

WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY UPDATE – JUNE 2018

Conflict Resolution Unit, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Please find below a brief update on the Women, Peace and Security agenda for May 2018. Please do not hesitate to get in touch at any time if you have [news](#), an [event](#) or [project](#) relevant to Ireland's WPS agenda that you would like circulated to this mailing list.

For more general information on Ireland's WPS agenda, please visit our [webpage](#). More information on the Oversight Group (including membership and meeting minutes) can be found [here](#). To see a copy of [Ireland's 2nd National Action Plan](#) itself, please click [here](#).

Security Council Debate on Sexual Violence



On 16 April, Ireland's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, H.E. Ambassador Geraldine Byrne Nason delivered Ireland's statement at the annual Security Council Debate on Sexual Violence in Conflict. The debate was particularly significant as it marked the first time that a Rohingya woman addressed the Council. In Ireland's statement, Amb Byrne Nason recalled the recent 20th anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement, citing the critical role played by women in the peace process. She also noted that despite policy progress over the last decade, women and girls continue to be a currency of conflict, particularly given the recent rise in violent extremism and the migration crisis. She cited Irish Aid's support to programmes aimed at tackling conflict-related sexual violence, and the focus on empowering women in Ireland's second National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security. Ambassador Byrne Nason additionally called on the Security Council to use sanctions in a consistent and timely manner against the perpetrators of conflict-related sexual violence. Ireland's statement is [linked](#).

Women Peace and Humanitarian Fund

Ireland is a founding member of the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund and sits on its Board as a core donor. The WPHF supports local women's grassroots organisations in fragile conflict situations. It currently funds projects in Burundi, Colombia, Jordan and the Pacific Islands. It recently opened a [call for proposals](#) to civil society organisations in Iraq, where it will invest \$2m in funding grassroots organisations. WPHF has also signed a partnership with the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative, to focus on protection issues in a number of African countries. In March, WPHF announced that actress Kristen Bell will act as its [Global Advocate](#), promoting the work of the Fund. In May, Ireland attended a productive meeting of the Board, focussing on concluding new partnerships and upcoming projects involving Global Advocate Kristen Bell.



Promoting Women in Peace Mediation: The Importance of Networks

The Conflict Resolution Unit in conjunction with the Irish School of Ecumenics, Trinity College Dublin, hosted an event titled, **Promoting Women in Peace Mediation: The Importance of Networks**, on the 1st of June 2018. This event included a public panel discussion with speakers, [Professor Monica McWilliams](#), [Dr Catherine Turner](#), and [Brendan McAllister](#).



(Screenshot of Eimhear O'Neill's film Peacemakers: Wave Goodbye to Dinosaurs)

The event also screened Eimhear O'Neill's documentary film **Peacemakers: Wave Goodbye to Dinosaurs**. The film charts the formation of the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition and the role they played during the Good Friday Negotiations. The screening was followed by a Q and A with former Women's Coalition members, Monica McWilliams and Bronagh Hinds.



In the afternoon, the Conflict Resolution Unit hosted an expert level roundtable at Iveagh House, in which the possibility of developing an Irish network of women mediators was discussed.

Women are more likely to form cross-party coalitions than men. It is therefore vital that States support women's capacity building initiatives.

Monica McWilliams, Promoting Women in Peace Mediation Workshop 1st June 2018

Women at the Table project in Nigeria — Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue



Members of Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue recently visited the department to discuss the [Women at the Table project in \(Middle Belt\) Nigeria](#), funded by the Conflict Resolution Unit, Stability Fund. The ongoing project has been successful in securing space for women in local level negotiations. The programme also conducts mediation trainings for local women continues to support the development of horizontal and vertical networks of women

peacebuilders. For more information on CHD see the [link](#).

Launch of the Report on Young People and the Sustainable Development Goals.

On the 25th April 2018, the new report on Irish youth perspectives on the SDGs was launched by Minister McEntee, Senator Ruane and Ireland's UN Youth Delegates, Lauren Flannigan and Paul Dockery. In her presentation Lauren Flannigan highlighted the importance of SDG5 on tackling gender inequality.



The report is titled *Generating Change: Spotlight Report on Young People, the Sustainable Development Goals and Ireland 2018* and can be accessed [here](#).





Lt. Col Mary Carroll, Vice Admiral Mark Mellett Chief of Staff and Mr Paul Kehoe, T.D., Minister of State with Responsibility for Defence

Lieutenant Colonel Mary Carroll Deployed to UNIFIL HQ in Lebanon

The first Irish female officer to command an Irish overseas contingent was Lieutenant Colonel Mary Carroll. Lt Col Carroll commanded the Irish Force Reserve Company in UNDOF in 2016 and was deployed to UNIFIL HQ Lebanon on 7th of May to take up the appointment as Special Security Officer (SSO) Integrated Outreach Ops.

More women are needed in the Defence Forces, not just because of trying to be politically correct or in order to address 'women's issues' in conflict, such as sexual and gender based violence, rather, greater gender balance in the military allows for better decision making and makes the military a healthier reflections of the societies that they serve. Vice Admiral Mark Mellett, Chief of Staff of the Defence Forces, 8th March 2018, Women in Peacekeeping Event, The Hague

Continued Regional WPS Engagement

CRU Director, Áine Hearn attended the Gender Focal Points Network biannual meeting in Berlin. This was attended by around 150 representatives from UN member states, regional and international organizations and civil society. The Network, serves as a cross-regional forum to exchange experiences and best practices to advance the implementation of the UN agenda on women, peace and security, and to improve coordination of funding and assistance to programmes.



Áine also attended the EU Task Force on Women, Peace and Security on the 22nd May 2018. The key themes addressed in the meeting were around 1) the Review of the Comprehensive Approach to the EU implementation of the UN Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820, and 2) Exploring EU engagement in the continuum of Gender-Based Violence, including Conflict-Related Sexual Violence (CRSV), Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, Violence against Human Rights' Defenders and the shrinking of space for Civil Society Organisations.

Regional Acceleration of Resolution 1325 (RAR)

The Conflict Resolution Unit will host the Regional Acceleration of Resolution 1325 (RAR), in Iveagh House on the 14th and 15th June. This will be attended by representatives of EU, OSCE, UNDPKO, NATO, AU and UN Women. The meeting will focus on the theme of developing indicators for evaluation, and will draw from the Irish experience. Bronagh Hinds and Debbie Donnelly, who conducted the mid-term review of the Irish National Action Plan, will present to the group as part of a lesson learning exercise.

Ann Anderson Appointed to the UN Secretary General's Peacebuilding Advisory Group.



Former Irish Ambassador to the United States of America and previously to the United Nations, Anne Anderson, has recently been appointed by UNSG António Guterres to the Secretary General's Peacebuilding Fund Advisory Group. For further information on the appointment, please see the [link](#).

President Michael D Higgins address to the United Nations General Assembly

President Michael D Higgins addressed the United Nations General Assembly High-Level meeting on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace on the 24th April 2018. He recognized the vital role of women in conflict resolution and referenced the role of women in garnering peace on the Island of Ireland.

He stated that, ***'our peace could not have been achieved without the steady and courageous activism of civic organisations campaigning for a more just and peaceful society, many of which were led by the women of Ireland, North and South'***. See the full speech

[here](#).



President Higgins addressing the General Assembly on 24th April 2018. President Higgins became a Champion for the [HeforShe Campaign](#) in 2015

During that same trip at an address to the Ireland Fund as part of the Women's

Leadership Series, he ***'gratefully acknowledged the central role played by the Women's Coalition in the negotiations that led to the Good Friday Agreement in 1998'***, and noted that ***'[T]he Women's Coalition contributed in important ways in the negotiations to securing a broader and a better Agreement text, in what was an otherwise a male-dominated process, in particular in stitching in the need for reconciliation in to the very fabric of the Agreement'***. See the full speech [here](#).



As Chair of the Commission on the Status of Woman, Ambassador Byrne Nason was delighted to congratulate the 4th woman to be elected President of the UN General Assembly, Foreign Minister of Ecuador, Ms. María Fernanda Espinosa Garcés.

International Alert

On April 18th 2018 the Conflict Resolution Unit hosted members of International Alert, including their gender advisor, Henri Myrntinen. They presented to the Department work that they are currently undertaking in Syria, Tajikistan and Colombia. Their work on gender and peacebuilding also engages closely with research on masculinities and the role of gender norms in providing incentives for joining armed groups. International Alert have also been involved in developing a [Tool Kit for Countering Violent Extremism](#).

The [Report of the Midterm Review of Ireland's second National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security](#) is [available](#) on the Women, Peace and Security webpage.

Please let any interested parties know that they can sign up to the mailing list by contacting wpsconsultation@dfa.ie. Should you wish to unsubscribe from the mailing list at any time, please also email wpsconsultation@dfa.ie.

*Considering the overwhelming role men play in producing and reproducing conflict-related and other forms of violence, a better understanding of the links between masculinities and violence – as well as non-violence – should be central to examining gender, conflict, and peace. Myrntinen, H, Khattab, L, Naujoks, J, 2016 [Re-Thinking Hegemonic Masculinities in Conflict-affected Contexts](#) in *Critical Military Studies*, 3:2, 103 – 119.*