

Eleventh Meeting

6th March, 2017, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Iveagh House

Minutes: Formal Meeting

Attendees:

Oversight Group

1. Nora Owen, Independent Chair
2. Louise Synnott, An Garda Síochána
3. Michael Rowan, Independent Expert
4. Noreen Woulfe, Intl Security and Defence Policy Branch, Department of Defence
5. Nura Hagi, Mind the Gap
6. Réiseal Ni Chéilleachair, Trócaire
7. Sarah McGrath, IUKA, DAFT
8. Eoghan McDermott, Defence Forces
9. Rachel Ingersoll, Evaluation and Audit, DAFT
10. Ruth Taillon, Centre for Cross Border Studies
11. Emer O'Brien, Development Co-operation Divisions, DFAT
12. Walt Kilroy, School of Law and Governance, Dublin City University
13. Ellen O'Malley Dunlop, National Women's Council of Ireland
14. Anastasia Crickley, Department of Applied Social Studies, Maynooth University
15. Terry O'Hagan, Gender Equality Division, Department of Justice and Equality

Secretariat:

15. Áine Hearnés, Conflict Resolution Unit, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
16. Heidi Riley, Conflict Resolution Unit, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Apologies:

- Catherine O'Rourke, Transitional Justice Institute, University of Ulster
- Colm Byrne, Oxfam

1. Adoption of previous meeting's minutes

In opening the meeting, the Chair welcomed the group back to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and summarised the agenda for the day. Approval of the previous minutes was brought before the group and there were no objections.

The following actions raised from the previous meeting were addressed:

- **The Chair** has written to the relevant Ministers to push for improved inter-departmental approach to services for refugee and asylum seeking women and girls, but has not yet had a response.
- **The Secretariat** has raised the issue of better incorporation of UNSCR 1325 into the 'Migrant Integration Strategy, A Blueprint for the Future', with the Organization for the Promotion of Migrant Integration (OPMI). CRU raised the point that, although UNSCR 1325 is mentioned in the introduction it is not fully incorporated into the strategic actions. It was suggested that this should be reviewed in the next formulation of the document.
- **The Secretariat** will input into the new Standards for Direct Provision but have yet to receive the working draft. The Secretariat will follow up with the Reception and Integration Agency (RIA) to enquire into what stage the document is currently at.
- **The previous minutes had noted that members of the group would look into statistics** on unaccompanied minors transitioning from Túsla to RIA accommodation. This information is still unavailable at the meeting, however, the Secretariat provided some statistics on unaccompanied minors arriving into Ireland. This information is below.

Figures on Unaccompanied Minors

In 2017 there was 175 referrals to the Team for Separated Children Seeking Asylum, up from 126 in 2016. 33 of these have come from the Calais Special Project (CSP) and 6 from the Irish Refugee Protection Programme (IRPP). The rest of the referrals come from GNIB at air or sea ports or from the International Protection Office. Not all referrals are children being received into care but instead may be in need of family reunification or may have an inappropriate referral.

Of the 33 CSP cases, there are 15 Afghans, 4 from South Sudan, 1 Syrian, 11 Eritrean and 2 Ethiopians. Of the 6 IRPP cases there are 5 Syrians and 1 Iraqi. Overall in 2017 there were 34 referrals to the service from Afghanistan, 9 Eritreans, 6 from Iraq, 5 from Syria and 2 from Ethiopia. Other nationalities or referrals in 2017 have been from Nigeria, Libya, Morocco, Georgia, Iran, Sudan and DR Congo.

Between the 1st January and the 15th February there were 16 referrals. Also at the time of enquiry on the 15th February, the Team for Separated Children Seeking Asylum were making plans to receive 7 Eritreans and 1 Ethiopian via the Calais Special Project.

The Secretariat has now requested information on the gender breakdown of these referrals.

CRU have since made further enquiries into the transition of minors to RIA accommodation and the figures that have been found are. For 2016 there were 11 transitions, 2017 there were 6, and so far in 2018 there has been 4. For those who don't transition to RIA the following options are available; Independent living, Residential Units, Foster Care/Supported Lodgings, Aftercare Unit, or to be reunited with family members.

Update from the Secretariat

Áine Hearn provided a comprehensive update from the Secretariat, raising the following points:

1. The mapping exercise on UNSCR 1325 and CRU thematic issues aimed at improving coherence across DFAT units is currently in the process of being approved before being sent out to various units.
2. A new 'Friends of WPS' group has been established by the Canadians in Geneva, which aims to link in likeminded Ambassadors in Geneva on WPS issues. Ambassador Gaffey, who is currently Ireland's Ambassador to the UN in Geneva, has become a member and continues to promote Ireland's position on WPS through this new platform.
3. Catherine Lumsden has become the new Gender Advisor for NATO. CRU intends to engage closely with her in exploring ways of promoting the Women, Peace and Security Agenda within NATO and beyond.
4. Heidi attended the 'EU Member States informal Retreat on Mediation in Brussels' on the 7th to 8th February. A number of issues were raised around women's participation in mediation processes, which are relevant to the WPS agenda. There is no public outcome documents as yet, but Heidi's report from the event can be issued on request.
5. CRU inputted into the Memo to Government on for the new Overseas Development Aid (ODA) White Paper, which is currently under review. WPS priorities were incorporated into CRU's input, particularly around the issue of the nexus between development, humanitarianism and conflict prevention and where, in this context, women's inclusion as agents-for-change remains crucial.
6. Ms Kathryn Bomberger, the Director General of the International Commission on Missing Persons (ICMP), met with the CRU team and spoke at an event at the Royal Academy on the 24th January. For information on her work see [here](#)
7. Áine Hearn is now a member of the Management Board Sub-Committee on Gender Equality and Diversity, and will brief the committee on the NAP at next meeting.
8. CRU attended the lunchtime Policy Event: **Somalia: Current Context and Challenges and Ireland's Future Engagement**, on Tuesday 20th February. Panel participants included the UN Secretary General's Special Representative for Somalia, Mr Michael Keating, and Dr Rashid Abdi, Horn of Africa Director at the International Crisis Group (funded from SF). Following the event CRU attended a workshop on shaping policy for Irish Aid's engagement in Somalia and focussed on emphasising the importance of WPS and YPS issues in our engagement.

The secretariat noted that as lunchtime events in DFAT are frequently public, we will ensure that OG members are notified in advance, should they wish to attend.

It was also reiterated that updates on WPS news from the Secretariat can be found in the quarterly WPS newsletter. This is now up on the DFAT WPS Webpage.

International Women's Day

- Heidi attended a Women Peace and Security lunchtime event hosted by Friends of Europe in Brussels. Attendance at the event was both as a representative of CRU and of [GLOBUS](#) research group which was established to critically examine the EU's contribution to Global Justice. For information on the event and speakers please follow the [link](#). Also the 'Friends of Europe' 'factsheet on WPS' can be accessed [here](#).
- Áine and Heidi attended the CRU International Women's Day event in The Hague, which was a joint project with the Dutch Foreign Ministry. The title of the event was 'Women in Peacekeeping - Mission (not yet) accomplished' and was held in the renowned Peace Palace in The Hague. CRU were involved in the organisation and conceptualisation of the event.

The event included presentations by : **Ameerah Haq**, former United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Field Support, **Vice Admiral Mark Mellet**, Chief of Defence for Ireland, **Major-general M.H. Wijnen**, Deputy Chief of Defence for the Netherlands, **Captain Deidre Carberry**, Peace and Former Gender Advisor for the Irish Defence Forces, **Commander Ella van den Heuvel**, Gender and Security expert, Netherlands. The discussion was chaired by **Ambassador Marriet Schuurman**, Head of the Dutch Taskforce for the UN Security Council. The event was very well received and received attention in the Dutch and Irish media. See here a link to an article in the [Irish Times](#).

Other updates on WPS developments in Ireland and abroad

- IUKA is currently partnering with Training for Women Network in the organisation of an event that highlights the role of women in the lead up to the Good Friday Agreement. This is part of the 20 year anniversary of the GFA and scheduled for the 18th of April.
- Niamh Kelpie from the Belfast office is running a 'First Friday initiative', which brings women from various sectors together on the first Friday of every month. Each week a speaker will present on a specific theme followed by a discussion and networking. The initiative is part of the Belfast office capacity building programme.

Sub-Working Group on Women in Mediation Conference

The Secretariat has suggested hosting a conference/workshop on the participation of women in peace mediation and negotiations. In broad terms peace mediation and negotiations refers to **'a way of assisting negotiations between conflict parties and transforming conflicts with the support of an acceptable third party'**. Traditionally women's participation in negotiations has been very low. In peace negotiations between 1992 and 2011 women made up only, 2% of Chief mediators, 4% of witnesses and signatories and 9% of negotiators. Although there have been improvements, for example in the Colombian context, there is still a long way to go.

However, it should be noted that peace mediation does not have to refer to high level peace negotiations (normally referred to as Track I mediation), it may instead refer to grassroots level mediation (Track III mediation). For example between contentious communities at the grass roots level. Thus any conference/workshop will need to be clear in which area of mediation it seeks to focus on.

Members of the group were provided a brief background document to start the process of thinking about the format and objectives of the event. The discussion raised the issue that any conference on this theme should clearly identify in its design, what is intended to be achieved and what are the outcome goals. It was also noted such an event should heed caution against 'praising a 100 problems', and it was also suggested that it should be framed from a rights perspective, rather than from an instrumentalist framing.

The precise format and framework for the conference/workshop will be decided by a sub-working group which was established at the meeting. Membership of this sub-working group are:

- Walt Kilroy, School of Law and Governance, Dublin City University
- Nura Hagi, Mind the Gap
- Ruth Taillon, Centre for Cross Border Studies
- Eoghan McDermott, Defence Forces
- Áine Hearn, Conflict Resolution Unit, DFAT
- Heidi Riley, Conflict Resolution Unit, DFAT

The sub-working group met for an initial brainstorming session on the 20th March and an update on the outcomes of this meeting will follow soon.

Sub -Working Group on the Final Evaluation

A sub-group for the terms of reference of the final evaluation was also established at this meeting. Selected members are:

- Nora Owen, Independent Chair
- Anastasia Crickley, Department of Applied Social Studies, Maynooth University
- Laura Leonard, Evaluation and Audit, DAFT
- Réiseal Ni Chéilleachair, Trócaire

Áine will continue to work on the terms of reference and will be in contact with members of the sub-group in order to finalize them further.

Further actions to be carried out in response to the thematic discussion.

- The Chair noted that she would like to visit a direct provision centre in order to gain contextual knowledge of an area that is directly relevant to the WPS agenda. It was suggested that other members of the group could arrange to visit but in small numbers. However, it was also emphasised that visits should be organised via professionals that are working in this context and no pressure to discuss conditions should be placed on residents. It was highlighted that visits by outsiders may cause fear among residents and thus any visit should be navigated with respect for the privacy and rights of the residents. In addition, the visit will need to be approved by the Department of Justice & Equality.
- Michael Rowan has since been in contact on this issue and suggested that for visits to Direct Provision centres in the Southern Region, Mr Mike Fitzgibbon and Dr Jacqui O'Riordan, both academics at UCC, could facilitate access. Both have detailed and

comprehensive knowledge of the asylum system and are known and trusted within the migrant community.

Forthcoming Meetings and Events

- A provisional date for the next Oversight Group meeting is the 6th of June. The theme will be focused on **women in peace mediation and negotiations** as a follow-up to the May conference.

Upcoming Events

- The Humanitarian Action Study Group of the Development Studies Association – Ireland, will host a panel discussion on the DRC on the 25th April at 18.30 at the Irish School of Ecumenics. See the [link](#) for information.

Secretariat to the Oversight Group to Ireland's 2nd National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security.

21st March 2018