



# WOMEN, Peace and Security



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

August 2020



Welcome to the August WPS newsletter, since our last newsletter we have all been faced with the challenges of Covid- 19 which has changed our lives in many ways and has impacted on many WPS issues. The WPS team in DFA is working from home and connecting our work virtually with our partners until such time as it is safe to return to the traditional working environment. We are of course all contactable by email should you have any queries regarding any item in this newsletter.

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## WPS webinars

Over the recent months, many excellent webinars have offered unique and timely insight on the impact of Covid-19 on the WPS Agenda and the work of women peacebuilders, helping us understand how to move forward and keep our projects relevant in this ever-evolving context. To name a few:



# STOCKHOLM FORUM on Peace and Development 2020

Twenty Years of the  
Women, Peace and Security Agenda  
Online: 11 May 2020



INTERNATIONAL alert KVINNA KVINNA are proud Forum partners.



**The Stockholm Forum on Peace and Development** was launched on the 11 May with more than a week of interactive dialogues, many of which had strong gendered lenses. The first session was a high-level interactive dialogue titled **‘Twenty Years of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda: Lessons from the Past, a Roadmap for the Future.’** It was organised in partnership with Kvinna till Kvinna and Ireland’s stability fund partner, International Alert. Petra Tötterman Andorff, Secretary General of Kvinna till Kvinna, introduced their recently published report [A Right, Not a Gift](#) quoting a participant of their research from Syria: “Women need to know participation is a right and a duty toward her country and it’s not a gift given by men.” Our Stability Fund partner, International Alert, also shared recommendations and findings of their soon to be published report, resulting from extensive research and grassroots consultation on how the WPS Agenda has, in the last 20 years, been experienced and implemented on the ground.



**International Alert** @intalert · 12 мая

We must engage with men and masculinities to transform patriarchal gender norms that block progress of the [#WomenPeaceSecurity](#) agenda.

Ndeye Sow gave our [#UNSCR1325](#) recommendations for donors, intl insts & govts at [#SthlmForum](#) yesterday.

Watch at [youtu.be/OMjnAfd00OQ?t=...](https://youtu.be/OMjnAfd00OQ?t=...)



Kvinna till Kvinna Sweden и еще 6



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(Sign up [here](#) to be updated regarding the publication)

Another fantastic webinar that took place under the forum was titled **“Covid-19 implications for Stability and Women-led responses to the Crisis: report from Monrovia, Liberia.”** Bringing together grassroots women peacebuilders, government representative and NGOs. The panel comprised Liberia’s Minister of Gender, Children and Social Protection Williametta Piso Saydee-Tarr; Mrs. Naomi T. Solanke, Director at [Community Healthcare Initiative](#); Mrs. Nelly Cooper, Director at [West Point Women for Health and Development Organization](#); Petra Tötterman Andorff, Secretary-General – Kvinna till Kvinna; and Mari Paz Ortega Rodriguez, Head of Office – Kvinna till Kvinna. The panel pointed out the degree to which women in the informal sector are adversely affected by the pandemic, highlighting the issue of decreased access to SRHR products and the implications of high teenage pregnancies, domestic violence, loss of livelihoods and income affecting lives that are already precarious. The tone of the session however, was one of hope and we encourage everyone to look into the work of these grassroots organisations.

- Please find all public sessions of the Stockholm Forum (here)
  - 20 years of WPS (webinar [here](#))

- Covid-19 implications for Stability and Women-led responses to the Crisis: report from Monrovia, Liberia (webinar [here](#))

On the 27 May, UAE, Ireland and the Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security held a webinar, **The Post-Conflict Window: Advancing Women's Role in Economic Recovery and Climate Resilience** featuring a strong intervention of Ireland's Permanent Representative to the UN, and long-standing WPS advocate Ambassador Geraldine Byrne-Nason

- Link to the webinar ([here](#)).

Most recently, the WPS team also took part in the **Mediation or Militarization: Resolving Conflicts in the Age of Corona** webinar, hosted by the LSE Centre for Women, Peace and Security and Women Mediators across the Commonwealth (WMC). Bringing together the experiences of women peacebuilders, they discussed how, in the midst of a pandemic, women mediators were responding to new needs in their communities as they continued to work towards long-term peace.

- Link to the webpage ([here](#))

As a member of the **WPS Focal Points Network**, Ireland attended two High-Level events organized by this year's co-chairs Canada and Uruguay. The first reflected on the challenges and opportunities of advancing the WPS Agenda in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic and inaugurated the beginning of a series of online meetings that will be held during this 20th anniversary year of UNSCR 1325. The second was an Intergenerational Dialogue titled Lessons for Leadership on Women, Peace and Security – Past, Present and Future where young activists and one of the original architects of the UNSCR 1325 discussed the resolution's achievements since its adoption and the many challenges ahead.

On the 28 June, the Ambassador Barbara Jones Ireland's Ambassador to Mexico had the honour to chair the **webinar "National Action Plans for Women Peace and Security: Advantages, Lessons Learned and Challenges in the Current Global Context"** and a great opportunity to hear experts from Mexico, Chile and Canada as well as Conflict Resolution Unit Director Áine Hearn exchange their experiences on implementing UNSCR 1325.



In January, to celebrate St. Brigid's day, Patricia O'Brien, Ireland's Ambassador to France hosted a high-level lunch in Paris on the theme of **UN and gender**. The keynote speakers were Generation Equality Forum Secretary General, Ambassador Patricia O'Brien, and former UN peacekeeper and former Captain in the Irish Defence Forces, Deirdre Carberry. The guests included over 20 influential Paris-based Ambassadors from different geographic regions, as well as the Paris head of think tank ECFR, Tara Varma, Irish Times correspondent Lara Marlowe and a former UNUSG for Peacekeeping, Alain le Roy. The event combined two facets of the UN's activity on gender, namely multilateral cooperation and UN peacekeeping which seemed to capture the attention of the audience and kept them engaged throughout the event. The lunch appeared to be a timely event that highlighted Ireland's own work on gender but also introduced GEF initiative to many of the Ambassadors in attendance.



On 13 May, the Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade's Conflict Resolution Unit hosted a **"Peace & Security Partners Dialogue"**. The meeting took place against the backdrop of Covid-19 and was intended to provide an opportunity to share knowledge

and expertise and take stock of developments with senior DFAT staff and with fellow conflict resolution and peacebuilding organisations. The CRU team have joined up with the Institute for Integrated Transitions (IFIT), one of our longstanding partners, who assisted us in facilitating the meeting. The discussion focussed on peacebuilding innovation and collaboration, and brought together Stability Fund Partners experts from Conciliation Resources, International Alert, Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, Dialogue Advisory Group, International Crisis Group and the European Institute of Peace.

## Impact of Covid-19 on WPS

We know that the impact of Covid-19 is especially serious for women and girls living in crises and conflict affected settings. The knowledge of local women's groups and peacebuilders can inform and improve community focused interventions that meet the specific needs of women and girls in conflict affected settings and it Ireland's priority to support and protect them in their work. Let us also remember that the WPS agenda calls for a gender analysis and improved women's access to the spaces where important decisions are being made:

- The crisis can provide for this opportunity and women can be involved in the design of preparation, mitigation, response and recovery from Covid-19 plans, providing first hand-knowledge to understand how to respond to the pandemic and build back better.
- We are actively working with our partners to ensure that Covid-19 related programming is informed by gender analysis, gender disaggregated data is collected and utilised, and that efforts to protect and support those furthest behind are prioritised, while safeguarding progress towards the SDGs.



Ireland is conscious of the recent pushback on gender equality and women's rights, coupled with the disproportionate negative impact Covid-19 is having on women and girls. We believe that strong supporters of gender equality should work together and work smart to ensure that hard won progress is not eroded.

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## **WPHF Covid-19 emergency window**

The Women Peace and Humanitarian Fund, a Stability Fund partner, have swiftly responded and adapted their work to the new reality of the pandemic. Conscious of the effect of covid-19 on the organisations and projects they were funding they put in place an emergency response window calling for proposals specific to the crisis in identified eligible countries. The scope of the window ranges from provision of seed funding, to stronger leadership and meaningful participation of women and girls, to support for women most economically affected by the crisis, restoration of access to sexual and reproductive health services and support for prevention and response to GBV.

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More information about the WPHF Covid-19 Emergency Response Window ([here](#))

## Recent appointments

In recent months, we have also been honoured with the appointment of three outstanding Irish women at very high levels in the UN system. Each appointment is a small victory for the WPS Agenda and we are delighted to see more experienced women in leading roles. We wish to use this opportunity to congratulate them and wish them well in their challenging roles.



In March 2020, Mary Lawlor, founder of Front Line Defenders and leading figure in developing rapid response mechanisms and institutional responses for human rights defenders was appointed as UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders. In Minister Coveney's own words: "Mary has been a tireless advocate for human rights for over 40 years both in Ireland and overseas" as he reminded us that "Ireland

has long championed civil society and human rights defenders who are critical to the protection and promotion of the human rights of others".

On the 17 of July, the 44th Human Rights Council appointed Siobhan Mullally UN Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons especially women and children. The established Professor of Human Rights Law and Director of the Irish Centre Human Rights at the National University of Galway with extensive publications and experience has dedicated her work to protecting the most vulnerable and we look forward to following her achievements in the field.



Both of the above appointments are in addition to Dr. Fionnuala D. Ní Aoláin, Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism who was appointed in August 2017 and is doing tremendous work in this area. Ireland now has three women UN Special Rapporteurs who also sit on the Department of Foreign Affairs Committee on Human Rights, making us confident the WPS will always remain a priority in our multilateral engagement.



Our sincere congratulations are also due to Anne Anderson, Ireland's former Ambassador to the United States of America and to the United Nations for her re-appointment to the UN Secretary Generals Peace Building Fund Advisory Group. This is Anne's second appointment to the Group and has been appointed as Chairperson of the group. We look forward to working with Anne to support inclusive

peacebuilding across the globe for the next two years at a critical time. We are convinced under her leadership the group will be a strong voice advising and guiding the UN on Peacebuilding issues across the globe.

## Oversight Group Meeting

The third meeting of the Oversight Group on the implementation of the Third National Action Plan was held on 03 June 2020 in a virtual format due to the ongoing pandemic. Professor Christine Bell presented to the Group on the impact of Covid-19 on peace settlement and WPS. Prof. Bell leads the Political Settlements Research Programme at the University of Edinburgh and is committed to supporting communities experiencing violent conflict. Prof. Bell spoke of how the pandemic and the responses to it are affecting conflict and peace process trajectories. Her presentation covered the global calls for ceasefires and some of the positive responses to it as well as the current work of her team and she briefed us about the launch of the new Peacefem App produced by her centre (see details below). It also acknowledged the many negatives including the rise of tensions in pre-existing conflicts and more pessimism about peace processes. Also at the meeting, colleagues from the Department of Justice and Equality (DJE) updated on efforts to tackle domestic violence during the pandemic and on the situation in Direct Provision and Emergency Reception centres. The Group heard of DJE's Domestic Violence Action Plan and how it sits within the wider gender considerations of the government's response to Covid-19.

The Group was updated on the work of Civil Society Members, including a pre-pandemic International Organization for Migration (IOM) project on SGBV published in coordination with other IOM missions and 12 NGO partners. The project aims to build capacity of different actors working with migrants on the ground and raising awareness on GBV related to migrants. The output took the form of different leaflets for adults and children in multiple languages.

WILPF updated on feedback received from activists on the areas where we all need to be vigilant during this pandemic, including the pushback on Human Rights, austerity measures, and militarised and authoritarian responses to the pandemic.



## Security Council election

We were delighted that after a hard fought campaign Ireland has been elected to serve on the UN Security Council for the period 2021- 2022. Since its inception, female participation at one of the world's most important tables has been low. The results of this election held on 17 June has confirmed that there will be at least one more female voice sitting at the horseshoe table from January 2021, that of Ireland's Ambassador Geraldine Byrne Nason.

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We do not underestimate scale of task ahead. But neither will we shy away from it. We sought this seat because we sincerely believe that it is responsibility as a member of the international community to step up. I would add, to seize an opportunity to do the right thing, when many others seem challenged.

- Ambassador Geraldine Byrne Nason



Ireland's membership to the UN Security Council affords the opportunity to advance our foreign policy commitments on gender equality and to strengthen implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda.

*Ambassador Byrne Nason casting Ireland's vote*



Ambassador Byrne Nason addressed the IIEA on 10 July, discussing the key elements of Ireland's successful campaign. She also shared that Ireland hoped to work to make peace-building processes more inclusive during its membership of the Security Council in 2021 and 2022. She reminded us that: "we believe also that building peace needs to be inclusive, not the preserve of governments and active parties to conflicts. It has to include civil society, young people and women from the outset and throughout the whole process."



## Launch of PeaceFem App



The newly launched app brings together data on women and peacemaking in one easy-to-use app available in English and Arabic. The app, developed by UN Women, University of Edinburgh's Political Settlements Research Programme (PSRP), Monash Gender, Peace and Security Centre and Inclusive Peace, was designed to support women's rights advocates in influencing peace process negotiations, particularly in the Arab world, but also beyond. It provides information on 30 key peace processes around the world, where gender inclusion was a key feature of the peace settlement. The app provides information about the strategies used to include women; the enabling and constraining factors that enabled women; fully searchable gender provisions in the peace agreements that resulted; and information as to how well they were implemented.

Screen video of the App ([here](#))



Now available.  
Download the  
PeaceFem app



## UNSCR 1325 Anniversary Project

Many things are left to uncertainty with the 75 UNGA to start in the middle of the pandemic in September. This might also mean the WPS week will move to the virtual world. The Conflict Resolution Unit has been adapting to the fast changing world and we are looking forward to hosting, with our partners UNW and GNWP, a 1325 UNSCR anniversary event and launch a report that has been in the making for the past year. It will be the result of our work of consultations with women peacebuilders across the world in Colombia, Uganda, Northern Ireland and South Africa. A summary of the findings of the report has already been shared as a submission to the 2020 Peace Building Architecture Review and we look forward sharing with you all the details of the event in our October newsletter.

## UN and WPS/YPS

On the 14 of July, the Security Council adopted a resolution 2535 on YPS. As a strong advocate of the WPS/YPS intersectionality and conscious of the importance of an age/generationally responsive WPS agenda, we were happy to see this consolidated the through multiple references and repeated commitment to the distinct experiences and roles of young women. Especially the references in the preamble:

*“Recognizing the challenges faced by youth, especially by young women, which put them at particular risk, including gender inequalities that perpetuate all forms of discrimination and violence and **emphasizing** that advancing gender equality and empowerment of women is critical for the full, equal and effective participation of women at all stages of peace processes given their vital role in the prevention and resolution of conflict and peacebuilding, reaffirming the key role women can play in re-establishing the fabric of recovering society and in the development and implementation of post-conflict strategies in order to take into account their perspectives and needs...”*



*Minister Simon Coveney with Irish UN Youth Delegates Valery Molay from Dublin and Jack O'Connor from Kilcolman*

With a special thanks to esteemed colleagues **Graeme Simpson & Ali Altiok** from our Stability Fund partner **Interpeace** for highlighting these points. Our partners are key players in keeping our work, on YPS in this case, relevant and up to date. Another output of this partnership will be five briefs to help us prepare strategically to take on our role at the Security Council in December. Of these five, we were delighted



to hear that two will especially focus on the role of young women in peace building and YPS/WPS intersectionality.

Indeed, the policy brief on **transgenerational issues** would address the importance of YPS not only in peace negotiations, but also in transitional justice and reconciliation and possibly engaging with young women peacebuilders in Northern Ireland for input.

Another brief will explore the **link between YPS and WPS**, taking care to navigate the intersection in a meaningful way, integrating a generational lens in WPS efforts all the while considering gender perspectives in YPS efforts for instance by addressing the issue of masculinities.

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## Tribute to John Hume



In concluding our newsletter this month, and with a heavy heart, we would like to pay tribute to the passing of an exceptional man and peacemaker John Hume who has left us on 03 August. We hope and believe that John Hume's legacy will live on and asked his friend and colleague Monica McWilliams to share a note in his memory. May he rest in peace and from all our hearts we thank him for his continuous courage, patience, resilience and tenacity and for never giving up on his dream of peace for the Irish people.

*Ar dheis Dé go raibh a h-anam dílis.*



*"I first met John Hume as he stood on Magilligan Strand as a voice of calm during an anti-internment demonstration in January 1972. He marched up to the front line to demand that the British commander 'stop firing rubber bullets at those women.' I was one of those women and I heard him say 'You may govern us but you do not have our consent.' He believed that consent came through political agreement and not through*

*violence and that was a message he was to repeat many times to both sides in our thirty year long conflict in Northern Ireland. He had such self-belief and understood that it is people, not the land, who are divided.*

*John Hume was ahead of his time. Long before we signed the 1998 Good Friday (Belfast) Agreement, he reminded us that 'whatever form that agreement takes, it's an agreement; the quarrel is over and then at last we start working together and as we work together, presumably, the old prejudices will be eroded'. He was right to say 'presumably' as John Hume understood the work that would have to be undertaken if we were to reconcile our political differences. His mantra that 'it is mind-sets, and not just guns, that have to be decommissioned' was said repeatedly. John Hume delivered what he promised, campaigning for human rights and entitlements and bringing jobs and investment to Northern Ireland. He is recognized around the world for his work, having been awarded the Gandhi Peace Prize, the Martin Luther King award and the Nobel Peace Prize. He gave the the money that came with the awards to charity which was a sign of the man's generosity. The greatest reward of all was the ending of violence on our streets and the promise of peace and social justice.*



*It was John Hume's inspirational leadership that encouraged young people, like myself, to join the civil rights movement in Northern Ireland in the late 1960's. That led on to the women's rights movement. Pat Hume brought her own leadership style to the many enterprises that she and John created over their sixty years of marriage. From the credit union, through to the constituency office and managing the house in Derry where high-level political discussions were held, they were a couple working in partnership. The John and Pat Hume Foundation was set up last year to promote their steadfast aim of peaceful change and reconciliation. John and Pat Hume never gave up and neither should we. "*

***Monica Mc Williams.***

## Resources

- **Women, Peace and Security:** [PeaceFem App](#) - developed by UN Women, University of Edinburgh's Political Settlements Research Programme

(PSRP), Monash Gender, Peace and Security Centre and Inclusive Peace - was designed to support women's rights advocates in influencing peace process negotiations, particularly in the Arab world, but also beyond.

- **Women, Peace and Security:** The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) has published a guide for civil society organisations and activists to ensure that the WPS Agenda is included in UN Security Council resolutions. More information [here](#).
- WILPF analysis of the Analysis of the 2020 HLPF: "**Sustainable Development Requires System Change**" [here](#)
- LSE, WPS centre: **40 of CEDAW** [here](#)
- See also [here](#) and [here](#) commentary pieces from Dr Aisling Swaine and Dr Catherine O'Rourke on the opportunities regarding Ireland's Security Council membership in advancing the WPS agenda.
- [Women's Rights in Armed Conflict Under International Law](#) (Cambridge University Press, 2020, Dr Catherine O'Rourke)
- Transitional Justice Institute Podcast on [Apple](#) and [Spotify](#)

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Please feel free to contact us at [wpsconsultation@dfa.ie](mailto:wpsconsultation@dfa.ie)



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