



NORTHERN IRELAND INQUIRY: Call for Written Evidence

June 2011

BACKGROUND

In 2000, the UN Security Council unanimously passed its resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. Among others, the resolution calls for:

- Increasing the participation of women in conflict resolution, peacebuilding, post-conflict reconstruction and governance
- Incorporating gender perspectives into peacekeeping
- Taking special measures to protect women in conflict situations

Between the 1969 and 2001, conflict in Northern Ireland resulted in 3,526 deaths of which 1,855 were civilians. During the conflict, most women were actively engaged in efforts to build peace, either through direct engagement at a local level, or by extending this involvement through national, European and international routes. Northern Ireland women were pioneers in their efforts to obtain gender equality during the peace process. Despite this, women continue to face inequalities and exclusion. There were 2 women signatories to the Belfast Agreement and women represented 13 per cent of the Northern Ireland Assembly's membership¹.

In 2008, the CEDAW Committee published its findings on the UK. In its concluding remarks the Committee noted "with regret the lack of information provided on the implementation of resolution 1325 on women, peace and security in Northern Ireland"². The Committee also calls for the full implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) in Northern Ireland.³ In November 2010, HM Government published a revised version of the UK National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security which sets out the government's strategy to implement UN Security Council resolution 1325. Like the previous incarnation of the Plan, there are no provisions setting out how the government intends to implement resolution 1325 in Northern Ireland.

KEY ISSUES

In order to aid the Associate Parliamentary Group on Women, Peace and Security in its Inquiry, we would welcome submissions which particularly address the following issues, although any other relevant information is welcome.

- Should UN Security Council resolution 1325 be directly implemented in Northern Ireland? How is the resolution currently being implemented and by whom? What actions need to be taken to implement resolution 1325?
- Are women disadvantaged in participating in peace building and governance in Northern Ireland? If so, how?
- Are women's needs, experiences, realities and gender perspectives being taken into account in peace building and governance in Northern Ireland? If so, how?
- What measures have HM Government and the Northern Ireland Executive been taking in order to address criticisms on the implementation of resolution 1325 in the 2008 CEDAW report? Has additional information on the implementation of resolution 1325 in Northern Ireland been provided to CEDAW?
- Should HM Government include provisions relating directly to Northern Ireland in the National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security? What has the involvement of the Northern Ireland Office, the Northern

¹ As at March 2011

² CEDAW, *Concluding Observations of the CEDAW on the UK*, 10 July 2008, pp. 10. (UN Document: CEDAW/C/UK/CO/6).

³ CEDAW, *Concluding Observations of the CEDAW on the UK*, 10 July 2008 p.p. 10 (CEDAW/C/UK/CO/6)

Ireland Executive and Northern Ireland civil society organisations in the development of the National Action Plan been to date and how should departments be engaged in the future?

- Does the Northern Ireland Office and the Northern Ireland Executive demonstrate adequate understanding of UN Security Council resolution 1325 and its requirements? What actions have they taken to implement resolution 1325 throughout government policy and provide training for staff?

SUBMITTING YOUR EVIDENCE

Evidence is invited from organisations and individuals. The deadline for submitting evidence is **18.00 on Monday 22 August 2011**. Each submission should:

- (a) State clearly who the submission is from (organisation or individual)
- (b) Include a named contact point, address, email and telephone number
- (c) Be no longer than 3,000 words in length
- (d) Begin with a short summary of evidence in bullet point form
- (e) Be in a single Microsoft Word format document
- (f) Use as little colour or logos as possible
- (g) Include a declaration of any interests

Submissions should be sent in soft-copy by email to: levickc@parliament.uk with "Northern Ireland Inquiry" in the subject line. Receipt of all submissions will be acknowledged. If you do not receive an acknowledgement, please get in touch.

Contact: Chris Levick, Coordinator, APG on Women, Peace and Security. Tel: 020 7219 5182, Email: levickc@parliament.uk.

NEXT STEPS

All evidence will be reviewed and considered by the APG. If any further information is sought or required, individuals and organisations submitting evidence may be contacted. The APG may also contact those making written submissions to the inquiry to provide oral evidence. The APG intends to hold at least one evidence session in Westminster and likely a further evidence session in Belfast. Oral evidence will be heard in public.

At the end of our considerations, the APG will publish a report of findings along with recommendations. This report will be published during 2011.

ABOUT THE ASSOCIATE PARLIAMENTARY GROUP ON WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY

The Associate Parliamentary Group on Women, Peace and Security is a unique parliamentary forum for the consideration and analysis of women, peace and security issues. The Group's work mainly focuses on UN Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security (2000) and its associated resolutions 1820, 1888, 1889 and 1960. Crucially, the APG plays a role overseeing HM Government's work to implement resolution 1325, as described in the UK National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security. The Group has a cross-party membership in both the House of Commons and the House of Lords.

The APG on Women, Peace and Security is supported by

