP on WPS with the Zimbabwe National Technical Committee** tasked with drawing up the country’s first NAP. The intervention focused on the importance of a broad and transparent consultation process and of a wide participation of civil society, women’s organisations and women from diverse backgrounds, including women with disabilities and women belonging to minorities. Ms Hearn stressed the importance of fully implementing the WPA Agenda globally and highlighted the **Regional Acceleration of Resolution 1325** initiative, which coordinates efforts of several regional organisations ( the EU, African Union, NATO and OSCE) to progress the Agenda.



The **Women Peace and Security Focal Points Network** welcomed the Central African Republic and the Republic of Korea as new members in 2021, expanding [membership](#) to 90 members (83 UN Member States and 7 Regional

Organisations).

In 2021, several countries adopted their first or new National Action Plans on WPS: **Australia** (2nd) 2021-2031; **Germany** (3rd) 2021-2024; **Iraq** (2nd) 2019-2023; **Mexico** (1st) 2021-2024; **Republic of Korea** (3rd) 2021-2023; **Uganda** (3rd) 2021-2025; and the **United Arab Emirates** (1st) 2021- 2024. A global map of adopted National Action Plans on WPS can be accessed [here](#).



### **WPS-Humanitarian Action (WPS-HA) Compact Board Meeting**

The Compact on Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action (WPS-HA) was launched at the Generation Equality Forum in Paris on July 2. By joining the Compact, signatories pledge to take concrete action on existing commitments for women and girls in five key areas: increased financing for WPS and gender equality in humanitarian programming; meaningful participation in peace processes; economic security and access to resources; leadership and agency; and protection and promotion of women's rights in conflict and crisis. There are currently 160 signatories to the Compact.

On 1 March, the WPS-HA Compact Board, of which Ireland is a member, met to discuss governance issues for the Board and planning for activities during 2022. **Conflict Resolution Unit Director, Áine Hearn, attended the meeting.**



The **Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund (WPHF)** is a global pooled funding mechanism designed to accelerate action and support for women's participation, leadership, and empowerment in humanitarian response and peace and security settings.

The Fund has recently opened new funding windows. The **Women Human Rights Defenders (WHRDs) Window**, launched in 2022, aims to respond to the urgent needs and protection of WHRDs as peace activists through flexible funding safety nets and direct logistical support for advocacy purposes. [Calls for funding proposals](#) have been launched for local civil society organizations in Iraq, Lebanon, the Philippines and Ethiopia who are working to enhance women's leadership in humanitarian and crisis response and to ensure the rights protection of women and girls.

**Until the next issue, keep an eye on [@DFAPeaceSupport](#) for updates on all things WPS!**



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