

WPS Consultation,
Conflict Resolution Unit,
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79-80 St. Stephen's Green,
Dublin 2, Ireland

The Institute for Conflict Research (ICR) is pleased to submit this short response to the Conflict Resolution Unit at the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade in relation to its consultation paper: Ireland's Second National Action Plan: Women, Peace and Security.

ICR is a not-for-profit charity based in Belfast engaged in action-based research, practice work and policy development. We work with and in communities which continue to be affected by the legacy of conflict, as well as with women whose status as Refugees and Asylum Seekers are impacted by their experiences of conflict in their countries of origin. Our research and senior staff have PhDs in Anthropology and having been working as practice-based academics in the fields of gender, conflict transformation, policing and with victims and survivors of conflict.

This response has been formulated from a series of private and public consultations with over 100 women from diverse backgrounds on their personal experiences of conflict prevention and resolution, peace negotiations and peace building. These include (but not exclusively), the deliberations and workshop findings from our symposium "Women on the Verge of ...Peacebuilding" held 18.8.2014, a specially convened session on Policing and the UNSCR 1325 with Loyalist women who continue to protest at the Twadell 'Civil Rights' camp in North Belfast, with women who have served as pro and anti-state combatants and who are the victims of pro and anti-state activities in the North. We consider that these consultations have helped us acquire consensual and collective data to respond with evidence to the following questions:

How can Ireland help empower women affected by conflict? How should the national Action Plan approach actions relating to Ireland-Northern Ireland?

- The introduction of quotas to ensure that the voices of women are appropriately represented on any decision making bodies and or discussion fora, including the political parties, aimed at furthering their needs and rights.
- Ensuring that the reintegration of former combatants into civic society does not curtail the existing culture of volunteering and employment opportunities that exist for women in small and tightly knit communities nor disrupt the horizontal and vertical support networks within those communities.
- Ring-fence resources and financial aid to provide gender specific programmes for women including health well-being; education; community development and capacity building; youth work; communication and media representation; economic empowerment.
- Raise awareness of avenues and access to rights based programmes that provide women with opportunities to network and learn with and from women from other jurisdictions and areas of conflict.

- Provide adequate opportunities for women to consider the trans-generational and family impact of conflict and to address these legacies and consequences through education, arts and communication based initiatives.
- Recognise that as the legacy of conflict can be played out in myriad ways with impacts on women (including reduced quality of life, increased political unrest, sexual and other forms of violence, policing, the use and accessing of public space, housing choices and needs, chronic and acute health consequences and segregated education), the implementation of policies and strategies across statutory service providers needs to mainstream awareness of the impact of conflict on women.

for and on behalf of the Institute for Conflict Research

Dr Katy Radford, MBE