

OHCHR- Questionnaire

Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences

Violence against Women Journalists

Submission of Ireland

Ireland is committed both to advancing gender equality, including through the elimination of violence against women, and to protecting civil society space. *The Global Island: Ireland's Foreign Policy for a Changing World* places both of these areas as priorities in Irish foreign policy.

Protection of journalists

Ireland remains deeply committed to protecting freedom of expression and the safety of journalists both nationally and internationally.

Ireland has taken a number of measures at national level to ensure investigations and accountability on allegations of intimidation and reprisals against journalists. One such example is the Protected Disclosures Act 2014, which provides comprehensive protections for workers who speak up about wrongdoing in the workplace. Workers are protected from all forms of penalisation or threats of penalisation – including dismissal, demotion, suspension, reduction in pay, coercion, intimidation and harassment – as a consequence of making a disclosure of wrongdoing in the workplace.

Additionally, there are a number of international monitoring organisations that include Ireland in their area of operation. Ireland is a member of the Council of Europe and the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), and strongly supports their work on this topic.

The OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media has an early warning role and responds to serious failings with regard to free media and freedom of expression. The mandate of the Representative allows them to observe developments with regards to media freedom in participating States and to promote respect for freedom of expression and free media. Additionally, Ireland strongly supports the mandate of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media.

The Council of Europe platform to promote the protection of journalism and safety of journalists was established in 2015, and allows specific partner organisations to post alerts

regarding concerns in relation to media freedom in any of the member states of the Council of Europe to the platform.

Violence against women

Whilst Ireland does not have specific mechanisms for the protection of women journalists, Ireland has numerous policies for combatting violence against women and girls more generally.

Ireland is committed to tackling domestic, sexual and gender-based violence in all its forms. One of the most important tools in achieving this is the Second National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence 2016-2021. This is a whole-of-Government response to domestic, sexual and gender-based violence, and contains a range of actions to be implemented by Government Departments and agencies.

The majority of the Strategy's actions are aimed at changing societal attitudes through awareness raising to help prevent domestic, sexual and gender-based violence, improving services to victims and holding perpetrators to account. The community and voluntary sector, working in collaboration with the State agencies, play a crucial role in ensuring the delivery of a successful strategy.

In addition to work ongoing under the Second National Strategy for Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence, concern over the prevalence of gender-based violence experienced by women across social classes and situations is reflected in the priorities of the National Strategy for Women and Girls 2017-2020, which includes combating violence against women as one of its six high-level objectives.

On 8 March 2019 Ireland ratified the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention). Ratifying the instrument opened Ireland up to international monitoring by the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO).

On 17 January 2020, Ireland held its 18th Annual Civil Society Forum, the theme of which focused on a stocktake of progress in implementing the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. One of the panel discussions at the Forum addressed inter alia, the issue of online harassment faced by women journalists, as well as the intersectionality of gender and class in this regard, and outlined how the State can more effectively target the harassment of women in the media.

International human rights fora

Supporting civil society space, including the protection of journalists is a key commitment in Ireland's foreign policy.

Most recently, Ireland co-sponsored the UN General Assembly Third Committee resolution on the safety of journalists and the issue of impunity at its 74th session, and the Human Rights Council resolution on the safety of journalists at the Council's 39th session.

Further, Ireland engages with UNESCO on initiatives aimed at countering online harassment and strengthening protection of women journalists.

Ireland is also actively engaged in the strengthening of international standards aimed at addressing gender inequality and promoting women's empowerment at the United Nations and other international and regional organisations. Through engagement at the UN General Assembly and the Human Rights Council Ireland works to promote gender equality, combat all forms of discrimination against women, and prevent gender-based violence. In addition, Ireland works to mainstream gender issues across the broader UN agenda.