

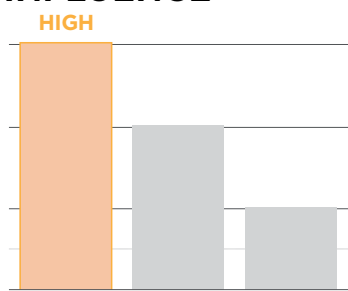
# Women's role in Northern Ireland's Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement (1996-1998)



## BACKGROUND ON THE BELFAST (GOOD FRIDAY) AGREEMENT

**The Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement** ended more than three decades of conflict. The Agreement instituted a power-sharing arrangement, comprising a legislative assembly with a cross-party executive and a series of cross-party committees, and set up mechanisms for North-South (Northern Ireland and Ireland) cooperation and East-West cooperation (UK and Ireland). However, the Agreement enshrined political divisions in Northern Ireland, and Northern Irish politics remains highly polarized, with repeated suspensions of the power-sharing arrangement.

## WOMEN'S INFLUENCE



## WOMEN'S INCLUSION IN THE PROCESS

### Northern Ireland Forum for Political Dialogue (1996-98)



• **15 out of 110** members elected to the forum (2 Northern Ireland Women's Coalition Delegates)

Consultative forum and mechanism to select delegates to talks

### Multiparty Talks (1996-98)

Mandate: agree relationships and arrangements within Northern Ireland, and with and between London and Dublin

• **5 women delegates**  
(2 NIWC delegates, 1 Sinn Féin, 1 UK Government, 1 Irish Government)

### Referendum

22 May 1998 to ratify the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement



• NIWC campaign for Yes vote (71% voted yes)

### Post-agreement Commissions

#### Independent Commission on Policing (1998-99)



• **2 women out of 8** members  
• Numerous consultations involving women's groups

#### Independent International Commission on Decommissioning (1997-2010)

0 women

#### Independent Monitoring Commission (2003-11)

0 women

## WOMEN'S ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE PROCESS

- ➔ Securing the participation of a dedicated women's caucus – the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition (NIWC) – in the track 1 negotiations
- ➔ Facilitation, which advanced the talks
- ➔ The inclusion of language and provisions on equal opportunity, women's rights to equal political participation, social inclusion, reconciliation and the needs of victims of violence, and integrated education and mixed housing
- ➔ Provisions to create the Civic Forum, the Human Rights Commission, and the Equality Commission
- ➔ Key role in the "Yes" campaign for ratification
- ➔ The role of the NIWC served as a catalyst for improving women's political representation

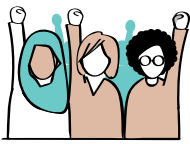
### + FACTORS ENABLING WOMEN'S INFLUENCE



Communication and advocacy strategies



Coalition building



Support from existing women's groups



Preparedness



Funding



Mediators' support

### - FACTORS CONSTRAINING WOMEN'S INFLUENCE



Attitudes of political parties



Societal attitudes



Low public buy-in



Heterogeneity of women's identities

This infographic is based on a case study published by the Inclusive Peace & Transition Initiative (IPTI) as part of the series "Women in Peace and Transition Processes" that analyzes the conditions under which women participated in and influenced peace, political reform, and constitution-making processes worldwide. To discover other infographics and our case study series, visit our website: [www.inclusivepeace.org](http://www.inclusivepeace.org)

This infographic was commissioned by UN Women through funding from the Federal Republic of Germany.

IPTI is an initiative of:



**IPTI, Graduate Institute**  
**Maison de la Paix**  
**Chemin Eugène-Rigot 2**  
**1202 Genève**

@InclusivePeace