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Ireland and International Law 2019

DUG CUBIE*

ON THE 22ND January 1919, Ireland's first Minister for Foreign Affairs, Count George Noble Plunkett, was appointed by the newly established Dáil Éireann. The year 2019 therefore represented the centenary of the Irish foreign service and the official development of bilateral diplomatic relationships, and provided an opportunity to reflect on the changes which Ireland and the world have seen in the past 100 years. At the commemoration event to mark the first sitting of Dáil Éireann, then Minister of State for European Affairs, Helen McEntee, TD, highlighted the important contribution to Irish social, cultural and economic life made by people from all over the world who have made their homes in Ireland. Reflecting on the centenary at a time of global uncertainty, Minister McEntee stated:

While we are marking the occasion with a look back it is even more important that we consider Ireland's place in the world in a dramatically shifting global environment where the international norms and certainties that shaped our first century of independence are under considerable strain.¹

The Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Simon Coveney, TD, likewise reflected on the centenary of Irish diplomatic service when he launched *Ireland: A Voice Among the Nations*, written by John Gibney, Michael Kennedy and Kate O'Malley. The Tánaiste noted:

Ireland: A voice among the nations provides a wonderful insight into the evolution and history of Irish foreign policy. At the heart of this publication are the people who have worked tirelessly since the foundation of the state to promote Irish values and interests throughout the world ... The book reminds us that we can look back with pride at our achievements in engaging, influencing and shaping global ideas. Looking to the future, we will continue to invest in our international presence through our Global Ireland strategy, drawing on the experience of the past 100 years as we continue to project our values and promote our interests in the 21st century.²

With the ongoing uncertainty of Brexit looming throughout 2019, the skills and expertise of Irish diplomats and officials continued to be tested. Yet despite the international challenges, the pending departure of the UK from the European Union provided an impetus for a re-evaluation of Ireland's partnerships and relationships with other European nations. Building on the Global Ireland foreign policy launched in 2018, 2019 saw Ireland undertake extensive bilateral discussions with

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¹ Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), 'Welcoming Remarks by Minister McEntee on Centenary Commemoration of First Sitting of Dáil Éireann' (Speech, 21 January 2019).

² DFAT, 'Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade Launches *Ireland: A Voice Among the Nations*' (Press Release, 27 November 2019).

EU colleagues and expand the reach of the Irish diplomatic and consular services to reflect the diversity of countries and regions across the globe with which Ireland engages. Beyond the traditional diaspora communities in the UK and the US, during 2019 Ireland advanced its connections with other small island states, with a dedicated Our Ocean Wealth Summit and SeaFest taking place in Cork with a special focus on Small Island Developing States (SIDS), while the Government's campaign for election onto the UN Security Council for the period 2021–22 prompted a raft of diplomatic and cultural events in New York, Geneva and beyond. The year also saw the publication of an update on the 2015 White Paper on Defence, a new international development policy ('A Better World'), and the commencement of public consultations on a new diaspora policy. Throughout the year, ministers responded to world events and made statements on key aspects of international law, as set out below.

BREXIT

The uncertainty resulting from the UK's decision to leave the European Union, known as Brexit, was a predominant theme running throughout the year for Ireland's foreign policy and international relations. The need to ensure closer links with our other European partners resulted in a series of bilateral two-way visits during 2019. For example, over the course of the first three months of the year, Minister of State for European Affairs, Helen McEntee, TD, travelled to Slovenia, Latvia, Lithuania, Sweden and Denmark for discussions with her counterparts.³ While in August, following a visit to Ireland by the Norwegian Foreign Minister, the Tánaiste visited several European capitals, including Prague, Paris, Helsinki and Warsaw to discuss Brexit and the EU's other priorities.⁴

The Brexit process was not helped by the series of rolling 'cliff edges' which occurred over the course of 2019 – the first of which was the original exit date of 31 March 2019, which was postponed at the request of the UK Government under Theresa May. While the UK only requested an extension until 30 June, the European Council approved an extension until 31 October 2019. Following May's resignation as Prime Minister on 24 May, and the subsequent appointment of Boris Johnson as UK Prime Minister, the European Council approved another extension of the Brexit deadline to 31 January 2020. Despite the increasingly complex and acrimonious Parliamentary and public debate in the UK, Ireland was generally supported by its European partners on issues such as avoiding a hard border with Northern Ireland via the so-called 'Irish backstop'.⁵

³ DFAT, 'Minister for European Affairs, Helen McEntee, Travels to Slovenia for Two-Day Working Visit' (Press Release, 22 January 2019); DFAT, 'Minister for European Affairs, Helen McEntee T.D. to Visit Latvia and Lithuania' (News, 26 February 2019); DFAT, 'Minister for European Affairs, Helen McEntee T.D. to Visit Sweden and Denmark for St Patrick's Day' (Press Release, 14 March 2019).

⁴ DFAT, 'Tánaiste Simon Coveney to Meet Norwegian Foreign Minister, Ine Eriksen Søreide' (Press Release, 26 August 2019); DFAT, 'Tánaiste Simon Coveney Continues European Engagement Tour' (Press Release, 29 August 2019).

⁵ It is outwith this correspondent's report to detail the labyrinthine progression of Brexit in the UK Parliament and public discourse. RTÉ's Europe Correspondent, Tony Connelly, received widespread

The risks that Brexit posed to Ireland, from an economic and political perspective, were well recognised by the Government and regular Brexit contingency updates were provided throughout 2019.⁶ To address the changes in the legal relationship between the UK and Ireland which Brexit requires, in January it was agreed that one omnibus Brexit Bill would be introduced into the Oireachtas focusing on the broad themes of protecting the citizen, and supporting the economy, enterprise and jobs.⁷

The economic impact of Brexit for Irish exporters and business was the subject of extensive media discussion, and in August the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFAT) urged businesses to get ready for the impacts of Brexit, as well as highlighting the potential challenges for online purchasing post-Brexit.⁸ Likewise, in October, Minister for European Affairs, Helen McAtee, TD, visited the Revenue offices at Dublin Port in recognition of the huge customs implications which Brexit posed.⁹ However, despite the political and economic upheaval, the ties which bind the two countries remained strong as the Tánaiste acknowledged in May 2019:

The CTA [Common Travel Area] is a practical demonstration of the enduring strength of the British-Irish relationship and of our people to people ties. I want to assure British citizens living in Ireland that they are welcome and truly valued here, as is their contribution to Ireland and Irish life. British citizens will continue to be able to travel freely, live, study, and work in Ireland into the future. I welcome the similar commitment and welcome of the UK Government for Irish citizens in Britain.¹⁰

INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS

The ground-breaking UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325/2000 on women, peace and security, adopted in October 2001, provides a key global framework for promoting the meaningful participation of women and girls in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, peace negotiations, peace-building, peace-keeping, humanitarian response and in post-conflict reconstruction.¹¹ Ireland first set out a coordinated and comprehensive policy response to the Resolution in Ireland's National Action Plan for Implementation of UNSCR 1325 (2011–2014)

praise for his detailed reporting during this period. For some of his early analysis, see Tony Connelly, *Brexit and Ireland: The Dangers, the Opportunities, and the Inside Story of the Irish Response* (Penguin, 2017).

⁶ DFAT, 'Brexit Contingency and Preparedness Update' (Press Release, 15 January 2019); DFAT, 'Publication of Brexit Contingency Action Plan Update, 9 July 2019' (Press Release, 9 July 2019).

⁷ DFAT, 'Government Publishes Brexit Omnibus Bill to Prepare Ireland for No Deal Withdrawal by the UK' (Press Release, 22 February 2019).

⁸ DFAT, 'Government Urges Businesses to Prepare for Brexit with 10 Weeks to Go' (Press Release, 22 August 2019); DFAT, 'Minister Helen McEntee Highlights Potential Brexit Changes when Buying Online' (Press Release, 26 August 2019).

⁹ DFAT, 'Minister McEntee Highlights Revenue's Extensive Engagement with Businesses During Visit to Revenue' (Press Release, 3 October 2019).

¹⁰ DFAT, 'Tánaiste Signs Agreement with UK on Common Travel Area' (Press Release, 8 May 2019). See also discussion below of the bilateral review of the Ireland-Scotland relationship that was initiated by the Scottish and Irish Governments in November 2019.

¹¹ UN Security Council Resolution 1325, adopted by the Security Council at its 4213th meeting, on 31 October 2000, UN Doc S/RES/1325 (2000).

in November 2011.¹² Mary Robinson, former President of Ireland and UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, noted in the Introduction to this first National Action Plan (NAP) that: ‘We are convinced that strengthening women’s leadership at every level is key to advancing peace, sustainable development and human rights in the 21st century.’¹³ Since then, Ireland has published a series of progress reports and analysis of the Irish policy responses to UNSCR 1325.¹⁴

In advance of the conclusion of Ireland’s second NAP, in late 2018 the Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Simon Coveney, TD, launched a public consultation and targeted stakeholder workshops to identify priority actions for Ireland over the course of the State’s third NAP.¹⁵ In particular, the consultation sought input on a series of questions based around the ‘pillar’ structure of Ireland’s NAPs, which cover:

1. Prevention of conflict including gender-based violence and sexual exploitation and abuse;
2. Empowerment, participation and representation of women in decision-making;
3. Protection, relief and recovery;
4. Promotion of the Women, Peace and Security agenda in international, regional and national arenas.¹⁶

Following workshops in Dublin and Cork in early 2019, the Tánaiste launched Ireland’s third NAP on Women, Peace and Security on 21 June 2019. Speaking at the launch, the Tánaiste said:

Ireland is committed to putting women and girls at the heart of our work to prevent and resolve conflict. Ensuring that peace is forged on the basis of rights, equality and inclusion is an expression of Ireland’s values and our interests. Driven by both conviction and experience, Ireland as a champion on Women, Peace and Security is determined to raise its voice and to focus on implementation of this transformative agenda from grassroots to global institutions.¹⁷

List of Multilateral Agreements that Entered into Force during 2018

The following is a list of the multilateral agreements that entered into force for Ireland during 2018.¹⁸

¹² DFAT, ‘Ireland’s National Action Plan on Implementation of UNSCR 1325 (2011–2014)’ (November 2011).

¹³ *Ibid* 5.

¹⁴ See, eg, Bronagh Hinds and Karen McMinn, ‘Mid-Term Progress Report: Implementation of Ireland’s National Action Plan for UNSCR 1325, 2011–2014’ (2013); Karen McMinn, ‘Final Review Report: Implementation of Ireland’s National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (2011–2014)’ (2014); Bronagh Hinds and Debbie Donnelly, ‘Midterm Review of Ireland’s Second National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (2015–2018)’ (March 2017); Bronagh Hinds and Debbie Donnelly, ‘Final Review of Ireland’s Second National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325’ (2019).

¹⁵ DFAT’s dedicated webpages on UNSCR 1325 are available at: www.dfa.ie/our-role-policies/international-priorities/peace-and-security/women-peace-and-security/.

¹⁶ DFAT, ‘Public Consultation Paper for Ireland’s Third National Action Plan Women, Peace and Security: Open Invitation for Submissions’ (November 2018).

¹⁷ DFAT, ‘Tánaiste launches Ireland’s third National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security’, Press Release (21 June 2019).

¹⁸ Details of multilateral agreements that entered into force in 2019 are not yet available.

Table 1 List of Multilateral Agreements that Entered into Force during 2018

ITS Number	Title of Agreement
No 2 of 2018	<p>Framework Agreement on Partnership and Cooperation between the European Union and its Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of the Philippines, of the other part, done at Phnom Penh on 11 July 2012</p> <p><i>Ireland's notification of the completion of the procedures necessary for the entry into force of this Agreement deposited on 18 July 2017, entered into force on 1 March 2018</i></p>
No 3 of 2018	<p>Nagoya-Kuala Lumpur Supplementary Protocol on Liability and Redress to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, done at Nagoya on 15 October 2010</p> <p><i>Ireland's Instrument of Ratification deposited on 14 January 2013, entered into force on 5 March 2018</i></p>
No 4 of 2018	<p>Euro-Mediterranean Aviation Agreement between the European Community and its Member States, of the one part, and the Kingdom of Morocco, of the other part, done at Brussels on 12 December 2006</p> <p><i>Ireland's notification of the completion of the procedures necessary for the entry into force of this Agreement deposited on 23 July 2012, entered into force on 19 March 2018</i></p>
No 5 of 2018	<p>Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, done at New York on 13 December 2006</p> <p><i>Ireland's Instrument of Ratification, with Reservations and Declarations pursuant to Articles 12, 14 and 27(1) of the Convention, deposited on 20 March 2018, entered into force with respect to Ireland on 19 April 2018</i></p>
No 6 of 2018	<p>Protocol to the Framework Agreement on Partnership and Cooperation between the European Union and its Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of the Philippines, of the other part, to take account of the accession of the Republic of Croatia to the European Union, done at Brussels on 15 January 2015</p> <p><i>Approved on behalf of the European Union and its Member States on 4 December 2017 and by the Republic of the Philippines on 9 April 2018, entered into force on 1 May 2018</i></p>
No 7 of 2018	<p>Agreement on Privileges and Immunities for the International Renewable Energy Agency, done at Abu Dhabi on 13 January 2013</p> <p><i>Ireland's Instrument of Accession deposited on 11 April 2018, entered into force with respect to Ireland on 11 May 2018</i></p>

(continued)

ITS Number	Title of Agreement
No 8 of 2018	Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the European Union and its Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Iraq, of the other part, done at Brussels on 11 May 2012 <i>Ireland's notification of the completion of the procedures necessary for the entry into force of this Agreement deposited on 1 August 2017, entered into force on 1 August 2018</i>
No 9 of 2018	Protocol to the Euro-Mediterranean Agreement establishing an Association between the European Community and its Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Lebanon, of the other part, to take account of the accession of the Republic of Bulgaria and Romania to the European Union, done at Brussels on 18 June 2015 <i>Approved on behalf of the European Union and its Member States on 18 July 2016 and by the Republic of Lebanon on 18 July 2018, entered into force on 1 August 2018</i>
No 10 of 2018	Protocol to the Euro-Mediterranean Agreement establishing an Association between the European Community and its Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Lebanon of the other part, to take account of the accession of the Republic of Croatia to the European Union, done at Brussels on 28 April 2016 <i>Approved on behalf of the European Union and its Member States on 31 March 2017 and by the Republic of Lebanon on 18 July 2018, entered into force on 1 August 2018</i>
No 11 of 2019	Protocol to the Framework Agreement between the European Union and its Member States, on the one part, and the Republic of Korea, on the other part, to take account of the accession of the Republic of Croatia to the European Union, done at Brussels on 21 June 2017 <i>Approved by the Republic of Korea on 4 July 2017 and on behalf of the European Union and its Member States on 24 July 2018, entered into force on 1 August 2018</i>
No 12 of 2018	Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, done at The Hague on 14 May 1954 <i>Ireland's Instrument of Ratification deposited on 17 May 2018, entered into force with respect to Ireland on 17 August 2018</i>
No 13 of 2018	Second Protocol to the Hague Convention of 1954 for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, done at The Hague on 26 March 1999 <i>Ireland's Instrument of Accession deposited on 17 May 2018, entered into force with respect to Ireland on 17 August 2018</i>
No 15 of 2018	Convention Establishing a European Organisation for Astronomical Research in the Southern Hemisphere, done at Paris on 5 October 1962 <i>Ireland's Instrument of Accession deposited on 28 September 2018, entered into force with respect to Ireland on 28 September 2018</i>

(continued)

ITS Number	Title of Agreement
No 16 of 2018	<p>Agreement between the European Union and its Member States, of the one part, and Iceland, of the other part, concerning Iceland's participation in the joint fulfilment of the commitments of the European Union, its Member States and Iceland for the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, done at Brussels on 1 April 2015</p> <p><i>Ireland's notification of the completion of the procedures necessary for the entry into force of this Agreement deposited on 12 August 2015, entered into force on 27 November 2018</i></p>
No 17 of 2018	<p>Protocol to the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement establishing a partnership between the European Communities and their Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Uzbekistan, of the other part, to take account of the accession of the Republic of Croatia to the European Union, done at Brussels on 17 July 2017</p> <p><i>Approved by Uzbekistan on 1 February 2018, the European Atomic Energy Community on 7 November 2018 and on behalf of the European Union and its Member States on 22 November 2018, entered into force on 1 December 2018</i></p>

Statements on the Work of the International Law Commission

Over the course of 2019, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) provided written statements in the UN General Assembly (UNGA) Sixth Committee (Legal) on a variety of topics under consideration by the International Law Commission (ILC). These statements are included in full in the Documents section of this *Yearbook*.¹⁹ The three statements covered the following topics:

- Statement to UNGA 74, 28 October 2019 on Part 1 of the ILC Report Relating to Crimes Against Humanity, *Jus Cogens* and Provisional Application of Treaties.²⁰
- Statement to UNGA 74, 1 November 2019 on Part 2 of the ILC Report Relating to Immunity of State Officials from Foreign Criminal Jurisdiction and Sea-Level Rise in Relation to International Law.²¹
- Statement to UNGA 74, 5 November 2019 on Part 3 of the ILC Report Relating to General Principles of Law.²²

¹⁹ See Documents section.

²⁰ *Statement by Mr. James Kingston, Legal Advisor, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, at the Sixth Committee United Nations General Assembly 74th Session, Agenda Item 79: The Report of the International Law Commission on the Work of its 71st Session* (28 October 2019).

²¹ *Statement by Mr. James Kingston, Legal Advisor, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, at the Sixth Committee United Nations General Assembly 74th Session, Agenda Item 79: The Report of the International Law Commission on the Work of its 71st Session* (1 November 2019).

²² *Statement by Ms. Anne-Marie O'Sullivan, Legal Advisor, Permanent Mission of Ireland to the United Nations, at the Sixth Committee United Nations General Assembly 74th Session, Agenda Item 79: The Report of the International Law Commission on the Work of its 71st Session* (5 November 2019).

Of note, following the adoption of the final draft articles and commentaries on crimes against humanity, the Irish Government expressed its strong support for the elaboration of a Convention based on the draft articles and indicated its preference for this to occur via an international conference of plenipotentiaries.²³ Likewise, in regards to the examination of sea-level rise in international law, the Irish delegation highlighted President Michael D Higgins' call before the UN General Assembly in September 2019 to draw on the expertise of SIDS, and supported the ILC's establishment of an open-ended Study Group to examine issues related to the law of the sea, statehood, and the protection of persons affected by sea-level rise.²⁴

DIPLOMATIC MATTERS

During 2019, the President of Ireland, Michael D Higgins, received credentials from ambassadors representing: the Republic of Guinea, Lebanon, Sweden,²⁵ Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Kingdom of the Netherlands, Republic of Angola,²⁶ Hellenic Republic, Republic of Zimbabwe, Commonwealth of The Bahamas,²⁷ Republic of Colombia, Arab Republic of Egypt, Peru, Republic of South Africa,²⁸ People's Republic of China, Republic of Benin,²⁹ Republic of Finland, Republic of Bulgaria, Republic of The Gambia,³⁰ United States of America,³¹ Malaysia, Japan, Mongolia,³² Republic of Poland, Republic of Croatia, Georgia,³³ Republic of Kenya, Republic of Serbia, People's Republic of Bangladesh,³⁴ Principality of Andorra, Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, and the Republic of Namibia.³⁵

FOREIGN POLICY, BILATERAL RELATIONS, CONSULAR SERVICES AND THE DIASPORA

Foreign Policy

Following the publication in June 2018 of the Government's foreign policy Global Ireland, 2019 saw a series of initiatives to implement commitments made in the new policy. As reiterated by the Tánaiste on 2 January, the Global Ireland policy is an 'all-of-Government' programme which aims to double Ireland's impact in the world

²³ Statement by Mr. James Kingston (n 20) para 4.

²⁴ Statement by Mr. James Kingston (n 21) paras 14–16.

²⁵ DFAT, 'New Ambassadors Present Credentials' (Press Release, 19 January 2019).

²⁶ DFAT, 'New Ambassadors Present Credentials' (Press Release, 1 March 2019).

²⁷ DFAT, 'New Ambassadors Present Credentials' (Press Release, 21 March 2019).

²⁸ DFAT, 'New Ambassadors Present Credentials' (Press Release, 30 April 2019).

²⁹ DFAT, 'New Ambassadors Present Credentials' (Press Release, 28 May 2019).

³⁰ DFAT, 'New Ambassadors Present Credentials' (Press Release, 25 June 2019).

³¹ DFAT, 'New Ambassadors Present Credentials' (Press Release, 1 July 2019).

³² DFAT, 'New Ambassadors Present Credentials' (Press Release, 13 September 2019).

³³ DFAT, 'New Ambassadors Present Credentials' (Press Release, 31 October 2019).

³⁴ DFAT, 'New Ambassadors Present Credentials' (Press Release, 20 November 2019).

³⁵ DFAT, 'New Ambassadors Present Credentials' (Press Release, 5 December 2019).

by 2025. In particular, the policy highlights Ireland’s global footprint in three broad areas: ‘how we trade; the bilateral and multilateral partnerships we build; and our wider contribution to the world’.³⁶ A key element of the policy is the development of specific bilateral and regional strategies for Irish foreign affairs, which had commenced in 2018 with the Ireland-Germany Joint Action Plan, ‘Ireland in Germany: A Wider and Deeper Footprint’.³⁷ Over the course of 2019, this was followed by the publication of Ireland’s Strategy for the US and Canada in February,³⁸ a Strategy for France 2019–2025, ‘Together in Spirit and Action in August’,³⁹ and Strategy for Africa to 2025 in November.⁴⁰

Another key priority for the Irish Government during 2019 was the world’s oceans and SIDS. Activities centred around an international conference held in Cork in June entitled ‘Our Ocean Wealth Summit and Seafest’. The summit and festival aimed to highlight Ireland’s own status as a small island, and the threats posed by climate change, in particular to small island states in the Pacific, Caribbean, Atlantic and Indian oceans. The Tánaiste stressed:

Ireland strongly believes that we can only address this challenge of a generation if we take a strong climate justice approach. Emphasising the needs and realities of those who have the most to lose, yet have done least to contribute to the problem, will always be a centerpiece of our approach.⁴¹

As part of the summit, and linked to the Government’s new development assistance policy ‘A Better World’, the Tánaiste launched a new partnership strategy for SIDS, which set out ten commitments:

1. Ireland will commit dedicated resources to continuous dialogue with Small Island Developing States, holding regular Céilí meetings to share views and build further collaboration.
2. Ireland will establish a permanent network of Envoys to support and further develop our relationship with Small Island Developing States.
3. Ireland will launch a series of partnerships in cooperation with Small Island Developing States, which embody our shared values. These will include an Ocean Innovation Initiative and a Small Island Developing States fellowship scheme.
4. Ireland will share our experiences in working with the diaspora with Small Island Developing States partners.

³⁶ DFAT, ‘Tánaiste Outlines Global Ireland Plans for 2019’ (Press Release, 2 January 2019).

³⁷ DFAT, ‘Tánaiste Hosts German Federal Foreign Minister at “Global Ireland 2025” Conference’ (Press Release, 8 January 2019).

³⁸ DFAT, ‘Launch of Government’s New Strategy for the US and Canada’ (Announcement, 6 February 2019).

³⁹ DFAT, ‘Global Ireland – Ireland’s Strategy for France 2019–2025, “Together in Spirit and Action”’ (News, 28 August 2019).

⁴⁰ DFAT, ‘Launch of the Government’s New Africa Strategy: Global Ireland: Ireland’s Strategy for Africa’ (Press Release, 27 November 2019). See also: DFAT, ‘Tánaiste Simon Coveney Meets with Sierra Leone Foreign Minister During Visit to Dublin’ (Press Release, 14 February 2019); DFAT, ‘Minister of State Cannon Launches Programme of Community-based Events to Celebrate Africa Day’ (Press Release, 14 May 2019); DFAT, ‘Minister of State Cannon Hosts Inaugural Ministerial South Africa-Ireland Joint Commission’ (Press Release, 5 November 2019).

⁴¹ DFAT, ‘Our Ocean Wealth Summit and Seafest, Cork’ (Press Release, 8 June 2019).

5. Ireland will use our membership of the EU to ensure that the needs of Small Island Developing States are reflected in development cooperation, trade, and other partnership arrangements.
6. Ireland will continue to provide intensive support to Small Island Developing States-related processes at the UN, in particular the SAMOA Pathway process, and support efforts by Small Island Developing States to influence global processes.
7. Ireland will support UN Volunteer placements in the Pacific and Caribbean.
8. Ireland will provide support to UN DESA (the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs) and OHRLLS (the Office of the High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Land-locked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States) to support Small Island Developing States partnerships in the SAMOA pathway process.
9. Ireland will provide €12 million to the Ireland Trust Fund at the Asian Development Bank, to support Small Island Developing States on climate and disaster resilience.
10. Ireland will deepen our relationship with CCRIF (the Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility) to establish further partnerships on risk management.⁴²

These commitments were acted upon during the rest of 2019. For example, in October, the Government committed €4 million to funding a newly established Ocean Initiative to provide short-term capacity support to SIDS, and to fund long-term collaborative research between Irish counterparts and SIDS, in the area of coastal and marine management.⁴³ This was followed in late November with the establishment of a postgraduate scholarship programme to assist future leaders from the Pacific and Caribbean regions and from African SIDS. As part of the long-running Irish Aid Fellowship programme, successful candidates will be supported in undertaking Masters-level studies in Ireland in courses relevant to addressing climate change, the blue economy and associated challenges.⁴⁴

In addition to these bilateral and regional priorities, a series of thematic issues were highlighted during 2019. In February, the Tánaiste attended the high-level UN Conference on Disarmament, and reiterated Ireland's support of the UN Secretary General's Agenda for Disarmament. In particular, the Tánaiste announced that Ireland would champion three of the actions identified in the Agenda – namely, facilitating dialogue on nuclear disarmament, work towards a political declaration to address the use of explosive weapons in populated areas, and building understanding on the impact of arms on conflict management.⁴⁵ Later in the year, following the announcement of the death of HE Mr Yukiya Amano, Director-General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the Tánaiste reflected:

Throughout his diplomatic career Mr. Amano established himself as a champion for many issues related to disarmament and non-proliferation, and was held in high regard by all those who knew him. In his ten years at the IAEA, Mr. Amano worked tirelessly to fulfil the

⁴² DFAT, 'Tánaiste Launches New Strategy for Ireland's Partnership with Small Island Developing States' (News, 10 June 2019). See also: Government of Ireland, 'Ireland's Strategy for Partnership with Small Island Developing States' (June 2019).

⁴³ DFAT, 'MoS Cannon, T.D. Announces €4 million in Funding to the Ocean Initiative at Our Ocean Conference' (Press Release, 23 October 2019).

⁴⁴ DFAT, 'New Fellowships under Ireland's Fellowship Programme for Small Island Developing States' (News, 2 December 2019).

⁴⁵ DFAT, 'Tánaiste Simon Coveney Addresses the Human Rights Council for the First Time' (Press Release, 25 February 2019).

aims of the Agency, demonstrating a strong commitment to the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, and supporting and promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.⁴⁶

As part of the Government's campaign for a seat on the UN Security Council for 2021–22, the Tánaiste made a series of commitments at the UN Human Rights Council in February, when he noted that Ireland's commitment to freedom and justice was

woven through our foreign policy, through our bilateral engagement and through our determined and committed membership of the European Union. It underpins our commitment to the United Nations and to the Sustainable Development Goals. It is the reason we are acting on our promise to meet the UN target of providing 0.7% of GNP in development assistance by 2030 and it is the cornerstone of our candidacy for a seat on the UN Security Council for 2021–22.⁴⁷

Other key issues of concern highlighted by the Tánaiste at the UN Human Rights Council were the importance of civil society and human rights defenders, the continued use of the death penalty and equal treatment for LGBTI persons. The Tánaiste also stressed the Government's serious human rights concerns in regard to the situation in Yemen, Myanmar and the Occupied Palestinian Territory.⁴⁸

Bilateral Relations

As noted in the Brexit section above, a key element of Irish foreign policy during 2019 was the elaboration of bilateral and regional strategies with both European partners such as France and Germany, and global partners. The implementation of a pro-active foreign policy, as set out in the *Global Ireland strategy 2025*, reflects the importance of adapting to the post-Brexit European and global context. For example, building on the establishment in 2015 of a 'Scottish Hub' within the British Embassy in Dublin, in November 2019 the Scottish and Irish Governments announced a joint strategic review of their bilateral relationship. Speaking at the launch, the Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Simon Coveney TD, said: 'The age-old Ireland-Scotland relationship has developed and deepened over the last two decades – facilitated by devolution in the UK; the Good Friday Agreement and the establishment of the British-Irish Council; and the opening of our Consulate in Edinburgh.' Meanwhile, Scottish Government External Affairs Secretary Fiona Hyslop noted:

Ireland is one of Scotland's oldest friends, linked by history, geography and culture. In this era of global uncertainty it is more important than ever that we seek to strengthen our relations even further, allowing us to improve in areas where we already work together and identify new opportunities for collaboration.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ DFAT, 'Statement by Tánaiste Simon Coveney, T.D. on the Death of H.E. Mr. Yukiya Amano' (Statement, 22 July 2019).

⁴⁷ DFAT, 'Tánaiste Simon Coveney Addresses the Human Rights Council (n 45).

⁴⁸ *Ibid.* See further an earlier report titled 'Human Rights in Ireland 2019' in this volume.

⁴⁹ DFAT, 'Launch of Scottish-Irish Joint Review' (Press Release, 4 November 2019). See also: DFAT, 'Tánaiste Visits Edinburgh to Review Bilateral Ireland-Scotland Relationship' (Press Release, 13 November 2019); DFAT, 'Strengthening Irish Links' (Press Release, 13 November 2019); DFAT, 'Ireland-Scotland Online Questionnaire' (Press Release, 24 December 2019).

The two Ministers also published a joint opinion piece in the *Irish Examiner* and *The Scotsman* newspapers setting out the objectives of the review process:

We will review government-to-government work; the Scottish-Irish Health Forum is an excellent example of a constructive, focused collaboration which shares challenges and solutions. While we work together across many sectors, we don't yet have a framework to drive holistic bilateral cooperation, that natural intertwining we seek.

The review will also look beyond government, in the areas of business and economy, community and diaspora, academic and research links, culture, and rural, coastal and island communities. We want to learn from the best in each country and empower those who can bring our relationship to a new level.⁵⁰

Following an initial mapping exercise, a series of consultations will be held in the first half of 2020 with key sectoral stakeholders (covering business and the economy; community and diaspora; cultural; rural, coastal and island communities; and academia). The review will produce a final report setting out a five-year plan, outlining the scale and value of current Irish-Scottish cooperation, making recommendations addressed to both governments on priorities for future cooperation, and making recommendations on any structures required to provide an appropriate framework for regular government-to-government dialogue on aspects of the bilateral relationship.⁵¹

Likewise, the Government undertook a series of engagements with Scandinavian and Baltic states in the second half of 2019. In August, Tánaiste Simon Coveney met with the Norwegian Foreign Minister, Ine Eriksen Søreide, who visited Dublin and the border region to learn more about the impact of Brexit. Speaking ahead of the visit, the Tánaiste noted:

This visit is part of Ireland's continued programme of diplomatic outreach to help increase understanding of how Brexit will uniquely effect people across this island. The complex constitutional arrangements in Northern Ireland, the experiences of border communities in the past, and the interwoven nature of relationships on the island can be best understood by a visit to the area.⁵²

Meanwhile, in October, Minister for State Helen McEntee, TD met with Sturla Sigurjónsson, Permanent State Secretary of the Icelandic Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to discuss Brexit contingency planning and EU/EEA cooperation. Reflecting on the strong bilateral relationship between Ireland and Iceland, Minister McEntee noted:

As part of our preparations for an EU of 27, we have worked to deepen our engagement across Europe. Ireland and the Nordic Baltics share a long rich history of cultural and trading links. It is natural that we should learn from each other's experiences and work together to adapt and innovate in a sustainable way.⁵³

⁵⁰ Simon Coveney and Fiona Hyslop, 'Bilateral Review Will Renew Links that have Long Bound Ireland and Scotland' *Irish Examiner/The Scotsman* (3 November 2019). Available at: www.scotsman.com/news/opinion/columnists/bilateral-review-will-renew-links-have-long-bound-ireland-and-scotland-1403458.

⁵¹ DFAT/Scottish Government, 'Concept Note: Strategic Review of Irish-Scottish Relations' (November 2019).

⁵² DFAT, 'Tánaiste Simon Coveney to Meet Norwegian Foreign Minister, Ine Eriksen Søreide' (Press Release, 26 August 2019).

⁵³ DFAT, 'MoS McEntee Meets with Finland's Permanent Secretary & Permanent SoS of Iceland' (Press Release, 24 October 2019).

This engagement was followed by the hosting of an international conference in Dublin entitled ‘Ireland and the Nordic-Baltic 8: Working Together for a Secure, Sustainable and Digital Europe’, which brought together leading experts and diplomats from across Ireland and the Nordic-Baltic states (Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway and Sweden) to consider topics including digitisation, cyber and hybrid security challenges, and the transition to sustainable energy and green economy.⁵⁴ In opening the conference, then-Minister of Communications, Climate Action and Environment, Richard Bruton, TD highlighted the importance of collaboration in the face of the global climate emergency:

It is only by working together that countries can deliver the changes needed. Common targets, collective action, shared learning and collaborative innovation are needed to tackle what is the biggest challenge of this generation – climate disruption. Ireland has a pathway forward with our Climate Action Plan, which will put us on a trajectory to be net zero emissions by 2050. I am looking forward to hearing from those present here today with a view to considering any successful initiatives in the next iteration of the Plan.⁵⁵

Meanwhile, the importance of the close relationship with France was highlighted by the Tánaiste in September, following the death of former French President, Jacques Chirac. Expressing his deep sadness and condolences, Simon Coveney, TD noted:

Ireland and France are linked through culture, history, trade, shared values, and our shared engagement in Europe. The relationship is one of a strong and enduring friendship. Former President Chirac continued that tradition and was a great friend of Ireland. He visited Ireland on several occasions and always sought to cultivate the closest possible ties with this country. Tous nos hommages à un grand ami de l’Irlande.⁵⁶

Conversely, the relationship with Russia remained more challenging. In July, the Tánaiste Simon Coveney, TD visited Moscow for a meeting with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov. The visit combined a desire to ‘further our people to people contacts and continue to support civil society actors’ with a reiteration of Ireland’s support for the five principles that guide EU relations with Russia, namely: full implementation of the Minsk agreements; closer ties with Russia’s former Soviet neighbours; strengthening EU resilience to Russian threats; selective engagement with Russia on certain issues such as counter-terrorism; and support for people-to-people contacts.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ DFAT, ‘Ireland and the Nordic-Baltic 8 Working Together for a Secure, Sustainable and Digital Europe’ (Press Release, 25 October 2019).

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ DFAT, ‘Statement on the Passing of Jacques Chirac’ (News, 26 September 2019). In 2018, Ireland became an Observer at the International Organisation of the Francophonie, and in March and April the Mois de la Francophonie takes place in Ireland to celebrate the French language and diversity in the French-speaking world. See: DFAT, ‘Minister Helen McEntee Launches the Month of La Francophonie 2019’ (News, 26 February 2019).

⁵⁷ DFAT, ‘Tánaiste Simon Coveney Visits Moscow for Meeting with Russian Foreign Minister’ (Press Release, 1 July 2019). See also the statements made by the Tánaiste in support of the criminal proceedings against the suspects in the attack on Malaysian Airlines Flight 17 (MH17) which was downed by a missile above Ukraine in 2014: DFAT, ‘Statement by the Tánaiste on the Investigation into the Downing of Flight MH17’ (Press Release, 21 June 2019).

List of Bilateral Agreements that Entered into Force during 2018

The following is a list of the bilateral agreements that entered into force for Ireland during 2018.⁵⁸

Table 2 List of Bilateral Agreements that Entered into Force during 2018

ITS Number	Title of Agreement
No 1 of 2018	Agreement between Ireland and the Macao Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China for the exchange of Information relating to Tax Matters, done at Macao on 12 September 2016 <i>Notifications of the completion of the procedures necessary for the entry into force of this Agreement exchanged on 24 October 2016 and 6 March 2018, entered into force on 6 March 2018</i>
No 14 of 2018	Agreement between Ireland and the European Organisation for Astronomical Research in the Southern Hemisphere concerning the Accession of Ireland to the European Organisation for Astronomical Research in the Southern Hemisphere, done at Dublin on 26 September 2018 <i>Entered into force with respect to Ireland on 28 September 2018</i>

Consular Services

At the commemoration event to mark the centenary of the first sitting of Dáil Éireann and the Irish foreign service and diplomatic relationships, Minister of State for European Affairs, Helen McEntee, TD noted that the Government's Global Ireland 2025 strategy includes a commitment to significantly increase the number and staffing of Irish diplomatic missions, and the implementation of a one-stop-shop model to bring together diplomatic missions and relevant economic, trade and scientific state agencies in 'Ireland Houses' around the world.⁵⁹

Following the opening of an Embassy in New Zealand, and establishment of a Consulate in Vancouver in 2018, during the first six months of 2019 a further four new Embassies were opened (in Colombia, Chile, Jordan and Liberia), as well as two new Consulates General (in Cardiff and Mumbai).⁶⁰ A further element of the Government's Global Ireland strategy to double the scope and impact of Ireland's global footprint by 2025 took place in September 2019, when DFAT hosted the inaugural conference for Ireland's 75 Honorary Consuls from across the globe.⁶¹

⁵⁸ Details of bilateral agreements that entered into force in 2019 are not yet available.

⁵⁹ DFAT, 'Welcoming Remarks by Minister McEntee on Centenary Commemoration of First Sitting of Dáil Éireann' (Speech, 21 January 2019).

⁶⁰ DFAT, 'Ambassadorial Nominations' (Press Release, 26 June 2019).

⁶¹ DFAT, 'Inaugural Conference of Ireland's Honorary Consuls' (Press Release, 17 September 2019).

Speaking ahead of the conference, the Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Simon Coveney, TD noted:

Whether it's providing consular services; offering assistance in emergency situations; or supporting the Department's economic and trade promotion functions, our Honorary Consuls do invaluable work. Their contribution to the promotion of Ireland's interests and values in the world is deeply appreciated.⁶²

The important role played by Irish Embassies and Consulates is highlighted by the level of passport applications which are processed each year. Over 900,000 Irish passports were issued during 2019, representing a seven per cent increase from 2018 and during peak periods over 5,800 applications were being submitted each day.⁶³ Reflecting the trend of recent years, a significant number of applications were received from Northern Ireland and Great Britain, with over 94,000 first time applications coming from the United Kingdom during 2019. In addition to the applications from the UK, the Embassies and Consulates which received the highest number of applications were New York, Pretoria, Canberra, San Francisco, Abu Dhabi, Ottawa, Sydney, Paris, Chicago and Berlin.

As part of the ongoing modernisation actions, which started with the establishment of online passport applications in 2017, a Customer Service Hub was launched in January 2019 to increase the Passport Service's capacity to process queries. Nearly 100 officers were recruited or reassigned to work in the new unit, which handled up to 10,000 queries per week during 2019. At the Irish CX Impact Awards, which recognise excellence in customer service, the Passport Service won the Impact in Digital award for the development of the online services and the Customer Service Hub was awarded Team of the Year.⁶⁴

Meanwhile, Irish Embassies, Consulates-General and Honorary Consuls provided assistance to 1,723 Irish citizens in distress during 2019, including inter alia, 243 Irish citizens who were arrested abroad, 64 cases of deportation, 13 cases of child abduction, and 268 deaths of Irish citizens abroad.⁶⁵ In addition to Irish citizens being impacted by major incidents such as the political instability in Hong Kong and terrorist attacks in Sri Lanka and Kenya, over 30,000 Irish people travelled to Japan for the Rugby World Cup between September and November 2019. Reflecting this high level of engagement with the consular services, in May the Government launched a four-year consular strategy for 2019–2022. The strategy, 'TravelWise: Staying Safe and Informed while Travelling Abroad', sets out the Department's vision for the development of consular assistance over four years and focuses on services and how citizens can be encouraged to adopt a safer approach to travel. As noted by the Tánaiste, Simon Coveney, TD:

The number of Irish people traveling, working and living abroad is at record levels and with this comes a rising demand for consular assistance. We need to constantly adapt

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ DFAT, '2019 Sets New Record for Irish Passports' (Press Release, 27 December 2019). All figures are from this statement, unless otherwise noted.

⁶⁴ DFAT, 'Passport Service Wins Team of the Year and Impact in Digital Awards at the CX Impact Awards' (Press Release, 8 November 2019).

⁶⁵ DFAT, '2019 Saw 1,700 Cases of Irish Citizens Requesting Consular Assistance Abroad' (Press Release, 1 January 2020).

our consular services to these developments and that is what this consular strategy, our first, aims to do. In the context of Global Ireland 2025, as our network of Embassies and Consulates expands, this strategy also aims to ensure that we maintain the highest standard in the consular services available to our citizens.⁶⁶

The Diaspora

Another of the central planks of the Global Ireland strategy is the development of a new diaspora policy by 2020, to update the first written diaspora policy which was published in 2015.⁶⁷ Building on a visit to Boston to meet with members of the Irish diaspora in February,⁶⁸ then-Minister of State for the Diaspora and International Development, Ciarán Cannon, TD launched a public consultation process for the development of a new diaspora policy in April. A series of public meetings in Galway, Cork, Donegal and Mayo took place between April and July, as well as events in Irish Embassies and Consulates around the world. Commenting on the process, Minister of State Cannon said:

It is of great importance that our new diaspora policy is informed by a wide range of views. Nearly every person in Ireland has experience of emigration in some way and I would like to I invite all interested members of the public to attend our consultation events and to help shape Ireland's future diaspora policy.⁶⁹

The Emigrant Support Programme provides a focal point for government financial support to emigrant communities, the total budget of which increased from €11.59 million in 2018 to €12.59 million in 2019.⁷⁰ In announcing the additional funding, Minister of State Cannon stressed:

That this budget has increased ... is a demonstration of the Government's continuing commitment to the diaspora. This increase is something to be welcomed, and I for one would hope to see this investment built on further in the coming years.⁷¹

Reflecting the ongoing uncertainty and issues arising from Brexit, in October Minister Cannon announced an additional £5.5 million in funding for

⁶⁶ DFAT, 'New Consular Strategy 2019–2022 Launched' (Press Release, 16 May 2019).

⁶⁷ DFAT, 'Global Irish: Ireland's Diaspora Policy' (March 2015). For discussion, see: D Cubie, 'Ireland and International Law 2015' (2017) 10 *Irish Yearbook of International Law* 241–64, 251–52.

⁶⁸ DFAT, 'Minister Ciarán Cannon Visits Boston for Diaspora Consultations' (Press Release, 11 February 2019).

⁶⁹ DFAT, 'Minister of State Ciarán Cannon Announces Public Consultation Process Ireland's New Diaspora Policy' (Press Release, 3 April 2019).

⁷⁰ As noted by the DFAT, the main focus for funding under the Emigrant Support Programme is the frontline welfare service providers that support elderly Irish emigrants, and other vulnerable members of our communities worldwide. More recently, the programme has also recognised the importance of strong and active Irish communities more generally, funding projects which foster a sense of community, promote vibrant networks and a sense of Irishness among the Irish abroad.

⁷¹ DFAT, 'Minister Cannon Announces an Extra €1 Million in ESP Funding for Irish Communities Abroad' (Press Release, 6 March 2019).

over 100 Irish organisations in Britain under the Emigrant Support Programme. As noted by Minister Cannon,

It is my hope that this funding will assist in the provision of a vibrant and active Irish community in Britain whose contribution the Government values very highly and who have an important role to play in the context of Ireland's evolving relationship with the UK.⁷²

In recognition of the two-way migration flows from and to Ireland which many emigrants undertake, a new online information resource for returning Irish emigrants was established in August by the Citizens' Information Board (CIB) and DFAT. The 'Returning to Ireland' pages on the CIB website provide practical information on Irish public services aimed specifically at people returning to live in Ireland to help during their transition to Ireland on matters such as how the Irish taxation system works, how to get an Irish driving licence or get a passport for a child born abroad. As noted by Minister Cannon,

I am keenly aware that returning to Ireland from abroad can be a challenging experience. This is why the Government is committed to making this process as smooth as possible by ensuring that, as a first step, people thinking about making the move have access to comprehensive, detailed and accurate information.⁷³

FOREIGN CONFLICTS AND INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM

As in previous years, the Government responded diplomatically to a range of armed attacks from state- and non-state actors and conflicts during 2019. The year started with an attack in Bogotá, Colombia, which prompted the Tánaiste Simon Coveney, TD to reiterate that 'Ireland is a strong supporter of the Colombian peace process, and we will continue to stand behind the Colombian people, and the Government of Colombia, as they strive to achieve lasting peace in their country.'⁷⁴ The Tánaiste also expressed concern regarding a suicide bombing in Kashmir and increasing tension between Pakistan and India in March 2019. The Tánaiste noted:

... the situation must be immediately de-escalated and peacefully resolved, to the satisfaction of both countries, as quickly as possible. Ireland will always work with the international community to promote peace and reconciliation, as the impact of violence and conflict on people and societies can be devastating.⁷⁵

⁷² DFAT, 'Minister of State Ciarán Cannon, T.D. Announces over £5.5 million in Emigrant Support Programme Funding to the Irish Community in Britain' (Press Release, 22 October 2019).

⁷³ DFAT, 'Minister Cannon Announces New Online Information Resource for Returning Irish Emigrants' (Press Release, 22 August 2019). See also: DFAT, 'Call for Applications for Back for Business Programme Launched by Minister Ciarán Cannon T.D.' (Press Release, 11 November 2019).

⁷⁴ DFAT, 'Statement by Tánaiste Simon Coveney T.D. on the Terrorist Attack in Bogotá' (Press Release, 18 January 2019).

⁷⁵ DFAT, 'Statement from Tánaiste Simon Coveney on Pakistan-India Relations' (Press Release, 3 March 2019). See also: DFAT, 'Statement on the Terrorist Attack in Jammu and Kashmir's Pulwama District' (News, 19 February 2019).

2019 also marked the 25th year since the Rwandan Genocide in 1994, and the Tánaiste expressed solidarity with the Rwandan people and noted that the commemoration ‘reminds us of the consequences of hate speech and division based on ethnicity. It is a reminder of the responsibility of the international community to protect all peoples from genocide and crimes against humanity.’⁷⁶

Freedom of religion and beliefs were challenged on numerous occasions during 2019. For example, the Tánaiste unreservedly condemned the terrorist attacks on two mosques during Friday prayers in Christchurch, New Zealand in March 2019, and he stated:

There can be no justification for acts of violence and discrimination based on religion or beliefs ... Freedom of religious expression is a cornerstone of any functioning democracy and those rights must be guaranteed for all citizens. Ireland will continue to stand in solidarity with all the people of New Zealand.⁷⁷

Likewise, the Tánaiste condemned attacks on churches and hotels in Sri Lanka in April, stating:

I am shocked at the appalling attacks on innocent civilians this morning in Sri Lanka. No political or other cause can justify or excuse the bombing of people at worship or simply going about their daily lives. I express my sympathy to the families of those who have been killed and my support to those who have been injured. On behalf of the government of Ireland I also express our solidarity with the people and government of Sri Lanka at this tremendously difficult time. Ireland strongly supports everyone’s freedom of religion and belief. Attacks such as those in Sri Lanka today and in Christchurch and elsewhere are a challenge to us all to do everything that we can to defend that right. Places of worship must be places of peace, free from fear.⁷⁸

Closer to home, the threat posed to journalists and freedom of expression was starkly highlighted by the murder of Lyra McKee in April while she was reporting on rioting in the Creggan area of Derry.⁷⁹

Responding to the interconnected conflicts in the Middle East was another theme of 2019, not least due to the extensive peacekeeping commitment which the Irish state has provided in the region over the past 40 years. In March, the Government reiterated its position in regards to the Golan Heights, with the Tánaiste stating:

Ireland regards the Golan Heights as Syrian territory under Israeli occupation. The Government has no plans to alter that position. Annexation of territory by force is prohibited under international law, including the UN Charter. This is a fundamental principle of the relation of states and the rule of law in the modern world. Our view of the behaviour

⁷⁶ DFAT, ‘Statement by the Tánaiste on the 25th Commemoration of the Rwanda Genocide’ (Statement, 7 April 2019).

⁷⁷ DFAT, ‘Statement by Tánaiste Simon Coveney T.D. on Attacks in New Zealand’ (Press Release, 15 March 2019).

⁷⁸ DFAT, ‘Tánaiste Simon Coveney Condemns Attacks in Sri Lanka’ (Press Release, 21 April 2019).

⁷⁹ DFAT, ‘Statement by Tánaiste on the Death of Lyra McKee’ (Press Release, 19 April 2019). See also: ‘“New IRA” Admits Killing Journalist Lyra McKee’ (*RTE News*, 23 April 2019). Available at: www.rte.ie/news/ulster/2019/0423/1045047-lyra-mckee/. See further the report on ‘Human Rights in Northern Ireland 2019’ in this volume.

of the current Syrian government does not negate this principle. Israeli annexation, and recognition of it, also ignore the wishes of the inhabitants of the area.⁸⁰

Likewise, in early April, the Tánaiste made a statement regarding the construction of Israeli settlements in the West Bank:

I condemn the latest reported decisions by the Israeli authorities to advance plans and tenders for further settlement construction in the West Bank. The great majority of these plans and permissions relate to areas deep within the West Bank. Continued expansion of settlements in these areas is not compatible with a good faith effort to reach a peace agreement, and adds to the concerns raised by election promises in recent days to annex lands in the West Bank.⁸¹

The Tánaiste also unequivocally condemned the rocket fire from Gaza in early May: ‘I call for an end to indiscriminate attacks on civilians and for restraint in terms of the Israeli response, which has already led to several deaths in Gaza.’⁸² Meanwhile, following reports of the demolition of civilian houses in the Sur Bahir area of Jerusalem, the Tánaiste issued the following statement:

I strongly condemn this morning’s demolitions in Sur Bahir. Regrettably, once again we are seeing Israeli authorities evict members of a population which should be under their protection. The practice of demolitions and forced evictions is contrary to Israel’s obligations under International Law. These actions cause further suffering to ordinary Palestinians, destroying their livelihoods. It is particularly concerning that most of the demolished properties are in Areas A and B, in which, even by Israeli practice, it is for the Palestinian Authority to grant permission for development. Ireland stands by the long-standing and agreed parameters of a two-state solution. I am closely following developments and call on Israel to halt plans for any further demolitions in Sur Bahir.⁸³

The ongoing conflict in Syria also occupied considerable challenges during 2019. In particular, the decision by Turkey to conduct military operations in north-eastern Syria in October. Reflecting concerns that Turkey was targeting Kurdish forces who had been fighting against ISIS and the Assad regime in Syria, the Tánaiste stated:

I am deeply troubled by Turkey’s announcement earlier today of the launching of a military operation in north-eastern Syria. The fight against ISIS made decisive progress earlier this year. Any unilateral military action against those groups which played a decisive frontline role in the fight against ISIS risks undermining this progress. Such action could also lead to further protracted instability and have serious humanitarian consequences. We urge Turkey to refrain from this action. While we understand Turkey’s security concerns about its own territory, unilateral military action cannot be condoned. The protection of civilians and respect for international humanitarian law must be paramount and any refugee returns must be voluntary, safe and dignified.⁸⁴

⁸⁰ DFAT, ‘Statement by the Tánaiste on Ireland’s Position on the Golan Heights’ (Statement, 25 March 2019).

⁸¹ DFAT, ‘Statement on Settlement Construction in the West Bank’ (Press Release, 8 April 2019).

⁸² DFAT, ‘Statement by the Tánaiste on the Situation in the Middle East’ (Press Release, 5 May 2019).

⁸³ DFAT, ‘Tánaiste Statement on Demolitions in Sur Bahir Area of the Jerusalem Governorate’ (Statement, 22 July 2019).

⁸⁴ DFAT, ‘Tánaiste’s Statement on Situation in North-Eastern Syria’ (Statement, 9 October 2019).

Two days later, following a meeting with the Turkish Ambassador to Ireland and officials from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Tánaiste reiterated Ireland's deep concern at the unilateral military action by Turkey in north east Syria and called on Turkey to cease unilateral military action and fully abide by humanitarian principles.⁸⁵ Consequently, Ireland supported the EU decision to suspend arms exports to Turkey and again stressed that respect for international humanitarian law and unhindered humanitarian access was vital.⁸⁶ Separately, in response to Turkey's continued illegal drilling activity in Cyprus' Exclusive Economic Zone, EU Foreign Ministers agreed a framework regime of restrictive measures, or sanctions, in respect of persons responsible for or involved in illegal drilling activity in the Eastern Mediterranean. The Tánaiste noted that 'Ireland and the EU stand in full solidarity with Cyprus and call on Turkey to respect its sovereignty and sovereign rights in accordance with international law.'⁸⁷

Meanwhile, following a missile attack on a migrant detention centre in Tajoura, Libya in early July which killed at least 40 refugees and migrants, and injured dozens more, the Tánaiste joined calls from the EU and the UN for an investigation into the attack, and called on all parties to allow unconditional access for humanitarian actors. The Tánaiste stressed that

'Attacks on civilians, or reckless attacks which endanger them, are completely unacceptable, are contrary to international humanitarian law, and in this instance may well constitute a war crime. This tragic event underlines the fact that the system of detention centres in Libya is completely unsuitable for migrants, and puts them at risk. My thoughts are with the injured, and the families of those who lost their lives.'⁸⁸

Likewise, in September the Tánaiste condemned as a 'worrying escalation in an already tense region' the sophisticated drone attack on two oil facilities in Saudi Arabia, owned by the state-run company Aramco, by suspected Yemeni Houthi rebels. The Tánaiste continued: 'This attack on civilian infrastructure has endangered civilians and threatens regional security. It is important that the facts are established. Ireland supports the EU's call on all parties to show restraint and work towards de-escalation of the situation.'⁸⁹

Meanwhile, on a more positive note, in August the Tánaiste welcomed the signature of the Mozambique Peace Agreement and stated: 'Ireland is proud to support Mozambique's peace process through the contribution of professional expertise by the Defence Forces to the Joint Technical Group for Disarmament, Demobilisation

⁸⁵ DFAT, 'Tánaiste Updated Statement on Situation in North-Eastern Syria' (Statement, 11 October 2019).

⁸⁶ DFAT, 'EU Member States Agree Unanimously to Suspend Arms Exports to Turkey' (Statement, 14 October 2019).

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ DFAT, 'Statement on Missile Attack in Libya' (Press Release, 3 July 2019). See also: Sally Hayden, 'Libyan Detention Centre Survivors Condemn EU and UN after Air Strike' *The Irish Times* (3 July 2019). Available at: www.irishtimes.com/news/world/middle-east/libyan-detention-centre-survivors-condemn-eu-and-un-after-air-strike-1.3945141.

⁸⁹ DFAT, 'Statement on Drone Attacks in Saudi Arabia' (Statement, 16 September 2019). See also: 'Saudi Arabia "Ready to Respond" over Oil Field Attack' *RTE News*, 15 September 2019). Available at: www.rte.ie/news/world/2019/0915/1076002-saudi-arabia/.

and Reintegration.’ Minister with Special Responsibility for Defence, Paul Kehoe, TD also noted:

Ireland’s substantial contribution to international peace support operations depends on the readiness of Defence Forces personnel to serve overseas in often difficult and dangerous circumstances. Colonel Hathaway [*Ireland’s representative on the Joint Technical Group*] should be very proud of his contribution to this process, serving the cause of international peace and security in the best traditions of our Defence Forces.⁹⁰

PEACE SUPPORT OPERATIONS

As set out in the Department of Defence and Irish Defence Forces Annual Report for 2019, within Ireland there are two key forms of defence organisations: the civilian component, such as the Office of Emergency Planning and the Civil Defence; and the military component comprised of the Defence Forces (Army, Naval Service and Air Corps). The White Paper on Defence was published in July 2015 to provide a strategic and comprehensive defence policy framework for the period up to 2025. As planned, the first update on implementation of the White Paper was published in December 2019 to provide ‘a fully updated assessment of the security environment with a fresh consideration of implications for overall policy requirements, associated tasks, capability development and resourcing’.⁹¹ At the national level, activities include the development and implementation of the defence policy and input into the state’s overarching security framework, as well as preparation and response to natural and human-made hazards.⁹² For example, the 2019 Update notes that: ‘The possibility of a pandemic, caused by influenza and other diseases, remains an ongoing concern with the potential to cause serious disruption to society’.⁹³ As regards Ireland’s commitments to supporting international peace and security, the Annual Report 2019 sets out the key activities which this entails:

The defence policy framework also encompasses, in collaboration with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, defence inputs to the maintenance of global and regional peace and security, including the ongoing development of the EU’s Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), Ireland’s support for multilateralism and collective security through participation in United Nations authorised peace support and crisis management operations, our engagement in NATO’s Partnership for Peace and support to the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE).⁹⁴

⁹⁰ DFAT, ‘Tánaiste Simon Coveney Welcomes Signing of Mozambique Peace Agreement’ (Press Release, 8 August 2019).

⁹¹ Government of Ireland, *White Paper on Defence: Update 2019* (December 2019) 9.

⁹² For example, in 2019, Civil Defence volunteers undertook a total of 2,135 operations. These included support to the Principal Response Agencies (An Garda Síochána, local authorities and the Health Service Executive) as well as at community, sporting, cultural and charitable organisations. At the end of 2019, there were 3,307 active volunteers in Civil Defence. See: Department of Defence and Irish Defence Forces, ‘Annual Report 2019’, 19.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 35. Note that this statement was made prior to the identification of the global COVID-19 pandemic.

⁹⁴ Annual Report 2019 (n 92) 7.

At the end of 2019, the Irish Permanent Defence Forces (PDF) amounted to 8,659 personnel, comprised of 7,002 Army, 936 Navy personnel and 721 Air Corps.⁹⁵ Of these personnel, 598 were women (501 Army personnel, 63 Naval Service personnel and 34 Air Corps personnel), representing 6.9 per cent of the overall strength of the PDF. However, recent years have seen challenges in the recruitment and retention of personnel within the Irish Defence Forces. For example, in 2016 there were 9,126 PDF personnel – a fall of 467 personnel in three years. In contrast, the staffing target set by the Government is 9,500 personnel across the three services. Retention appears to be an ongoing issue; while there were 605 new personnel recruited into the PDF in 2019, there were 878 departures.

In addition to the PDF, the Reserve Defence Force (RDF) consists of the First Line Reserve (FLR), the Army Reserve (AR) and the Naval Service Reserve (NSR). The primary role of the RDF is to augment the PDF in crisis situations and to contribute to state ceremonial events. The FLR is comprised of former members of the PDF who have undertaken to complete a period of service in the FLR. At the end of 2019, the strength of the FLR was 304 personnel; comprising of 164 Army, 114 Naval Service and 26 Air Corps. The AR and NSR are comprised of individuals, from a broad variety of backgrounds, who have voluntarily committed to complete a period of military service. At the end of 2019, the effective strengths of the AR and NSR were 1,534 and 139 personnel respectively.⁹⁶ As of 31 December 2019, the numbers of female personnel (effective) serving in the AR and NSR were 201 and 22 respectively, equating to 13.1 per cent in the AR and 15.8 per cent in the NSR, both of which are considerably higher than the 6.9 per cent of females serving in full-time roles in the PDF.

During 2019, 1,785 members of the PDF served overseas in various missions. Over the course of 2019, the largest Defence Forces deployment was with UNIFIL in South Lebanon where 338 personnel were deployed where, during 2019, the Irish Defence Forces partnered with Poland and the Armed Services of Malta. An additional 138 personnel were deployed as a Disengagement Observer Force in the Golan Heights (UNDOF), and Brigadier General Maureen O'Brien took up the appointment of Deputy Force Commander, UNDOF in September 2019. In September 2019, the Defence Forces also commenced its first deployment to the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali (MINUSMA).⁹⁷ Meanwhile, although the Naval Service contribution to rescue at sea in the Mediterranean ended in October 2018, three personnel were working in the Operational HQ of the EU Naval Force Mediterranean (EUNAVFOR-MED) in Rome during 2019. The mission's strategic objective is to disrupt organised criminal networks involved in illicit activities, including smuggling of migrants, human trafficking and terrorism.

⁹⁵ All figures from *ibid*, 44.

⁹⁶ Although in accordance with the White Paper on Defence, the strength of the AR should be 3,869 personnel while the NSR should be 200.

⁹⁷ Irish Defence Forces, 'Defence Forces Year in Review 2019' (Press Release, 30 December 2019).

In April 2019, the Naval Vessel LÉ George Bernard Shaw was commissioned into service, following a naming and commissioning ceremony held in Waterford which the then-Taoiseach, Leo Varadkar, attended.⁹⁸

Since figures for the years 2017 and 2018 were not available at the time of publishing this correspondent's report in the past two volumes of this *Yearbook*, the overall total commitment of Irish Defence Forces personnel deployed on Peace Support Operations during the years 2017–2019 is set out in the following table:⁹⁹

Table 3 Peace Support Operations 2017–2019

Missions ¹⁰⁰	01 Jan 17	31 Dec 17	01 Jan 18	31 Dec 18	01 Jan 19	31 Dec 19
UN-led operations						
UNTSO (Middle East)	12	12	12	12	12	9
MINURSO (Western Sahara)	3	3	3	3	3	3
MONUSCO (Democratic Republic of Congo)	4	4	4	4	4	3
UNOCI (Côte d'Ivoire)	1	0	0	0	0	0
UNIFIL HQ (Lebanon)	30	30	30	9	9	9
UNIFIL Infantry Battalion (Lebanon)	341	341	341	443	443	340
UNIFIL Sector West HQ (Lebanon)	8	8	8	8	8	8
UNDOF Infantry Group (Golan Heights)	130	130	130	130	130	129
UNDOF HQ (Golan Heights)	6	6	6	8	8	8
MINUSMA (Mali)	0	0	0	0	0	13
<i>Sub-total (UN)</i>	535	534	534	617	617	522

(continued)

⁹⁸ Department of Defence, 'Naming and Commissioning Ceremony of the New Naval Service Vessel L.É. George Bernard Shaw' (Press Release, 29 April 2019).

⁹⁹ Annual Report 2019 (n 92) 44.

¹⁰⁰ Not including Naval Service vessel deployments to the Mediterranean for the years 2017 and 2018.

Missions	01 Jan 17	31 Dec 17	01 Jan 18	31 Dec 18	01 Jan 19	31 Dec 19
EU-led operations						
EUFOR (Bosnia & Herzegovina)	7	5	5	5	5	5
German-led Battlegroup 2016	10	0	0	0	0	0
UK-led Battlegroup 2016	5	0	0	0	0	0
German-led Battlegroup 2020	0	0	0	0	0	10
EUTM Mali	18	20	20	20	20	19
Operations HQ/ Floating HQ (Operation Sophia HQ)	0	3	3	5	5	3
<i>Sub-total (UN Mandated Missions)</i>	40	28	28	30	30	37
NATO-led operations						
KFOR HQ	12	12	12	12	12	13
<i>Sub-total (NATO/PfP)</i>	12	12	12	12	12	13
OSCE-led operations						
OSCE	2	1	1	1	1	1
<i>Sub-total (OSCE)</i>	2	1	1	1	1	1
Military Reps/Advisors/Staff Postings						
UNNY (New York)	1	1	1	1	1	1
EUMS (Brussels)	4	4	4	5	5	6
NATO/PfP (Belgium)	5	5	5	5	5	6
Irish delegation to OSCE (Vienna)	1	1	1	1	1	1
CSDP/PSC (Brussels) ¹⁰¹	9	8	8	11	11	8
<i>Sub-total (Military Reps/Advisors/Staff)</i>	20	19	19	23	23	22
Total Personnel Overseas	609	594	594	683	683	595

¹⁰¹ Both civil and military staff from the Defence Organisation are deployed to CSDP/PSC offices in Brussels.

OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT AID AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

There was reasonable growth of Irish Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) in 2018¹⁰² – from €743.42 million in 2017 to €791.63 million in 2018, representing a 6.5 per cent increase. However, as a percentage of Irish Gross National Product (GNP), this actually equated to a marginal fall from 0.32 per cent to 0.31 per cent due to the overall increase in the country’s economy. This follows a period of three years when the total percentage had stagnated at 0.32 per cent. This remains less than the proportion given in 2001 (0.33 per cent) and is significantly lower than the high of 0.59 per cent in 2008,¹⁰³ despite the Government’s long-standing commitment to achieve the UN target of spending 0.7 per cent of Gross National Income (GNI*)¹⁰⁴ on ODA by 2030. This commitment was reiterated as part of the Government’s bid for a seat on the UN Security Council for 2021–22.¹⁰⁵ The breakdown of Irish ODA for the period 2013–2018 is set out in the following table:

Table 4 Irish ODA for Period 2013–2018

Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Total ODA Budget (€ millions)	637.10	614.86	647.56	725.78	743.42	791.63
% of GNP	0.46	0.39	0.32	0.32	0.32	0.31

As part of the broader Global Ireland strategy 2025, in February the Government launched ‘A Better World: Ireland’s New Policy for International Development’, which aimed to realign Ireland’s development focus onto gender equality, climate action, good governance and combatting poverty. As stated by An Taoiseach Leo Varadkar, TD at the launch of the policy:

I believe in an Ireland that is at the centre of the world, an economy open to trade and investment, a committed member of the European Union and the United Nations, a country committed to peace, human rights and multilateralism. Our commitment to continue to increase funding for International Development as part of the Global Ireland programme is central to realising this vision. But it’s not just about money. It’s about outcomes. So we have chosen to focus on a few areas in which we believe we can make a real difference including gender equality, governance, climate action and reducing humanitarian need.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰² The equivalent figures for 2019 are not yet available.

¹⁰³ All figures come from the ‘Irish Aid Annual Report 2018’ (published in November 2019) 66–68. Note that Irish Aid reports on the basis of GNP, not GNI*.

¹⁰⁴ As explained by the Central Statistics Office (CSO): ‘GNI* is designed to be a supplementary measure of the level of the Irish economy and excludes globalisation effects related to highly mobile economic activities that disproportionately impact upon the measurement of the size of the Irish economy.’ See: CSO, ‘Information Notice – Modified Gross National Income at Current and Constant Market Prices’ (July 2019). Available at: www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/in/nie/in-mgnicp/.

¹⁰⁵ DFAT, ‘Tánaiste Simon Coveney Addresses the Human Rights Council’ (n 45). See also: DFAT, ‘“A Better World”, Ireland’s New Policy for International Development’ (Press Release, 28 February 2019).

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, DFAT, ‘A Better World’.

Reflecting the priorities set out in the new policy, in February the then-Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, Katherine Zappone, TD announced Ireland's renewed commitment to ending the global epidemics of AIDS, TB and malaria by increasing the Government's annual contribution to the Global Fund to fight these epidemics by 50 per cent.¹⁰⁷ Ireland also continued its support for the humanitarian response to the long-running conflict in Syria, by pledging an additional €25 million in funding at the Brussels conference on 'Supporting the Future of Syria and the Region' in March. At the conference, the Tánaiste, Simon Coveney, TD reiterated the Irish position, namely:

The roots of this humanitarian tragedy lie in conflict, and it is vital to bring this conflict to a close. Ireland fully supports the work of the UN Special Envoy and his efforts to bring an end to conflict, based on the 2012 Geneva Communiqué and UN Security Council Resolution 2254. We need a long term, sustainable solution to this conflict.¹⁰⁸

Likewise, following the cancellation of US funding for the UN Relief Works Agency in Palestine (UNRWA) announced by US President Trump in September 2018,¹⁰⁹ the Irish Government reiterated its support for the work of the UN agency. While not referencing the US decision explicitly, in announcing an additional €5 million funding for UNRWA in June 2019, the Tánaiste noted:

Ireland is a longstanding supporter of UNRWA. Its work is essential to the delivery of healthcare, education and humanitarian relief and social services, including food assistance, to 5.4 million Palestine refugees. The ongoing conflict in the Middle East region has meant an increased demand for UNRWA's services ... Today's announcement of €5 million in core funding for UNRWA reflects Ireland's abiding commitment to the vital work of UNRWA. The services that UNRWA provides are necessary, and will remain necessary, until a lasting solution to the Israeli/Palestinian conflict can be negotiated that meets the needs of both parties and resolves all final status issues.¹¹⁰

The funding for UNRWA followed the establishment of a specific scholarship programme for Palestinians under the Irish Aid Fellowship scheme in February 2019,¹¹¹ and a subsequent visit by the Tánaiste to Israel and Palestine in December 2019 at which he stated:

This is my fourth trip to Israel and Palestine as Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade. This reflects the importance I attach to the Middle East Peace Process, and the high priority that the Government and the Irish people continue to give to this issue. During the visit I will meet with a range of Israeli and Palestinian political leaders and representatives of UN agencies. I will use this opportunity to discuss how Ireland can support efforts towards a durable two state solution to the conflict, and to convey clearly and firmly Ireland's

¹⁰⁷ DFAT, 'Ireland Announces a Commitment to Increase Funding to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria' (Press Release, 9 February 2019).

¹⁰⁸ DFAT, 'Ireland Pledges €25 million to the Syria Crisis in 2019' (Press Release, 14 March 2019).

¹⁰⁹ Michael Jansen, 'Palestinian Refugees may Suffer Terrible Toll after US Cancels Funding' *The Irish Times* (3 September 2018). Available at: www.irishtimes.com/news/world/middle-east/palestinian-refugees-may-suffer-terrible-toll-after-us-cancels-funding-1.3616813.

¹¹⁰ DFAT, 'Tánaiste Announces Funding of €5m for the Palestinian People' (News, 26 June 2019).

¹¹¹ DFAT, 'Tánaiste Announces Launch of Ireland-Palestine Scholarship Programme' (Press Release, 11 February 2019).

concerns about the impact of the occupation, including in relation to settlement activity and the blockade of Gaza. I will also have the opportunity to visit an UNRWA school, and see how Irish Aid support for UNRWA is helping to ensure that Palestinian children, including girls, receive an education.¹¹²

Following the announcement of additional funding for UNRWA in June 2019, the Government confirmed the ongoing provision of core funding for the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). During a visit by UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi, to Dublin on 10–11 July, the Tánaiste announced €9 million in core funding for UNHCR, which increased the annual funding provided by Ireland to UNHCR to €15.5 million for 2019. As noted by the Tánaiste:

Refugees, often displaced by violent conflict or the impact of climate change, are among the most vulnerable. Remembering the generosity of those who helped Irish refugees and migrants in difficult times, Ireland is proud to support UNHCR in its efforts to provide vital assistance to refugees, to offer protection, and to try to find durable solutions.¹¹³

During his visit, the High Commissioner met President Michael D Higgins, the Taoiseach Leo Varadkar, the Tánaiste Simon Coveney, then-Minister for Justice and Equality Charles Flanagan, and then-Minister of State for International Development and the Diaspora Ciarán Cannon.

In April, the Irish humanitarian community lost a key figure, with the death of Sally O’Neill Sanchez in a car crash in Guatemala. The CEO of Trócaire, Caoimhe de Barra, expressed ‘profound shock and devastation’ at the news and noted ‘Sally was the heartbeat of Trócaire for almost 40 years. She was a truly remarkable person’.¹¹⁴ The Tánaiste also expressed his condolences and stated:

With her sad passing, Ireland and the countries where she had such a significant impact have lost a dedicated defender of human rights and equality for all. I would like to extend my deepest sympathy to Sally’s family at this most difficult time.¹¹⁵

The devastating impact of natural hazards was evident following Cyclone Idai which hit southern Africa, in particular Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Malawi, in March. Over 1.7 million people were affected by the cyclone, and as a result of flooding over 500,000 people lost their homes in Mozambique alone. The Irish Government responded by announcing more than €1 million in funding for the victims of the cyclone, and Minister of State for the Diaspora and International Development Ciarán Cannon, TD stressed:

Cyclone Idai is among the worst weather-related disasters ever experienced in Africa. Our collective response to what the UN has called an unprecedented disaster, will be crucial over the coming days in order to minimize the loss of life. I welcome the rapid allocation

¹¹² DFAT, ‘Tánaiste Visits Israel and Palestine’ (Press Release, 2 December 2019).

¹¹³ DFAT, ‘Tánaiste Welcomes the Visit of UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi & Announces Funding’ (Press Release, 11 July 2019).

¹¹⁴ Conall Ó Fátharta, “‘Heartbeat of Trócaire’ Sally O’Neill Sanchez Dies in Crash’ *Irish Examiner* (9 April 2019). Available at www.irishexaminer.com/news/arid-30916446.html.

¹¹⁵ DFAT, ‘Statement of Condolences by the Tánaiste on the Death of Sally O’Neill Sanchez’ (Statement, 8 April 2019).

of \$20 million from the UN's Central Emergency Response Fund, which will help those affected meet their immediate basic needs. Irish Embassies in Mozambique and Malawi are working with partners on the ground in response to this crisis, while the Embassy of Ireland in Pretoria is monitoring the effects of the crisis in Zimbabwe, through its office in Harare.¹¹⁶

In advance of the tenth anniversary of the Haitian earthquake of January 2010, in July 2019 the Government published a review of Irish Aid's emergency response to the earthquake.¹¹⁷ The assessment reviewed the rationale and efficiency of the €13.2 million in Irish Government funding provided between 2010–2012 to a variety of Haitian, UN and international organisations. The review concluded that the initial response was largely timely and efficient, and was facilitated by the pre-positioning of funding; stockpiling of emergency supplies; maintenance of a Rapid Response Corps; and funding to specialist and experienced organisations. However, the review also noted that divisions emerged between the internationally-led and Haitian-led recovery efforts. Areas identified for improvement in future responses to sudden onset emergencies included:

- Appraisal and approval processes for grant applications could be shorter.
- Partner accountability mechanisms could be strengthened.
- A strategic review of Irish Aid's approach should be undertaken on a regular basis to ensure that it continues to respond to emergent changes in the local context.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁶ DFAT, 'Tánaiste and Minister Cannon Announce more than €1 million in Funding in Response to Cyclone Idai' (Press Release, 22 March 2019). See also: International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), 'Revised Emergency Appeal, Mozambique: Tropical Cyclone Idai' (25 March 2019).

¹¹⁷ DFAT, 'Review of Irish Aid's Emergency Response to the Haiti Earthquake in 2010' (July 2019). For another recent example of a publicly available programme review from Irish Aid, see: DFAT, 'Evaluation of the Irish Aid Local Development Programme in Northern Province, Zambia: 2007–2016' (July 2018).

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 6, 41–42.