



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland



Ireland's Fourth National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security

2025 - 2030

Cover: Erica Vilela Yanomami, President of the Yanomami Women's Association KUMIRAYOMA (AMYK), during the IV Forum of Yanomami and Ye'kwana Leaders held in Maturacá, Brazil – an initiative supported by Irish Aid NGO partner Instituto Socioambiental

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Foreword

by An Tánaiste and Minister
for Foreign Affairs and Trade,
Simon Harris TD



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Ireland is steadfast in its commitment to placing women and girls at the heart of our efforts to prevent conflict, sustain peace, and promote inclusive development. We believe peace built on rights, equality, and inclusion reflects Ireland's core values and strengthens our collective security and prosperity.

This Fourth National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (2025–2030) reaffirms Ireland's unwavering dedication to the implementation of the WPS agenda, as mandated by United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) and the nine subsequent resolutions that have deepened and expanded its scope. These resolutions recognise the indispensable role of women and girls in conflict prevention, peacebuilding, and post-conflict recovery and acknowledge the distinct and often disproportionate impacts of conflict on their lives.

Our Fourth National Action Plan outlines an ambitious vision for the WPS agenda across Ireland's foreign, domestic, and defence policies. It builds on the progress achieved through previous plans and seeks to embed gender equality even more deeply into how we act—both at home and globally. The Plan aligns closely with A Better World, Ireland's international development policy, where gender equality stands as one of our four core priorities, alongside climate action, reducing humanitarian need, and strengthening governance.

Through this Plan, Ireland will advance the WPS agenda under four key pillars: prevention, participation, protection, and promotion. We will strengthen our monitoring and learning framework to ensure that our actions drive meaningful, measurable progress. Domestically, we are committed to tackling gender-based violence and human trafficking, promoting gender equality, and ensuring that women and girls seeking refuge in Ireland receive the support they need. Internationally, we will champion inclusive peace processes, strengthen global peace and security frameworks, respond to the needs of women and girls affected by conflict and crisis, and address gender-based and conflict-related sexual violence.

Ireland knows first-hand the vital role women play in sustaining peace based on our lived experience of ending conflict on this island. We remain committed to ensuring that the WPS agenda informs ongoing peacebuilding

efforts across the island of Ireland. We will support the development of women's roles in civic and political life and peacebuilding, as envisioned by UNSCR 1325. Addressing the legacy of paramilitarism in Northern Ireland remains a priority, as does amplifying and learning from voices on the ground—particularly those of women leading community-level change.

We also recognise the transformative potential of young people as peacebuilders. This Plan commits to empowering young women, supporting their leadership, and fostering intergenerational dialogue between women of all ages. We know that meaningful and inclusive participation—across communities, generations, and identities—is essential to building lasting peace.

I take particular pride in the broad and inclusive consultation that shaped this National Action Plan. It reflects the insights and lived experiences of communities across the island of Ireland, as well as contributions from international partners, civil society, academia, and government. The process has strengthened the Plan and reaffirmed that collaboration is the key to success.

As we mark the 25th anniversary of UNSCR 1325 in 2025, we acknowledge the progress made while recognising the urgent challenges ahead. Today, as violent conflicts intensify and hard-won gains face growing threats, women and girls continue to bear the brunt of insecurity. In a global context of shrinking space for civil society and declining investment in peacebuilding—particularly in women's organisations—Ireland remains resolute in its ambition to be a global champion for Women, Peace and Security.

We are determined to turn commitment into action. Through this Fourth National Action Plan, Ireland will continue to lead, listen, and learn, working in partnership toward a more just, peaceful, and equal world for all.

An Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade,
Simon Harris TD

Foreword

By Minister of State for International
Development and Diaspora,
Neale Richmond TD



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Ireland has a proud record of commitment to the Women, Peace and Security agenda, both at home and globally. Through the implementation of our previous National Action Plans, we have consistently championed gender equality as a cornerstone of sustainable peace, security, and development. The Fourth National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (2025–2030) builds on that foundation and responds to a changing world.

Since the adoption of our previous National Action Plan, the global context for women and girls in conflict-affected and fragile settings has grown more complex. The overlapping impacts of climate change, conflict, displacement, and economic insecurity have deepened existing inequalities. Against that backdrop, the case for inclusive peacebuilding is even more compelling, as is the full, equal, and meaningful participation of women in decisions that affect their lives and communities.

Ireland's international development policy, *A Better World*, continues to guide our efforts. Gender equality remains one of its four core priorities. *A Better World* recognises the interdependence of these priorities and commits Ireland to targeted action across three clusters of intervention—food, protection, and people. Gender equality is embedded throughout.

This Fourth National Action Plan reinforces our commitment to implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 5 on gender equality and SDG 16 on peaceful and inclusive societies. These goals are mutually reinforcing: a peaceful society cannot be built without women's rights; sustainable development cannot be achieved without gender justice. Ireland's leadership in advancing the SDGs, including through our role in the UN and the European Union, is integral to this plan.

We are proud that a high proportion of Ireland's international development cooperation spending continues to support gender equality. Building on this, and in a global context of shrinking peacebuilding budgets and severe underfunding of women's organisations, Ireland's NAP remains committed to providing predictable, flexible, and sustained funding to women's rights organisations, which support the protection and participation of women peacebuilders and address GBV and CRSV.

The Women, Peace and Security agenda is not only a foreign policy priority—it is also a domestic one. This Plan recognises the deep connections between Ireland's international commitments and our responsibilities at home, including to migrant and refugee women, women in policing and peacekeeping, and survivors of violence.

As in previous Plans, partnership is at the heart of our approach. This Fourth National Action Plan has been shaped by wide consultation, reflecting the voices of civil society, academia, and those with lived experience. Its implementation will rely on the same spirit of collaboration across government, with our international partners, and most crucially, with women's organisations and networks on the frontlines of peace and human rights work.

The Women, Peace and Security agenda belongs to all of us. It is an agenda for women and men, for girls and boys, for communities and nations. When women's voices are heard, societies are stronger. When their rights are upheld, peace is more enduring. Through this Plan, Ireland reaffirms its commitment to a more just, peaceful, and equal world.

Minister of State for International Development and Diaspora,
Neale Richmond TD

Executive Summary

Ireland's foreign policy is committed to promoting a more peaceful, equitable, and sustainable world. It recognises that lasting peace is closely linked to achieving greater equality and inclusivity. Ireland's Fourth National Action Plan (NAP) reaffirms the country's dedication to gender equality and the realisation of the rights of all women and girls.

Peace agreements are more durable when women are actively involved in their creation, and societies that pursue gender equality are more likely to achieve peace. Women play a central role in advancing conflict prevention, breaking the conflict cycle and working towards sustainable peace at many different levels. Ireland has long acknowledged the crucial role that women play in peacebuilding, drawing on its own experiences on the island, and through supporting peace processes globally.

Ireland's Fourth NAP on UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) is a core component of its broader commitment to gender equality. This priority is consistently reflected in Ireland's foreign policy strategies, such as *Global Ireland: Ireland's Global Footprint to 2025* and *A Better World: Ireland's Policy for International Development*.

This NAP builds upon the ambitions of previous plans and aligns with Ireland's international obligations, including the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). During the drafting of the NAP, the challenges of implementing the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) agenda in an increasingly complex world were acknowledged, including record levels of armed conflict and the acute realities of climate change and an escalating global backlash against gender equality and the rights of women and girls, all as crucial financing for women's organisations decreases. As we approach the 25th anniversary of UNSCR 1325 in 2025, we must redouble efforts to ensure women's participation in peace processes at all levels if we are to achieve the goals of the WPS agenda.

Ireland's vision for the WPS agenda promotes positive peace, supported by inclusive, gender-transformative governance in conflict and post-conflict regions, reduced gender-based violence (GBV), and improved outcomes for women and girls, both in Ireland and internationally. The Fourth NAP highlights the interconnected nature of the WPS pillars—prevention, participation, protection, and relief and recovery—by focusing on four high-level objectives with concrete actions, impacts, and outcomes. This NAP commits Ireland to ensuring that a gender-transformative approach guides peace and security frameworks. Furthermore, through an intersectional approach it aims to recognise and support women's leadership in peacebuilding and stabilisation processes. It also emphasises that women and girls in conflict-affected contexts should shape services that meet their unique needs and encourages transformative action on GBV by enhancing prevention, response, and support mechanisms.

Domestically, it will focus on tackling gender inequalities, addressing GBV and human trafficking in Ireland, and ensuring that women and girls, including refugees, receive the support and protection they need. A key priority across Ireland is developing the role of women in peacebuilding, civic, and political life and enhancing their capacity to assume leadership positions in society. Additionally, the NAP commits to ending paramilitarism in Northern Ireland, which has been linked to coercive control, and will support organisations working to address its impacts.

The plan recognises the importance of intergenerational leadership. One of the nine outcomes is dedicated to supporting young women peacebuilders and promoting dialogue between generations to foster a more inclusive peace process.

Ireland will implement the NAP in close partnership with other government departments and civil society, both domestically and internationally. A robust monitoring and learning framework will ensure that progress is measured and impact is delivered. Throughout the five-year cycle of this NAP, Ireland will continue to champion the WPS agenda, placing women's leadership, participation, and protection at the centre of our approach to peace and security.

Introduction

Ireland's fourth National Action Plan (NAP) on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) builds upon significant work, globally and nationally. This NAP sets out our ambition for the WPS agenda across our foreign, domestic and defence policies, building on the advancement across these policies and national strategies to date. United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on Women, Peace and Security was adopted in 2000. This resolution, and subsequent nine resolutions, laid the foundation for recognising women's and girls' indispensable role in building and sustaining peace. It built upon and developed a global movement championed by grassroots organisations and civil society, which have tirelessly advocated for placing women at the heart of peacebuilding efforts.

The WPS agenda forms a central aspect of Ireland's commitment to achieving the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (Annex III) as well as our obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Commitment to advancing the WPS agenda will also be reaffirmed in Ireland's upcoming EU Presidency in 2026.

In the 25 years since that landmark resolution, remarkable progress has been made, both on the international stage and across our island, but more work remains to be done. Hard-won progress is threatened by violent conflicts that are growing in scale and number, and the impact on women and girls is staggering. In 2023 the proportion of women killed in armed conflicts doubled compared to 2022. Four out of every ten people who died because of conflict in 2023 were women. UN-verified cases of

conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) increased by 50 per cent. This is against the backdrop of a global backlash against gender equality and the rights of women and girls, as crucial financing for women's organisations decreases generally, as well as in peace and conflict contexts. This is further compounded by the global funding crisis facing the UN, multilateralism and international development. The 25th Anniversary of UNSCR 1325 in 2025 serves as a timely opportunity for Ireland to recommit to and continue to champion the WPS agenda and the necessary contributions that can facilitate better peace and conflict resolution globally.

Ireland's commitment to WPS is rooted in a principled foreign policy, which includes an unshakable commitment to multilateralism, to human rights and to gender equality. Those principles stem from our history: including the recent experience of conflict on our island, and have been demonstrated during our membership of the UN Security Council (2021-22), our leadership within the European Union (EU), and strong bilateral and multilateral partnerships.

The WPS agenda resonated profoundly in Northern Ireland, where women had demanded and won a seat at the table in the negotiations that led to the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement, the 1998 peace deal that ended almost thirty years of violence. In the years since, the global WPS movement has inspired, and drawn inspiration from, the work of path-breaking women from all communities and backgrounds to address the persistent impacts of armed conflict on this island. This work continues to this day.



Fionnuala Gilson, Director, Peace and Stability Unit, speaks on behalf of Ireland at the UNSC Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security. 24 October 2024

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Building on success, meeting new challenges

Ireland's successful focus on domestic WPS actions, combined with our approach in previous NAPs of addressing intersecting identities (such as disability, class, sexuality and gender identity), is central to our engagement on this agenda. The experience of the conflict in Northern Ireland underlies our conviction that conflict resolution requires us to recognise the pluralism of our identities. As one of the few countries to include the LGBTQI+ community in our third NAP, Ireland will continue this inclusive approach, recognising that LGBTQI+ persons face differentiated and disproportionate impacts in conflict. It is important to engage all relevant stakeholders, including men and boys, in efforts to deconstruct and address the root causes of violence and inequality in a gender-responsive way.

Ireland's strong commitment to human rights underpins its implementation of the WPS agenda, while recognising core WPS priorities are fundamentally human rights issues. Ireland's broader human rights agenda, including its focus on gender equality, protection of civilians, support for women human rights defenders, reinforces its WPS commitments.

Ireland emphasises the role of civil society organisations (CSOs), both as collaborating partners and in holding Government to account, for advancing Ireland's WPS commitments. At the core of our partnership approach is the commitment to ensuring that the voices of women affected by conflict inform our work. We strive to involve women in the design, implementation, and evaluation of programmes. We collaborate with international partners, like-minded countries, and CSOs, on this island and internationally including Columbia, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Palestine, Sudan and Ukraine, to create meaningful spaces for women's engagement. This commitment is underpinned by an investment of two-thirds of Official Development Assistance (ODA) in programmes that integrate gender equality objectives.

During the period of the previous NAP Ireland achieved full gender parity in the appointment of Heads of Missions across our mission network. Further, the Third National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (2022-2026) was launched. Cuan, a dedicated national agency to address DSGBV, was established in 2024.

Tánaiste Micheál Martin participates in a panel discussion on the Future for Women in Afghanistan. 23 September 2024

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This progress is now threatened by rising geopolitical tensions, and new global challenges which are making peacebuilding increasingly difficult and risk undermining hard-won gains.ⁱ The human cost of conflict is stark. The proportion of women killed in armed conflict doubled in 2023 compared to the previous year.ⁱⁱ The number of armed conflicts around the world is, at time of writing, the highest it has been since the end of the Cold War.ⁱⁱⁱ Global insecurity created by these conflicts ripples outward, exposing women and girls to greater risks of gender-based violence (GBV), even as they move to seek safety in the EU and elsewhere.^{iv}

Throughout this tumultuous period, women have been on the frontlines, leading efforts to restore peace and stability and protests against systemic oppression.^v While these acts of resistance highlight women's resilience, they also uncover the vulnerabilities they face, which increase for women on the margins. As civic space shrinks globally, women and girls face increasing risks of intimidation and reprisals, both online and offline, from state and non-state actors.

Women with disabilities face compound vulnerabilities in conflict settings and are more likely to be excluded from peace building processes and humanitarian responses, due to the intersection of gender and disability discrimination. Conflict causes an increased number of women to acquire disabilities and blocks access to services needed to prevent treatable conditions, exacerbating the long term physical, mental and psycho social toll of conflict. Ireland will adopt a stronger focus on disabilities inclusion, in line

with UN Security Council Resolution 2475 on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Conflict Situations. If elected to the Human Rights Council (HRC) for the 2027-2029 term, Ireland will ensure coherence between the WPS agenda and the work of the HRC in supporting women with disabilities in conflict situations.

As global migration rates increase, Ireland must adapt its policies and services to identify and address new challenges, as well as embrace new opportunities. Escalating violence from organised crime and trafficking disproportionately targets women and girls.^{vi} The digital realm exposes women and girls to new and evolving risks, where the boundaries between online and physical safety are increasingly indistinguishable. This new era calls for an urgent holistic approach that tackles these challenges and risks while harnessing the potential of the digital space for women's leadership in peacebuilding.

A central feature of this fourth NAP recognises the interconnected nature of the traditional WPS pillars of prevention, participation, protection, and relief and recovery. This NAP is focused on concrete actions, impact and outcomes, whilst learning from previous NAPS to encourage a more dynamic and flexible approach. This will provide a framework to leverage resources more efficiently, and achieve tangible, long-term results for women's and girls' empowerment and security. Our approach emphasises the importance of inclusion and localisation for driving and achieving sustainable peace, and works with women and girls who are marginalised or face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination.

Snapshot from Ireland's Missions

In Ethiopia, Ireland partners with **ACCORD** (South Africa) to support local women's organisations like the Network of Ethiopian Women's Associations and the African Women Peace and Security Institute. These organisations are empowering women to play pivotal roles in peacebuilding efforts, ensuring that women's voices are not only heard but are central to conversation.

In the Somali region, **Conciliation Resources** works closely with local communities to engage with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Ireland provides support to these efforts, encouraging the involvement of women in these critical processes, and helping

them play a central role in healing and rebuilding post-conflict societies. A key success has been the establishment of Ugasso, a women's dialogue space which has resulted in meetings with political elites and inclusion in advisory groups.

In Colombia, Ireland has been funding the peace process since 2016 and supported the organisation of the national participative process for the formulation of Colombia's first NAP. Ireland also funds a project to support ongoing peace negotiations that includes a specific focus on supporting women's participation and gender equality. Lesson-sharing on Northern Ireland has played a central role in this support.

Development of Ireland's fourth NAP



Validation Workshops held in Iveagh House for the development of the Women, Peace and Security National Action Plan

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The Oversight Group (OG) for Ireland's third National Action Plan sought to create a methodology for the development of this NAP that was inclusive and participatory, based on an initial document review to identify areas of progress and lessons learned. A subcommittee of the OG oversaw the development of the NAP, meeting on several occasions to review drafts and guide the development of the NAP. Under this process, interviews were conducted and feedback was gathered from key Departments and Government agencies, including: Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, Department of

Defence, Department of Foreign Affairs, Department of Justice, Department of Rural and Community Affairs, An Garda Síochána, Defence Forces, and the Health Service Executive. Consultations with CSOs representing international, domestic, youth, and Northern Ireland constituencies, played a key role in informing the NAP's content.

A full day validation session, divided into sessions with Government departments and agencies, and civil society representatives, served to inform and validate the overall direction of the NAP, and its focus areas.

Ireland’s vision

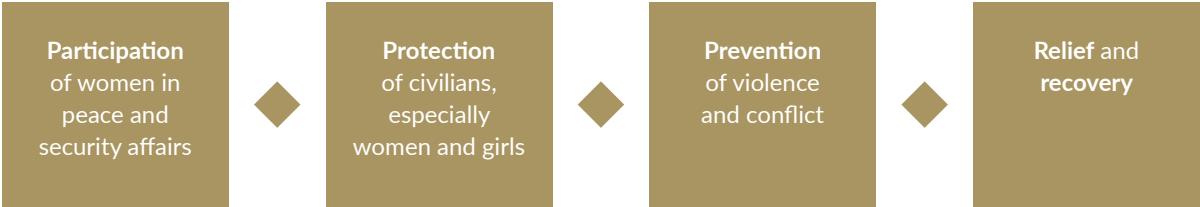
The illustration below sets out the vision for Ireland’s National Action Plan 2025 – 2030. It summarises the strategic direction, objectives and core outcomes, which will guide the implementation of the WPS agenda over the next six years. These four objectives are interconnected and mutually reinforcing. Progress in one area, such as women’s participation in peacebuilding, drives improvements in others, such as stronger prevention strategies and better protection mechanisms. This framework ensures continuity and pushes for transformative and ambitious action. In delivering on this vision, Ireland takes an intersectional approach to the WPS agenda, and works for improved outcomes for women and girls, including those from indigenous and LGBTQI+ communities, women and girls with disabilities, and those who are displaced.

This NAP is designed to build upon and contribute to cross-cutting and complementary national strategies, including those in development at time of writing. These include *Global Ireland: Ireland’s Global Footprint to 2025*; *A Better World: Ireland’s Policy for International Development*; *Zero Tolerance: Third National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender Based Violence*; *the Third National Action Plan to prevent and combat Human Trafficking*; *the National Strategy for Women and Girls*; *the National Migrant Integration Strategy*; and *the National LGBTQI+ Inclusion Strategy*.

IRELAND’S VISION

Positive peace, upheld by a more inclusive, gender-transformative governance in conflict and post-conflict regions, reduced GBV, and improved outcomes for women and girls both on the island of Ireland and internationally

WPS AGENDA PILLARS



Objectives of the National Action Plan



Objective 1:

Peace and security frameworks are guided by a gender transformative approach

The global backlash against gender equality is intensifying, with efforts by national governments and international actors to dilute gender frameworks and reverse crucial policies that promote women's participation, protect women's rights and address GBV.

Ireland works within multilateral spaces and with bilateral and regional partners to ensure that peace and security frameworks prioritise women's rights, gender equality, and

women's full, equal and meaningful participation in peace processes. Ireland will continue to advocate at the EU, UN, the Council of Europe, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, and Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe. By actively engaging at these fora, Ireland will continue to advocate for the advancement of the WPS agenda, through gender-transformative policies.

Key commitments

1. Support and defend WPS principles across peace and security policies on the island of Ireland and internationally.
2. Prioritise women's rights, gender equality, and women's full, equal and meaningful participation in peace processes and mediation.
3. Advocate for gender mainstreaming and women's senior leadership in all military and civilian peacekeeping missions and operations.
4. Facilitate learning and exchanges on WPS including on the Northern Ireland Peace Process.
5. Foster strategic partnerships with international organisations and partners on the island of Ireland to produce research on gender and peace
6. Build up Irish expertise and leadership on WPS, including through our role in the WPS Chiefs of Defence Network, and the Disarmament International Gender Champions network.



First two women promoted to the most Senior NCO ranks in the army, Regimental Sergeant Major and Battalion Quartermaster Sergeant Major highlighting increased participation of women at senior ranks
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DFA in Brussels promoting international women's day and the documentary Mrs Robinson.

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OUTCOME 1.1

GENDER-TRANSFORMATIVE POLICIES PROMOTED ON THE ISLAND OF IRELAND AND INTERNATIONALLY

As an EU member state, Ireland advocates for systematic gender mainstreaming across policies and programmes, including in EU CSDP missions and operations. At the UN, Ireland plays a leading role in promoting the WPS agenda, including through actively platforming the voices of women at the highest political levels, and advocating for the WPS principles to be included in all international policies related to peace and security. Ireland will take a leading role in the WPS Chiefs of Defence Network from June 2025. At EU level, Ireland has consistently advocated that the design of civilian CSDP missions be based on a strong gender analysis, include gender advisers, and supportive operational components for gender equality. Ireland supports the commitments captured in the 2023 Civilian CSDP Compact. Within that context, we are cognisant that Ireland currently falls short of these policy commitments on gender parity, and therefore we will develop a new deployment strategy to incentivise more women to deploy to these missions. Together, these efforts lay a strong foundation for driving lasting change and ensuring gender equality remains at the heart of global security. We will continue to champion the inclusion of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity issues, ensuring that the rights of LGBTQI+ individuals are recognised in peace and security dialogues.

The interconnection of climate change, fragility and conflict calls for integrated solutions. By embedding gender-transformative policies into our climate actions, we aim to empower women and marginalised groups, including women and girls with disabilities, to be fully involved in preventative action and response, creating more inclusive and sustainable approaches to both climate resilience and peacebuilding. Ireland's diplomatic missions

play a key role in advancing gender-transformative policies at both national and multilateral levels.

Ireland's approach centres on four key areas of engagement through our missions:

- a. Political Support:** Advocating for WPS through political and public diplomacy at bilateral and regional levels, to address critical issues like justice processes and NAP development.
- b. Funding:** Supporting women's and women-led organisations and their participation in WPS NAP development and implementation processes.
- c. Lesson Sharing:** Facilitating learning and exchanges between Ireland and partner countries, including on the Northern Ireland Peace Process.
- d. International Engagement:** Supporting global efforts to advance WPS by using our voice and collaborating with international partners in multilateral fora and other global fora.

Across the island of Ireland, a key priority is to develop the role of women in peacebuilding and civic and political life, in line with UNSCR 1325 and subsequent resolutions on WPS, and to build their capacity to take their rightful place as leaders in society. Northern Ireland remains a priority in this regard: as recent research has demonstrated, women continue to live under the coercive control of paramilitarism, a phenomenon that we are committed to ending. We will support relevant organisations working to address the impacts of paramilitarism, including continuing our support to the Independent Reporting Commission.

OUTCOME 1.2

IRELAND'S INTERNAL STRUCTURES LEAD BY EXAMPLE IN PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY

Ireland will continue to work to ensure gender considerations are integrated across the work of Government departments, and that relevant departments and agency staff possess the necessary expertise and knowledge of WPS. Ireland's Civil Service Renewal strategy commits to building an equal, diverse, and inclusive workforce with the target of achieving gender equality across all leadership levels,^{vii} and is taking a proactive and strategic approach to advancing gender equality and wider diversity and inclusion issues.

Women and girls require the security and defence sectors to respond to their needs and enable their participation and leadership. Ireland has made substantial strides in addressing gender balance within An Garda Síochána. Women in An Garda Síochána hold more senior leadership roles, including one Deputy

Commissioner, and half of the Senior Leadership Team at Assistant Commissioner rank is currently female. While women currently make up over 7% of the Permanent Defence Force (as of February 2025^{viii}), there are ongoing efforts at cultural transformation. These include ensuring the most senior serving female officer participates at the Defence Forces Board Meetings, as well as a commitment to increased female participation across the force and on career courses.^{ix} An Garda Síochána and the Defence Forces are committed to continual training for members to tackle sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment and GBV. Ireland is currently developing a National Security Strategy, which will cover a broad range of national security issues and will include the implications of all relevant security, defence and international developments.

Irish peacekeepers working as part of the UN Peacekeeping Mission in Cyprus

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OUTCOME 1.3

A ROBUST EVIDENCE BASE INFORMS PEACE AND SECURITY POLICIES, INCLUDING ARMS CONTROL

Ireland prioritises research and evidence-based policies, ensuring that peace and security strategies are informed by gender disaggregated data and research. By fostering strategic partnerships with international organisations and partners on the island of Ireland, this NAP will seek to broaden the evidence base on the gendered impacts of conflict and the importance of gender perspectives in security frameworks and peace processes. This research-driven approach aims to make the tangible contributions of women in peace and security more visible, reinforcing their central role in shaping and driving global peace and security policies.

While research highlights the link between women's participation and peace and security, making this case within the hard security realm remains challenging.

A key example is the lack of a gendered perspective in artificial intelligence (AI) development, particularly in military applications. AI technologies, and related policies, that overlook gender differences or apply them in culturally-specific ways, undermine human rights and reverse the progress made by UNSCR 1325.^x Ireland commits to supporting research to address these issues especially in areas such as arms control, disarmament, non-proliferation, and security policy, where women's involvement has been historically limited or underrepresented. This research will enable a clearer understanding of the unique gendered impacts of arms trade, conflict resolution, climate change security risks and the evolving landscape of emerging and developing technologies, hybrid threats and cybersecurity.



Mme Benita Diop, Special Envoy of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission on Women, Peace, and Security, and Ambassador Olivia Leslie, Embassy of Ireland in Ethiopia (Photo: Embassy of Ireland)

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Objective 2:

Women's leadership in peacebuilding and stabilisation processes is recognised and supported

Ireland recognises the critical role of women's leadership in peacebuilding and humanitarian response, not only in addressing the immediate and specific needs of women and girls, but in broader grassroots mobilisation, and positive social change. This NAP emphasises the need for a more enabling environment to support women's leadership in peace and security. This includes providing predictable, adequate and sustained funding to women's rights organisations and ensuring that protective measures are in place to safeguard women's participation in peace processes at all levels. Women peacebuilders, particularly those addressing GBV, often face intimidation, harassment and reprisals.

Key commitments

1. Provide predictable, flexible and sustained funding to women's rights organisations.
2. Ensure women have the necessary tools and training to reduce risk and engage effectively, including within digital spaces.
3. Promote and implement the YPS agenda, enabling young women to be active agents of change in conflict settings.
4. Convene dialogues that support, learn from, and amplify the experience of women peacebuilders.
5. Develop inclusive strategies and protection measures that support women to contribute to lasting peace, including those living with disabilities and dealing with the psychological and physical toll of conflict.

OUTCOME 2.1

GENDER-INCLUSIVE INTERVENTIONS AND WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP IN PEACEBUILDING STRENGTHENED

Despite the positive link between women's participation and a more sustainable peace, women remain severely underrepresented in decision-making environments, especially in conflict zones. Women's involvement in governance—from local to national levels—is key to building inclusive, lasting peace. A 5% increase in women's parliamentary representation makes a state five times less likely to resort to violence in international conflicts.^{xi} Ireland is dedicated to supporting women's political leadership and conflict resolution efforts at national, regional and local levels and to support ongoing efforts to ensure UN peacekeeping operations and political missions take inclusive approaches which are essential to achieving sustainable peace and security.

Women remain severely underrepresented in peace negotiations. This exclusion weakens peace processes, as women offer critical perspectives on conflict and recovery. At the same time, as humanitarian funding increases, resources for women's leadership in peacebuilding are shrinking.^{xii} Ireland will continue to tackle this through various initiatives and funds designed to rapidly and directly support grassroots activists.

Women with disabilities face multiple barriers to their participation in peace building. Ireland will strengthen engagement and support to organisations of women with disabilities in situations of conflict.

Women who challenge traditional gender roles face heightened risks of violence, intimidation, and exclusion. Ireland recognises how intersecting identities (such as disability, class, sexuality and gender identity) can compound these risks. To address these challenges, Ireland prioritises integrating protection measures into all support for women's political engagement. This includes working with local women leaders through community exchanges and learning, and advocating for gender-transformative priorities.

There is much to be learned from the experience of women in Northern Ireland from all communities and backgrounds, at political and grassroots levels.



They continue to be advocates for change, acting as peacebuilders in their everyday lives and further afield. In recognition of this, Ireland will convene dialogues and facilitate spaces that support, learn from, and amplify the experience of women peacebuilders in Northern Ireland, and thereby provide support for women peacebuilders across the globe.

The Reconciliation Fund awards grants to organisations working to build better relations within and between traditions in Northern Ireland, between North and South, and between Ireland and Britain. A priority area for the Fund has been to develop the role of women in peacebuilding and civic and political life and to build their capacity to take their rightful place as leaders in society, with a specific focus on supporting civil society in Northern Ireland.

The growing digital divide is another challenge of today's age that risks further marginalising women. We recognise the differentiated impact of digital exclusion on women

in conflict-affected contexts, where limited access to technology and a lack of digital skills can act as an additional barrier to political discussions, peace negotiations, and global platforms for collaboration and change. This Action Plan strives to address these emerging challenges by ensuring women have the necessary tools, training, and protections to engage safely and effectively in digital spaces. Ireland supports innovative, inclusive spaces, such as digitally facilitated peacebuilding, all-women dialogues, and regional exchanges, where women can come together to share strategy, amplify their impact and provide a much-needed sense of community and resilience.

Building on existing partnerships, Ireland continues to advocate for stronger protections for women human rights defenders (WHRDs). Ireland recognises the psychological and physical toll of conflict that can result in physical impairment and long term mental health issues. Through a holistic approach, Ireland is committed to creating an environment where women can contribute to shaping lasting peace.



Maria Munir from Association for Women's Sanctuary and Development met with the Tánaiste in Ethiopia
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OUTCOME 2.2

THE LEADERSHIP OF YOUNG WOMEN AND GIRLS IS RECOGNISED AND SUPPORTED AS A NEW FRONTIER IN CONFLICT PREVENTION AND RESOLUTION

Young women often play important leadership roles within their communities, driving peacebuilding initiatives, and shaping the future of conflict resolution. Their active participation brings new energy and perspectives to peace processes; despite significant contributions, they remain largely excluded from formal decision-making and their impact is overlooked. To bridge this gap, support for the protection and participation of young people, particularly young women, in social and political life is fundamental. Intergenerational dialogue is also crucial. By fostering conversations between younger and older women, we can enrich the peacebuilding process with both the fresh, innovative ideas of youth and the invaluable wisdom of older generations. This dialogue strengthens solidarity across generations, enhances leadership at all levels, and makes peace processes more inclusive and resilient.

Ireland will redouble efforts to promote and implement the Youth, Peace, and Security (YPS) agenda, as outlined in UNSCR 2250 and subsequent resolutions, enabling young women to be active agents of change in conflict settings. This includes providing mentorship, training and resources to empower young people of different genders to lead in peacebuilding and conflict resolution efforts. We will encourage – and where appropriate, facilitate – cross border dialogue and lesson sharing where the WPS and YPS agendas intersect.

Members of the organization Tejedoras de Vida de Putumayo with Irish Embassy Team Colombia and Melanie Lynch from Herstory ©DFAT



Objective 3:

Women and girls in and from conflict contexts shape services that meet their unique needs

In 2023, more than 170 armed conflicts and situations of organised violence exposed over 600 million women and girls to violence, instability, and displacement, underscoring their growing vulnerability.^{xiii} Yet, gender equality in humanitarian aid remains underfunded, with only 17% targeting gender issues.^{xiv} The silos between humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding sectors exacerbate these challenges, leading to fragmented efforts, duplicated actions, and missed opportunities for synergies.

Ireland's fourth NAP seeks to break down these silos by fostering integrated action across sectors. A cohesive approach recognises that resilience cannot be built in isolation and that addressing the root causes of crises, such as gender inequality, is just as crucial as meeting immediate needs. Additionally, this NAP emphasises the importance of aligning international efforts with domestic responses. This includes tackling domestic gender inequalities, addressing human trafficking in Ireland, taking an intersectional approach and ensuring that both women and girls in Ireland, including those seeking refuge, receive the support and protection they need. We are committed to strengthening co-ordination to address trafficking on the island of Ireland, working on a North-South and East-West basis to ensure effective information-sharing and aligned systems, to protect those at risk, and to dismantle trafficking networks.

Key commitments

1. Comprehensively address women's health needs, including access to reproductive healthcare, GBV services, legal aid, and psychosocial support, in tandem with efforts to empower women peacebuilders.
2. Address structural barriers to women's economic participation in fragile and conflict-affected contexts, and strengthen gender-responsive public services to reduce and eliminate inequalities.
3. Provide targeted education and vocational training programmes and facilitate participation in local governance and decision-making for refugee women in Ireland.
4. Dismantle trafficking networks through a victim-centred approach and effective cooperation and coordination on a North-South and East-West basis to protect those at risk on these islands.
5. Adopt a systematic approach to disability inclusion in all our development cooperation and humanitarian action.

OUTCOME 3.1

HUMANITARIAN RESPONSES AND DOMESTIC POLICIES PRIORITISE THE PROTECTION AND EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN AND GIRLS

The urgency of humanitarian need demands immediate action to empower and protect women and girls in conflict zones and on the island of Ireland, who are at heightened risk of GBV, trafficking, domestic abuse, and psychological trauma. These threats require a comprehensive and swift response.

Every day, an estimated 500 women and girls in conflict-affected countries die from complications related to pregnancy and childbirth. By acknowledging the connections between access to sexual and reproductive health services, the prevention of GBV, and women's participation in peace processes, Ireland aims to break down the silos that often hinder a comprehensive approach. This means ensuring that gender-responsive assessments are conducted, and women's needs are prioritised.

Through both domestic and international partnerships, Ireland aims to ensure that humanitarian action is better tailored to respond to women's needs, including the unique and specific needs of women with disabilities. We will ensure that women's health needs are comprehensively addressed, including access to reproductive healthcare, legal aid, and psychosocial support, in tandem with efforts to empower women in peacebuilding. Ireland's upcoming refresh of the International Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights initiative represents an opportunity to further strengthen our approach to reducing the vulnerability of women and girls during conflict, and

mitigating the impact of conflict, and in particular CRSV on health and well-being, thus reinforcing the potential for meaningful and sustained engagement in peacebuilding

Ireland's commitment to protecting women and girls extends beyond conflict zones to those seeking refuge within our borders. Women fleeing violence and instability often face heightened risks of trafficking, sexual exploitation, and further violence. Ireland has strengthened protection mechanisms in alignment with the EU Anti-trafficking Directive. An Garda Síochána plays a crucial role in ensuring women and girls arriving from conflict affected areas are safeguarded from exploitation,^{xv} through victim-centred approaches to combat trafficking. The National Referral Mechanism on Trafficking will enhance the coordination and effectiveness of the response to trafficking in Ireland.

Women and girls from conflict-affected contexts have both unique insights and needs. In Ireland, there are increased avenues for refugee women to advocate for their needs through local governance processes and policy discussions. Strengthening ties between local women's groups and refugee women's organisations helps to create spaces where women affected by conflict, can share experiences, and contribute to rebuilding communities and forge new pathways forward^{xvi}. These partnerships can help empower women and build stronger, more cohesive societies.



Mothers with their children all of whom are International Protection Applicants (asylum seekers) enjoying Emerald Park, supported by Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP)

©DRCD



OUTCOME 3.2

WOMEN ARE BETTER EQUIPPED TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE LONG-TERM RECOVERY OF THEIR COMMUNITIES

Women's economic empowerment is crucial for broader peace and development efforts. Gender inequality is both a driver and consequence of conflict. Ireland's international development policy, *A Better World*, has a key focus on removing structural barriers to women's equal economic participation. This includes enhancing opportunities in relation to food systems, land tenure, and economic rebuilding in fragile and conflict-affected contexts, as well as strengthening gender-responsive public services to reduce and eliminate inequalities.

Ireland commits to support gender-transformative education and economic opportunities for women and girls in conflict-affected regions. To address barriers to land and resource access, essential for food production and economic stability, Ireland funds programmes that improve women's access to land tenure and resources, helping women engage in food production and economic activities.

Ireland is committed to similar actions domestically, working to ensure that women from conflict-affected contexts have the economic security and opportunities they need to fully participate in society. Through targeted programmes that provide access to education, vocational training, and employment opportunities, women can rebuild their lives with financial independence.

Additionally, by offering tailored mental health support and access to childcare for those living in International Protection Accommodation Service (IPAS) Centres, Ireland fosters an environment where women can engage in education and work, enhancing their long-term stability and contributing to their new communities' economic and social development.

Refugee women and girls often encounter barriers that prevent them from fully engaging in community life and accessing vital services or integration opportunities. This exclusion not only heightens their vulnerability to violence and exploitation but also denies them the chance to contribute meaningfully to society. The rising polarisation around migration discourse globally further increases the risk to migrants in Ireland, including women from conflict settings. Stigma and xenophobia limit access to services and opportunities, heightening their vulnerability to violence and exploitation. To address this, initiatives that challenge stereotypes, promote inclusion, and ensure refugee women's involvement in decision-making are vital. The National Community Policing Model, along with training for law enforcement officers like Garda Diversity Officers, helps create inclusive, responsive policing enabling refugee and migrant women to live free from discrimination and actively build communities.



Participants of women-only consultation on Ethiopia's Transitional Justice Policy Option
©UN Women/Fikerte Abebe

Objective 4:

Ireland champions transformative action on GBV by strengthening prevention, response and support mechanisms

GBV, including sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment, remains one of the most pressing barriers to achieving gender equality, particularly in conflict-affected regions, with the rise of technology-facilitated GBV posing a growing threat globally. This is not only a grievous violation of human rights but also a tool used to destabilise communities and assert control. In conflict zones, women and girls, and LGBTQI+ persons, are targeted disproportionately by GBV, which is often employed as a weapon of war.

The recent 50% rise in conflict-related sexual violence cases and 35% rise in the number of girls subjected to severe violations during armed conflicts highlight the urgent need to address both the immediate and root causes of GBV.^{xvii} Despite the severity of the issue, global funding for GBV prevention and response remains critically low. Local, women-led organisations, particularly those on the frontlines providing essential services, face severe underfunding, limiting both immediate support for survivors and long-term efforts to break the cycle of violence.



An Garda Síochána works to promote operation limelight raising awareness of Female Genital Mutilation

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Ireland condemns CRSV wherever and whenever it occurs, advocating for robust international mechanisms aimed at prevention and deterrence, and to hold perpetrators to account. Ireland's approach focuses on both prevention and rapid response, addressing root causes while ensuring survivors have access to immediate care, protection, and legal support. By partnering with local women's and women-led organisations, Ireland aims to increase resources for such organisations and create an environment where survivors can rebuild their lives with the dignity, autonomy, and resources they need.



Key commitments

1. Protect progress and champion more comprehensive action on GBV prevention, including advocating for the inclusion of GBV issues in international sanctions, and holding state and non-state actors accountable for both the perpetration of violence and the failure to protect.
2. Condemn all cases of CRSV, and advocate for robust international mechanisms aimed at prevention, deterrence, and accountability.
3. Fund women's rights organisations working on the front lines of GBV prevention and response, and ensure that local activists guide and strengthen our advocacy work in multilateral spaces.
4. Support our national agency, Cuan, to share best practices internationally and learning from global experiences.
5. Engage men and boys in the prevention of, and in supports for, GBV, including through education.

OUTCOME 4.1

ADVANCE THE PREVENTION OF AND RESPONSE TO GBV IN MULTILATERAL SETTINGS

In the face of growing opposition, Ireland remains steadfast in our commitment to tackling GBV. Our approach is both ambitious and pragmatic—working to hold the line against efforts to roll back progress on GBV prevention, while also pushing for more robust and comprehensive action. Ireland advocates for the inclusion of GBV issues in international sanctions, holding governments and non-state actors accountable for both the perpetration of violence and the failure to protect women and girls from violence.

Ireland will continue to actively support women's rights organisations, and LGBTQI+ organisations, working on the front lines of GBV prevention and response, and ensure that the voices of local activists guide and strengthen our advocacy work in multilateral spaces. Ireland will continue to work with like-minded countries and organisations to ensure that GBV remains a global priority, advancing efforts to combat violence and discrimination against women and girls. Equally important is engaging men and boys as allies in the prevention of GBV. Shifting attitudes toward gender equality begins early, and education plays a pivotal role in fostering respect and equality.

OUTCOME 4.2

A ROBUST, GLOBAL AND DOMESTIC NETWORK OF GBV PREVENTION, RESPONSE, AND SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Ireland's approach to addressing GBV focuses on building on existing efforts, including the twin pillars of ensuring accountability, and expanding support for survivors. Ireland supports the International Criminal Court (ICC) and its Trust Fund for Victims to provide justice and reparations for survivors. Through partnerships, Ireland is actively investing in the prevention and response to GBV. Our contribution can help women and girls impacted by conflict to build safer, more resilient lives through access to vital support services and empowering them to lead their communities. Ireland funds initiatives that address CRSV, focusing on filling critical gaps in mental health and psychosocial support while rebuilding local health systems. These efforts are helping survivors rebuild their lives and gain access to care, protection, and justice.

Domestic efforts to combat and response to GBV extend across several Government departments and agencies; the recent establishment of a national domestic, sexual and gender-based violence (DSGBV) agency, Cuan has a strong focus on survivor-centred policies that prioritise the voices of women, including migrants affected by conflict. Collaboration with civil society ensures that survivors, particularly migrant women, have access to essential services. Cuan is committed to sharing best practices internationally and learning from global experiences. Additionally, the Irish National Health Service Executive has developed a National DSGBV Training Programme to upskill health and social care staff on recognising, responding to, and referring victims and survivors of GBV.^{xviii}



Women of Courage Across the Seasons - Inspiring Voices for Women's Rights, St. Brigid's Day 2024, (Photo: Embassy of Ireland in Ethiopia)

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Coordination, Delivery and Monitoring Progress

This fourth National Action Plan draws upon the many successes and lessons learned from previous NAPS, both of Ireland and of others, in its approach to coordination and evaluation efforts over the coming six-year period. It is anticipated that the NAP will be monitored and evaluated through the following mechanisms:

OVERSIGHT GROUP

An Oversight Group will be appointed by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade to oversee the delivery and review of progress of the National Action Plan, building upon the success of this format during the period of Ireland's previous NAPS. The Oversight Group will be independently chaired, and its membership will consist of 50% representation from relevant government departments and state agencies and 50% representation from CSOs, with 20% drawn from academia and independent experts. Civil society representatives will be chosen, based on the relevance of their organisation's experience and expertise, and will play a role in delivering on aspects of the WPS agenda under the NAP.

The Group will include representation from Northern Ireland, both to inform the work on this Plan's Northern Ireland specific commitments and to enrich its perspective through knowledge and practice developed through Northern Ireland's specific conflict and post conflict experience.

The Peace and Stability Unit, from the Department of Foreign Affairs, will serve as Secretariat to the group. The Oversight Group will meet quarterly, on average, to review progress on the NAP, reflect on its implementation and discuss ongoing and emerging issues in relation to the WPS agenda.

Government representatives will regularly report to the Oversight Group on their progress on achieving the objectives as set out in this plan, and civil society members will update the Oversight Group of their relevant work. An annual report will be presented to the appropriate Oireachtas Committee.



Nura Abdullahi attending Validation Workshops held in Iveagh House for the development of the Women, Peace and Security National Action Plan

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MONITORING AND LEARNING

The core purpose of monitoring and learning is to ensure accountability and drive effective implementation, prompting honest reflection around existing challenges as well as championing key successes. Its role is to measure impact, holding relevant stakeholders accountable for their roles and contributions. A robust monitoring framework will be developed through 2025, designed to track and support continuous improvement, whilst ensuring that the NAP remains dynamic, adaptable, and responsive to emerging challenges, a key recommendation of previous reviews.

This NAP has identified four objectives and nine key outcomes areas in relation to core issues such as women's leadership, human trafficking, GBV and peacebuilding. These and related issues must be incorporated into our response, building broad coalitions and recognising the new challenges and opportunities posed by digital technologies and AI. This NAP is further supported by an annex that sets out detailed actions, targets and those responsible for delivery.

This annex will be published later in 2025, and will include qualitative and quantitative indicators of progress. By combining both hard data and qualitative measures, we aspire to build a fuller picture of progress, both in Ireland and abroad. This balanced approach will help us better understand the real-world impact of the NAP and provide a more nuanced, compelling narrative to guide decisions and improve future actions.

Additionally, ongoing feedback mechanisms, such as periodic surveys and consultations with local communities and women's rights organisations, can ensure that the NAP remains relevant and responsive to its stakeholders.



Validation Workshops held in Iveagh House for the development of the Women, Peace and Security National Action Plan

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Glossary of Terms

WPS	Women, Peace and Security
NAP	National Action Plan
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
GBV	Gender Based Violence
CRSV	Conflict –Related Sexual Violence
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
LGBTQ	lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, and intersex
CSO	civil society organisations
ODA	Official Development Assistance
HRC	Human Rights Council
OG	Oversight Group
AI	artificial intelligence
WHRDs	women human rights defenders
YPS	Youth, Peace, and Security
IPAS	International Protection Accommodation Service
ICC	International Criminal Court
DSGBV	Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence ()

End Notes

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- iv. European Commission (2024), “Statistics on migration to Europe” 11 April 2024.
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- vi. Gang Violence and the WPS Agenda: Analyzing Gendered Realities in Central America and the Caribbean -IPI Global Observatory (International Peace Institute)
- vii. Civil Service Renewal 2030 Strategy Building on our Strengths
- viii. Data Management Office, Defence Forces, 5 February 2025
- ix. Defence Forces Detail Implementation Plan
- x. https://undir.org/files/2021-12/UNIDIR_Does_Military_AI_Have_Gender.pdf
- xi. <https://www.inclusivesecurity.org/publication/why-women-inclusive-security-and-peaceful-societies/>
- xii. United Nations (S/ 2024/671).
- xiii. United Nations(S/2024/671)
- xiv. United Nations (S/2024/671).
- xv. An Garda Síochána has established specialised units such as the Human Trafficking Investigation and Coordination Unit, and the Organised Prostitution Investigation Unit
- xvi. Community Sponsorship programmes
- xvii. An Garda Síochána has established specialised units such as the Human Trafficking Investigation and Coordination Unit, and the Organised Prostitution Investigation Unit
- xviii. Training modules are available to all HSE staff and staff from funded agencies via www.hseland.ie.

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- » Roisin Gallagher, representing Irish Consortium on Gender Based Violence
- » Abby Ryan, representing Irish Immigrant Council
- » Caroline Scanlon, Representing Irish Defence Forces
- » Noeline Blackwell, Independent representative.

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Notes

Notes



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