



The Association of Mixed Race Irish

The Association of Mixed Race Irish
(AMRI)
41 Raymond Avenue
London W13 9UY
United Kingdom
14 February 2024

Office of the United Nations
High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)
Palais Wilson
52 rue des Pâquis
CH-1201 Geneva,
Switzerland

**IRELAND - Implementation of the programme of activities of the
International Decade for People of African Descent**

Dear Sir Madam,

Further to the call for information on the above subject matter, due by 15 April 2024, please note a summary of the key points affecting people of African Irish descent, who were detained in Irish childcare institutions in Ireland.

Yours sincerely

Conrad Bryan

Director
The Association of Mixed Race Irish



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IRELAND - Implementation of the programme of activities of the International Decade for People of African Descent

1. Recognition

- a. Education on equality and awareness-raising

We welcome Ireland's new *International Decade for People of African Decent Fund*,¹ which set up a fund of €169,740 made available for projects to host events to mark and celebrate the International Decade for People of African Descent. The Association of Mixed Race Irish was successful in its application for the maximum amount of €5,000. This was used to hold an event at the EPIC Emigrant Museum in Dublin on 19th January 2024, called The Search for African Identities. Both women and men as well as families (boys and girls, i.e. the children) are affected by this issue relating to searching for last African fathers and families. The venue was filled to capacity with 80 people attending. This fund is the first its kind, but has come very late in the Decade (in the last year). It covered three themes: *Recognition, Celebration and Enrichment*. **We believe the fund should be continued annually and be significantly increased in amounts. Also, it should include aspects and projects connected with Justice and Development, in line with the three UN themes of: *Recognition, Justice and Development*.**

- b. Information-gathering

We believe **there is not enough disaggregated data**, publicly available, about children of African descent placed in the childcare and penal detention system, as well as the numbers of fostering and adoption placements in Ireland by ethnicity. Ireland should follow the lead of England in this regard.² This information is necessary to enable us to monitor the number of girls and boys detained in the Irish carceral system.

2. Justice

- a. Access to justice

- i. On 23 September 2022 UN Special Procedures (WGPAD and UN experts) issued a Statement³ calling on Ireland to provide remedies to children of African Irish descent (which includes women), for system racism and racial discrimination they were subjected to while detained as children in Irish childcare institutions. The State passed

¹ See: <https://www.gov.ie/en/press-release/94463-minister-joe-obrien-announces-35-projects-to-be-funded-under-the-international-decade-for-people-of-african-descent-funding-call>

² See examples here: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/children-looked-after-in-england-including-adoptions>

³ See: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements/2022/09/ireland-un-experts-call-adequate-redress-systemic-racism-and-racial>



the Mother and Baby Institutions Payment Act⁴ on 11 July 2023 to provide for a general payment to all children who were in a Mother and Baby Institution on an equal basis across everyone, based on the time spent in the institutions. **Ireland failed to reflect the recommendation of the UN experts in this legislation (to provide additional specific remedies to this racial group), contrary to the spirit of the programme of action for PAD and the DECADE.**

b. Special measures

- i. Ireland has an obligation under Article 1(4) of ICERD to provide Special Measures to secure adequate advancement of certain racial or ethnic groups or individuals requiring such protection. In framing and developing its overall Action Plan for survivors of Mother and Baby Institutions, Ireland should have considered **Special Measures** as part of its overall reparations plan, to deal with the “additional impact” children and mothers of different racial backgrounds suffered in the Irish Institutions. The **State Apology**⁵ issued by the Irish government in January 2021 states:

‘The Commission acknowledges the additional impact which a lack of knowledge and understanding had on the treatment and outcomes of mothers and children with different racial and cultural heritage...Such discriminatory attitudes exacerbated the shame and stigma felt by some of our most vulnerable citizens, especially where opportunities for non-institutional placement of children were restricted by an unjust belief that they were unsuitable for placement with families.’

We believe, by recognising, in the apology, the additional impact on children and mothers of mixed African Irish descent, the Irish State should have decided to take Special Measures as part of its reparations scheme. The State failed to take this opportunity when developing legislation in 2023.

⁴ See: <https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/bills/bill/2022/97/?tab=bill-text>

⁵ See: <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/state-apology-taoiseach-s-full-statement-on-mother-and-baby-homes-1.4457328>