



# **WOMEN, Peace and Security**



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

**Welcome to our summer 2022 newsletter, where you can find updates on Ireland's work on Women, Peace and Security. Since our last issue, a lot of our work in CRU has been focusing on the war in Ukraine and how internally displaced and refugee women and girls are being affected. Read on for news from the Security Council, the Informal Expert Group on WPS, which Ireland co-chairs with Mexico, the most recent meeting of the Oversight Group for Ireland's third National Action Plan and more.**

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



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

## **Security Council meetings on Ukraine**

Ireland was one of the first countries to draw attention in its statements at the Security Council to the differential impact this war is having on women and girls, the risks of sexual exploitation and trafficking they face as they flee their homes and the importance of gender-responsive and rights-based supports in host countries, with an emphasis on sexual and reproductive health and rights.

Since reports of conflict-related sexual violence by Russian soldiers have started emerging from Ukraine, Ireland has ensured that strong language on accountability for these crimes is included in our statements.

All Ireland's statements at the Security Council can be read in full [here](#).

“We have heard increasing allegations of sexual violence by Russian soldiers. (...) We must stress that conflict-related sexual violence can constitute a war crime. The perpetrators of such crimes must be accountable. They must be held accountable; they will be held accountable. Sexual violence is another abhorrent crime of this war that cannot go unanswered.” (Statement by Ambassador Byrne Nason at the UNSC Briefing on Ukraine, 5 April)

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“Ukraine’s displacement crisis deepens every day. Of those who have fled the country, 90% are women and children. The large population of older women, women with disabilities and those of marginalised groups, including the Roma and LGBTQI+ communities, are particularly vulnerable in this conflict. Millions of women face impossible decisions around evacuation. As their lives and their families are threatened, do women journalists stay to report? Do women healthcare workers and those in care-giving roles stay or go? Do women in the Ukrainian army who choose to bring their children to safety, return to defend their country? So many are making the desperate yet heroic choice to remain.” (Statement by Ambassador Brian Flynn at the UNSC Briefing on Ukraine - Situation of Women and Children, 11 April)

## **Annual open debate on Conflict-Related Sexual Violence (CRSV)**


In April, the UK held the Presidency of the Security Council and on 13 April called for an open debate on the theme of **“Conflict-Related Sexual Violence – Ending Cycles of Sexual Violence in Conflict: Accountability as Prevention”**. Briefers included **Mariana Karkoutly** (Co-Founder of Huquqyat, an NGO focused on

accountability for GBV and other crimes committed during the Syrian conflict and Legal Investigator at the Center for Justice and Accountability); **Meaza Gebremedhin** (who set up the first safe house for survivors of GBV in Tigray, Ethiopia); and **Nadia Murad** (Iraqi Yazidi human rights activist and founder of Nadia's Initiative).

Delivering Ireland's statement, **Ambassador Brian Flynn** called for an end to impunity for CRSV, emphasised the need for UN missions to be mandated and budgeted to monitor such crimes, and highlighted the crucial role of Women's Protection Advisers in the field.

## UNSC Briefing on Ukraine - Humanitarian

Following his visit to Kyiv and Bucha, on 19 April **Minister Simon Coveney** briefed the Security Council on the scale of destruction and human rights violations he witnessed there. He stressed the need for accountability for crimes committed during the war in Ukraine and emphasised Ireland's support for the International Criminal Court.



“ During my visit to Ukraine, so many people spoke to me about the urgent need for accountability to expose the horrors of what has happened to them (...) Without accountability and truth, there is no hope of a sustainable peace; not in Ukraine, not anywhere ”.

**Simon Coveney, T.D.**  
Minister for Foreign Affairs

An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha  
Department of Foreign Affairs

## Arria-formula meeting on conflict and hunger



UN SECURITY COUNCIL  
ARRIA-FORMULA MEETING

## CONFLICT & HUNGER



“Put simply, conflict-induced food insecurity continues to rise and rise. And just as with conflict itself, this food insecurity is proven to have gendered impacts, with women often eating last and eating least”.

Ambassador Geraldine Byrne Nason

Ireland continued to mainstream WPS across all its interventions at the Security Council. On 21 April, Ireland convened an Arria-formula meeting on conflict and hunger, where Ambassador Geraldine Byrne Nason highlighted the gendered impact of food insecurity on women.

## WPS briefing with the UN Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons

On 18 May, Ireland’s Permanent Mission to the UN in New York hosted a briefing and informal discussion with the **Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, Siobhán Mullally**. WPS experts from Ireland, Albania, France, India, Mexico and the United Arab Emirates attended.

**Ambassador Brian Flynn** delivered introductory remarks, highlighting the links between human trafficking and the Council’s work, noting in particular how situations of conflict and crisis can give rise to an enhanced risk of trafficking. With women and girls being among those disproportionately impacted by trafficking, Ambassador Flynn underscored the importance of considering how trafficking and the WPS agenda intersect and how to use the WPS agenda to advance action to

enhance protection, better care for survivors, and, ultimately, end trafficking.

## General Assembly High-Level Meeting on Financing for Peacebuilding



High-Level Meeting of  
the General Assembly on  
**Financing for Peacebuilding**



Presidency  
*of Hope*  
76<sup>th</sup> session of the  
UN General Assembly

CRU Deputy Director **Jason Robinson** took part in a round table on ***Innovative Solutions for Feminist Financing for Peacebuilding*** in New York, which Ireland co-sponsored, ahead of the General's Assembly High-Level Meeting on Financing for Peacebuilding. In his intervention, Jason emphasised the importance of core, flexible and sustained funding for grassroots women's organisations and reiterated Ireland's support for the UN Peacebuilding Fund. Watch a recording of the discussion [here](#).

While in New York, he also met with representatives from UN Women, the Office of the Special Representative for Sexual Violence in Conflict and the NGO Working Group on WPS and discussed ways to move forward the WPS Agenda for the remainder of our term on the Security Council and beyond.



Each month, the **NGO Working Group on WPS publishes Monthly Action Points (MAP)** with recommendations for the Security Council on how to progress WPS across different

country files. June's MAP focuses on Afghanistan, Syria and Ukraine and can be accessed [here](#).

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



On 8 April, the IEG met to discuss **Colombia** for the first time since 2020. The IEG was briefed by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) for Colombia and Head of the UN Verification Mission in Colombia, **Carlos Ruiz Massieu**; the UN Resident Coordinator, **Mireira Villar Forner**; the UN Women Country Representative in Colombia, **Bibiana Aido Almagro**; OHCHR representative **Juliette De Rivero**; and the Office of the SRSG for Sexual Violence in Conflict. The meeting discussed the progress, and limitations, to the advancement the gender provisions of the peace agreement; women's political participation in Colombia; and the increasing number of threats and instances of gender-based political violence against women, particularly afro-Colombian and indigenous women. There was also consideration paid to instances of conflict-related sexual violence, and the push from women's rights groups to have this reflected as a macro-case in the transitional justice mechanism.

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On 23 May, the IEG held a meeting on **Sudan** where topics discussed included: the high rate of sexual and gender-

based violence against women; the challenges in providing services to survivors of SGBV; and the many barriers to women's participation in decision making. The IEG was briefed by Deputy SRSG for Sudan **Khardiata Lo Ndiaye**, who was accompanied by colleagues from the **United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan (UNITAMS)** and the UN Country Team. Recommendations of the IEG can be accessed [here](#).

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IEG co-chairs Ireland and Mexico, together with the UK as WPS penholder, are planning a **field visit to Lebanon** in the coming weeks. This will be the first time the IEG has undertaken a field visit, despite it being listed as a recommended outcome according to the guidelines of the group, and reemphasises Ireland's leadership on WPS at the Security Council.

In our next issue, you will find updates on the field visit and the **IEG's next meeting on the situation in the Middle East including the Palestinian Question.**



**WPS Focal Points Network High-Level  
Capital Meeting**



CRU Director Áine Hearn and Desk Officer Shane Rice attended the **WPS Focal Point Network (FPN) Annual Meeting in Geneva** from 18-19 May. This was the first FPN meeting to be held in person since 2019 due to the Covid-19 pandemic and allowed for the opportunity to meet with Focal Points from likeminded countries and members of the UN Security Council, current and incoming, to discuss WPS issues. CRU met with **NATO's Special Representative for WPS Irene Fellin**, as well as WPS leads from Norway, Finland, Kenya, Brazil, Switzerland, Malta, Morocco and the UK.

The event included two high-level panel discussions, the opening one on ***Implementing the WPS Agenda through Multi-stakeholder Action*** and the closing one on ***Fulfilling the Promise of the WPS Agenda to Address Current Conflicts***.



From left: Norway's Special Representative for WPS Signe Guro Gilen, OSCE WPS Focal Point Lara Scarpitta, NATO Special Representative for WPS Irene Fellin and CRU Director Áine Hearn at the WPS Focal Points Network meeting in Geneva.

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

On 6 April, the **Oversight Group for Ireland's third NAP on WPS** held its first in-person meeting since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic. The group was briefed

by **Deaglán Ó Briain**, Department of Justice; Ireland's Ambassador to Ukraine, **Therese Healy**; **Janet Craven** of the Irish Red Cross; and **Olena Redrugina**, a Ukrainian woman volunteering with Dublin-based Ukraine Crisis Centre.

**Deaglán Ó Briain, Principal Officer from the Department of Justice**, who joined the meeting virtually, presented an overview of the **Third National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (DSGBV)** which has been developed following consultation with NGOs and the public. Further consultations are currently underway bilaterally with government departments and agencies regarding the draft strategy and the development of the first annual implementation plan. The strategy was co-designed by the Department of Justice, the National Women's Council and SAFE Ireland, ensuring the frontline expertise of these organisations, as well as existing services for victims and survivors of DSGBV, were incorporated into the process. While the strategy has a strong focus on women and girls, it also acknowledges men as victims of DSGBV.

When the discussion turned to **Ukraine**, the Group heard from representatives from the **Irish Refugee Protection Programme** and from the **Department of Justice** about the Irish response to the Ukrainian refugee crisis, the challenges in receiving such a high number of mostly women and children, and providing them with suitable and safe accommodation and education.





Olena Redrugina (third from right), Ukraine Crisis Centre and Janet Craven (centre), Irish Red Cross, briefing the OG



From left: Therese Healy, Ireland's Ambassador to Ukraine, Nora Owen, OG Chair and Áine Hearn, CRU Director

**Ambassador Therese Healy** highlighted the gendered nature of the Ukrainian refugee crisis and the tendency

during conflict to fall back on ingrained gender norms and the need to envisage a bolder role for Ukrainian women in the post-war reconstruction phase.

**Janet Craven**, the **Irish Red Cross**, presented on the organisation's work in support of Ukrainian refugees and stressed the need to provide psychosocial support for those arriving and gather accounts from those who may have witnessed or experienced traumatic incidents. She highlighted the enormous response from the Irish public, both in the form of cash donations to the sum of €30 million and pledges for goods, services and housing.

**Olena Redrugina**, **Ukraine Crisis Centre**, spoke about the small Ukrainian community in Ireland and the way that the seventy volunteers with Ukraine Crisis Centre in Dublin mobilised to assist the refugees arriving in Ireland. The organisation is involved in delivering humanitarian aid to Ukraine in collaboration with various Irish organisations. Volunteers are also present at airports and in Citywest, where refugees are housed temporarily. The most important assistance is the provision of information about life in Ireland and the cultural differences that may hamper the integration of refugees into Irish society.

**OG members** drew attention to the risks of trafficking and exploitation Ukrainian women refugees are faced with and emphasised the importance of having the right safeguards in place to prevent that from happening. OG members representing civil society offered their expertise to government representatives, who appreciated the support.



**The Irish Consortium on Gender Based**



# Violence

The **Irish Consortium on Gender Based Violence (ICGBV)** has recently launched a [guide](#) for ***Ethical Storytelling on Gender Based Violence***. The aim of the guide is to help organisations talk about GBV in a way that respects and protects those who have experienced it. The guide is primarily focused on the ethical challenges of engaging with a survivor of GBV who chooses to make their story public, via communications, fundraising campaigns, or programme reporting and on working in the International Development and Humanitarian context.



On Tuesday May 24, the **Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence (JCFAD)** met with representatives of the **Irish Consortium on Gender Based Violence (ICGBV)** to discuss Women, Peace and Security (WPS). The ICGBV was represented by **Mary van Lieshout**, Deputy CEO and Director of External Affairs, GOAL; **Abby Ryan**, Coordinator, ICGBV; and **Maurice Sadlier**, Programme Director, World Vision Ireland. Ireland's work on WPS and women's rights more broadly at the UN Security Council was praised by both ICGBV representatives and members of the JCFAD. Discussions focused on persisting barriers in tackling SGBV and areas where progress has been made, the Informal Expert Group (IEG) on WPS, the Istanbul Convention and the impact of Climate Change on women around the world, among other issues. Countries discussed included Afghanistan, South Sudan, Syria, and Ukraine. A recording of this meeting can be accessed [here](#).

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On 14 June, the **JCFAD** was briefed by **Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund (WPHF)** Head of Secretariat **Ghita El Khyari** and Policy Consultant **Breifní Flanagan** on WPHF's ongoing work in Ukraine. In direct and **rapid response to the war in Ukraine** and with the aid of funding from the Department of Foreign Affairs, the WPHF has activated an emergency regional response to the crisis, by **supporting women's organisations' responses in Ukraine and in Moldova**. The response will seek to support civil society organisations to participate in gender-responsive planning, implementation, and monitoring of current humanitarian/crisis response, as well as to deliver for women and girl IDPs and refugees. Furthermore, the response will support efforts to increase **programming aimed at preventing violence against women and girls and ensuring access to survivor-centred essential services provisions** in an increasingly complex operating environment, including in displacement areas and amongst displaced populations. So far, 14 civil society organisations, 8 from Ukraine and 6 from Moldova were identified and approved by the UN Resident Coordinators/Humanitarian Coordinators.

Through this support, women's organisations in Ukraine and Moldova are providing essential humanitarian and protection assistance to displaced women and girls, including shelter, medication, food, as well as vital psychosocial support, including to marginalised groups such as women and girls with disabilities and HIV/AIDs. WPHF partners are also training smaller women groups and organisations in gender-responsive humanitarian planning, SGBV and conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) response and prevention. Examples of activities include the **launching of an online platform through which CSOs will provide psychological and legal services on CRSV** among other types of violence, while also raising awareness and sharing information on CRSV.

One such organisation is **Positive Women, a Ukrainian NGO that supports women with HIV**. The JCFAD heard from **Olena Stryzhak**, head of Positive Women, of the difficult situation of women living with HIV, which has been aggravated by war, displacement and increasingly limited access to medical treatment. With financing from WPHF and technical support from UN Women Ukraine, the NGO built two shelters, one in Ukraine and one in Moldova, which provide safe spaces for displaced women and girls and cover their basic needs. A recording of the meeting can be watched [here](#).



**Women's Peace & Humanitarian Fund** 

A United Nations & Civil Society Partnership

The **Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund (WPHF)** is a multi-partner trust fund established in 2016 with the support of Ireland and Australia. The [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. WPHF mobilises critical direct and flexible funding for local women-led and women's rights organisations to prevent conflict and sexual and gender-based violence, respond to crises and emergencies, and seize key peacebuilding opportunities.



“Gbwee Peace Foundation Africa has impacted our lives and communities through the WPHF sponsored project by providing training and awareness on gender-based violence” says Ma Lorpu (far left). “Since receiving our training, we have been instrumental in solving common domestic problems, which are forwarded to our ‘peace brigade.’” © 2021 Gbwee Peace Foundation

## Events

CRU director **Áine Hearn** was invited to take part in the **Mná 100 podcast** produced by the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media as part of the **Decade of Centenaries Programme 2012-2023**. **Episode 4 – Seeking Peace** - celebrated the contributions of Irish women who led peace delegations in 1922 and reflected on their legacy of peace. The other speakers were former President of Ireland **Mary Robinson** and **Maria Butler**, Executive Director of the Nobel Women’s Initiative and member of the Oversight Group for Ireland’s Third National Action Plan on WPS. Read more about Mná 100 [here](#).





# Áine Hearn

Director of the Conflict Resolution  
Unit, Department of Foreign Affairs

## Seeking Peace

A Mná 100 Podcast



## Beneath the Wakashio Oil Spill: Youth marginalization, environmental disaster and resilience in Mauritius

with Anupah Makoond  
Moderated by Danica  
Damplo, Interpeace

@DFAPeaceSupport  
@InterpeaceTweet

On 10 May, the **Conflict Resolution Unit** and partner **Interpeace** organised a webinar to present a policy brief by **Anupah Makoond**, entitled **“Beneath the**



***Wakashio Oil Spill: Exploring the linkages between youth marginalization, environmental disaster, and resilience for peace in a small island state***” published with support by Interpeace. The brief sheds light on the under-explored **nexus of Youth, Peace and Security (YPS), climate justice and social cohesion**, speaking to the topic from the experience of a small island country and applying the lens of resilience. The brief is part of the Outside the Box series of YPS-related policy briefs produced by Interpeace with support from Irish Aid.

Our next issue will be out in August. Until then, the staff in the Conflict Resolution Unit wish you all a great summer!  
Keep an eye on [@DFAPeaceSupport](#) for updates on all things WPS!



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