



2024/ 2025 Annual Report

WiRL
Women in Refugee Law

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Who we are

Women in Refugee Law (WiRL)

A network to centre refugee women in international law, policy and practice

Women in Refugee Law (WiRL) is a global network that brings together refugee women, scholars, practitioners, judges, policymakers, and activists to re-centre the experiences and rights of women within refugee law, policy and practice. Founded in 2021 by [Dr Christel Querton](#) (UWE Bristol) and [Dr Moira Dustin](#) (University of Sussex), the initiative challenges the assumption that legal and policy changes in the last 30 years have displaced the need for continued research and advocacy efforts. WiRL aims to safeguard advances, and to identify and address contemporary obstacles to the protection of refugee women globally.

*In this report we include all asylum claiming and displaced women and girls in the category of 'refugee women'

Our values and objectives

Diversity – we are a diverse membership in respect to gender, sector, discipline and region

Collaboration – we work collaboratively to advance the network's objectives

Knowledge – at the centre of the network is knowledge production and sharing

The broad objectives of the network are:

- Refocusing attention on the needs and experiences of refugee women in all their diversity.
- Providing a platform for refugee and asylum-claiming women to contribute to refugee policy and law.
- Ensuring that women's voices and interests are included in academic and policy discourse relating to refugee protection.
- Reviewing the state of protection in domestic jurisdictions, regionally and internationally.
- Identifying unrecognised setbacks to adequate protection.
- Creating new knowledge to improve the quality of protection for refugee women.
- Highlighting gender diversity in refugee protection and incorporating the views of women and men.
- Creating opportunities for collaborative work to address new and persistent challenges.
- Supporting the development of young and early career scholars and practitioners, especially women.
- Building an open and inclusive global network to take forward all of the above objectives.

What we do

WiRL is a knowledge-exchange forum for sharing good practice and identifying gaps in refugee women's protection, and for using that knowledge to develop research agendas and collaborations, and inform law, policy and practice. We support refugee women and their advocates by creating new research agendas that contribute to the diversification and decolonisation of refugee scholarship and strengthening the capacity and expertise of advocates for refugee women.

“Thank you for your amazing work in creating this open space for WiRL members. For those, like me, who are based in the Global South it can sometimes be a challenge to exchange knowledge and experience with colleagues in the rest of the world. You make communication and collaboration easy and horizontal.”

Sabrina Vecchioni, WiRL Member



Our team

Dr Christel Querton

Founder and Convenor
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Dr Moira Dustin

Founder and Convenor
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Ms Nicola Robbins

Research Assistant
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Steering group

WiRL's activities are guided by an expert and diverse Steering Group made up of scholars, lawyers, activists and experts by experience from around the world. The Steering Group meets bi-annually to discuss WiRL's strategy and vision, whilst individual members support WiRL throughout the year in light of their particular area of expertise and interests. The Steering Group's work is guided by [Terms of Reference](#) which were updated this year.

Professor Deborah Anker (2022 - Present)
Harvard University

Gabriella Bettiga (2023 - Present)
MGBe Legal

Professor Heaven Crawley (2022 - May 2025)
Independent Research Consultant

Dr Moira Dustin (2022 - Present)
University of Sussex

Professor Kate Jastram (2024 - Present)
University of California

Professor Liliana Jubilut (2022 - Present)
Catholic University of Santos

Dr Sara L McKinnon (2022 - Present)
University of Wisconsin-Madison

Maggy Moyo (2022 - Present)
Right to Remain

Loraine Masiya Mponela (2022 - Present)
Coventry Asylum and Refugee Action Group (CARAG)

Professor Karen Musalo (2022 - Present)
University of California

Dr Christel Querton (2022 - Present)
University of the West of England

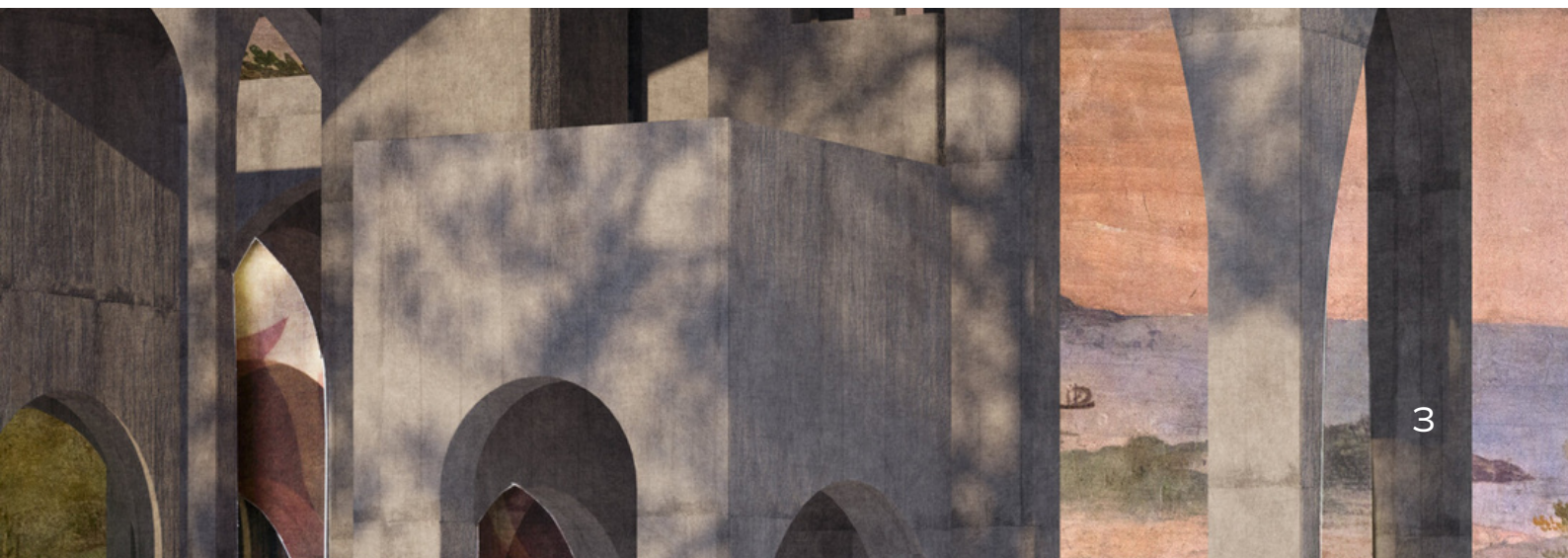
Lore Roels (2022 - Present)
University of Ghent

Professor Sibel Safi (2022 - Present)
Dokuz Eylul University

Dr Kalyango Ronald Sebba (2022 - Present)
Kyambogo University/ Makerere University

Professor Olajumoke Yacob-Haliso (2022 - Present)
Brandeis University

Natasha Yacoub (2022 - Present)
University of New South Wales

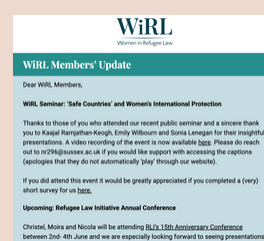


Our activities and achievements

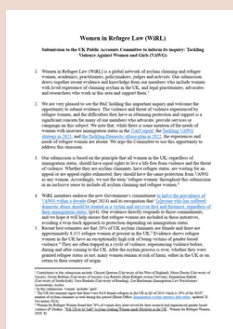
This report covers the period from September 2024 to August 2025. Below are just some of the network's activities, please [contact us](#) if you would like further information on a specific project or a broader view of the network's outputs.

Creating and supporting an inclusive global network

- The network has evolved into a global membership of over 300 members that includes academics, community groups and NGO representatives, legal practitioners, judges, policy-makers and – most importantly – women with lived experience of seeking international protection. WiRL’s membership spans more than 45 countries and 140 academic institutions.
- WiRL’s Kitchen Tables - our quarterly members’ meetings – are central to the network’s identity. They provide a supportive space for discussion and knowledge-sharing, the development of new working relationships between people and organisations with a commitment to refugee women’s rights. This year’s Kitchen Tables covered the work of the migrant women-led NGO New Women Connectors, the activities of GenSem – the European network of migration scholars, a forthcoming feminist refugee judgments project, and research on the experiences of displaced women passing through Mexico. Regular members’ updates are a space for talking about new developments, whether by academic researchers or small NGOs, and for new members to introduce themselves.
- In November 2024, in partnership with GenSem, WiRL hosted a film screening and panel discussion which critically examined gendered and racialised harm across various forms of displacement, with a spotlight on Australia’s extraterritorial asylum regime.

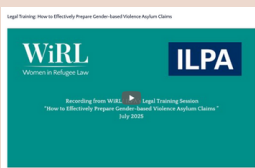


Influencing law, policy and practice



- WiRL made a submission to inform the February 2025 UK Parliament's Public Accounts Committee inquiry on Violence Against Women and Girls, drawing together recent evidence and knowledge from members with lived experience of claiming asylum in the UK, and legal practitioners, advocates and researchers who work in this area and support them.

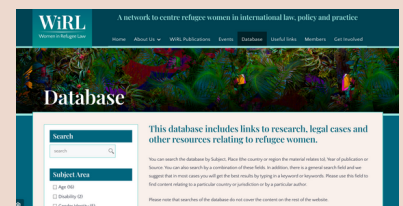
Influencing law, policy and practice (cont.)



- WiRL's second workshop on 'Gender Sensitivity in Asylum Interviews' supporting the work of our members was delivered in May 2025 by experts from academia and the field of sexual and gender-based violence, who shared knowledge and provided guidance on 'Gender Sensitivity in Asylum Interviews.'
- In May 2025, WiRL's co-convenors contributed to a research dialogue about Gender Equality with UNHCR thematic leads. The event was organised by the Global Academic Interdisciplinary Network (GAIN), which is the first network co-organised by academics and UNHCR to promote academic engagement and facilitate research, training and scholarship opportunities resulting in specific deliverables in support of the objectives of the Global Compact on Refugees.
- In July 2025, WiRL collaborated with Immigration Law Practitioners' Association (ILPA) to deliver legal training for more than 50 UK-based asylum and immigration practitioners. During the session expert Trainers provided a holistic view of how to effectively prepare complex gender-based violence asylum claims. This training is now available in a video on WiRL's website.

Setting research agendas and generating knowledge and debate

- This year we have continued to develop our website. We now have more than 490 database items relating to refugee women including links to research, legal cases and other resources relating to refugee women.
- We ran two public events this year on the theme of "Refuge in a Cold Climate: The Impact on Women". These events are online panel discussions, ideal for anyone whose work relates to refugee or asylum-claiming women or with an interest in their needs and experiences, attracting between 50-70 attendees. The series draws on WiRL's global membership to apply a gendered lens in analysing the impact of increasing hostility to refugees in different states and contexts. In October 2024, we held a seminar that focussed on the ways that climate change specifically affects women where Speakers reflected on ways this is being addressed in refugee law, policy and practice. In May 2025, expert panellists explored the concept of 'safe countries' in women's international protection with a focus on practice in the UK, Europe and Africa. Videos of these seminars are also available on the WiRL website.



Our financials

This year, WiRL has been supported by: University of Sussex Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) Impact Acceleration Account; University of Sussex Knowledge Exchange and Impact Fellowship, University of Sussex Knowledge Exchange Fund, and University of the West of England AHRC Impact Acceleration Account. We would like to thank our funders for their financial support and support in kind that have helped the development of the WiRL network.



How we have used our funding

75% of our funding went to staffing, 12% to our website and 13% on events and accessibility

Going forward

In 2025-2026, WiRL will continue and build on this past year's activities, including holding regular Kitchen Tables for members, public seminars, further legal training and workshops. We will continue to update our database with resources for and about refugee women globally - please send us your suggestions for new items to info@wirl.org.uk.

We welcome new members, suggestions for the network and contributions to our database of resources so please get in touch. Information about how to join is available on our website, as is information about our public events – past and future, and the resources described in this report. If you would like to support WiRL's activities, please contact us to discuss.

Find out more

wirl.org.uk
info@wirl.org.uk



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