

**Rachel Connolly**

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**From:** BRENNAN Pdraig (EEAS) <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Friday 27 October 2023 08:53  
**To:** Paschal Hanrahan  
**Subject:** RE: Canadian Armed Forces Chaplaincy Service  
**Attachments:** image001.png.htm

Good morning Paschal

I greatly appreciate your email and the points you make. Please note, I am not in any way endorsing their approach but just highlighting their recent publications and the work of someone whom I found very interesting to discuss these topics with. I suspect she would challenge some of the points you make and I would get great pleasure listening to the two of you discussing these topics; two people of great integrity with the fundamental care of those in the service at heart.

I absolutely agree with your view that we can learn from numerous chaplaincy's around the world; I could argue the point that Irish society is more reflective of Canada than the countries you listed, especially in light of the recent publications by the CSO on the 2022 census; however, my fundamental view is that the DF Chaplaincy Service of the future must have the ability to cater for the needs of those of all faith and those of no faith. I believe our Board Report and its recommendations can play an integral part in that.

I am delighted to hear that you have discussed these recommendations with the Episcopal Conference and your fellow chaplains and they have received support. I haven't received any feedback on our Board Report and its recommendations. As items such as additional financial support to the DFCS and a review of DFR A3 (Old Series) are time urgent, it is difficult for me to see how any of our recommendations will be implemented in the short to medium term.

You mention you are presenting to the DF Board; I am unclear who that is and what you are presenting on?

Regards

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**From:** Paschal Hanrahan <paschal.hanrahan@defenceforces.ie>  
**Sent:** 26 October 2023 22:27  
**To:** BRENNAN Pdraig (EEAS) <[REDACTED]>; Adrian O Murchu  
 <adrian.omurchu@defenceforces.ie>  
**Subject:** RE: Canadian Armed Forces Chaplaincy Service

Pdraig,

I hope you and all the family are keeping well. Many thanks for forwarding the Public Reflection Policy for the Canadian Armed Forces and indeed the One Pager on Secular Spiritual Care in the Military.

If I may I would like to make the following comments.

1. I am struck by the lack of respect for denominational/worldfaith/secular **integrity**. In its desire to be inclusive it devalues and erodes the richness that comes from diversity. A diversity that in my view should be celebrated. A fundamental principal of a successful and professional Chaplaincy Service ought to be based on a protocol of mutual respect for each other's traditions, patrimony, practice and dress. Reducing all to the optional wearing of a scarf and the delivery of purely 'inclusive words' is perceived by the majority of people attending such public events as utter verbosity and 'much ado about nothing'. However, take for example – The State Commemoration at Arbour Hill where all religious and secular leaders light a candle expressing a sincere and united hope for an Ireland where people were free to express their identity and views without recrimination and for which our patriots paid the ultimate sacrifice. Take the sentiment expressed to me by Jillian Brennan the CEO of the Humanist Association that she wanted to stay for the mass (I had offered her the opportunity to go for a coffee at IUNVA House if she felt uncomfortable) because she recognises the importance of the Eucharist for both those who were executed and their families in successive generations and she is in no way offended by it. And do we not have a better model of State Commemoration where we can have a Buddhist, a Christian (Catholic/Protestant/Orthodox), a Hindu, a Humanist, A Jew, and a Muslim stand side by side and offer a prayer or reflection according to their rite/belief rather than a non-descriptive individual voice offering well-intentioned but ultimately mere inclusive platitudes.
2. If I am struck by what I perceive to be a lack of **respect** for denominational/worldfaith/secular **integrity**, I am equally struck by the sheer lack of **tolerance** for that which is 'other' than humanist. This is particularly obvious in the many changes proposed in the dress code at public events and the 'fear' of giving offence if I choose to wear a 'Cross' on my uniform and Imam Ali wears a 'Crescent' and Rabbi Leonard wears a 'Star of David'. I fear that the three of us could choose to be offended by the requirement to appear neutral and give up our distinctive identity for say a 'happy human' symbol. Identity is so important particularly in the military just take the 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion, and for the military identity is important and they see through neutral concepts.
3. Interestingly with regard to identity, I note from the one pager on Secular Spirituality across the Military – that they all have rank, this is particularly important element to all the Secular/Humanist chaplaincies that I have encountered over the past 20 years. In my humble opinion, they 'minister through authority' as distinct to what I like to call 'minister through authenticity'. While the DFCS is not perfect, it's proven effectiveness as highlighted in our internal conversations with officers and enlisted personnel and indeed with external groups most noteworthy the veteran community comes from its humanity, its respectful listening and it's 'no rank' structure.
4. It is very difficult to compare Chaplaincy Services, it's like comparing Apples and Oranges no two are exactly the same. Yes we can learn from other chaplaincies and we will. I could present to you the unique work of the Chaplaincies of the Ukrainian Armed Forces, The Polish Armed Forces, The Israeli Armed Forces and the Lebanese Armed Forces we would get a whole different picture. So we must be mindful of 'robbing an orchard' when there is much fruit about.
5. The DFCS remains committed to developing a broad and diverse Chaplaincy Service, it has, at its recent conference endorsed the 11 +1 Recommendations of the recent DF Review of the DFCS. The +1 refers to an additional recommendation to formalise our hitherto fore ad hoc pastoral support to the three main Veteran Associations (ONE, IUNVA and ARCO). I have presented these recommendation to the Irish Episcopal Conference (at their October meeting) and along with the chaplaincy team I am preparing a presentation for the DF Board which I hope to have presented by January 2024. November and early December is a very busy period for the Chaplaincy team with countless commemorations, remembrance ceremonies and Christmas services to be planed and delivered across the country so I will be proposing that we finalise our presentation at the Chaplain's January Conference and deliver it at the Jan DF Board.

Thanks again for sending on those pieces for CAF. I know there is a lot going on internally within the CAF Chaplaincy Service at the moment as a result of that Supreme Court Judgement, which for some is proving too much to countenance.

Every good wish,

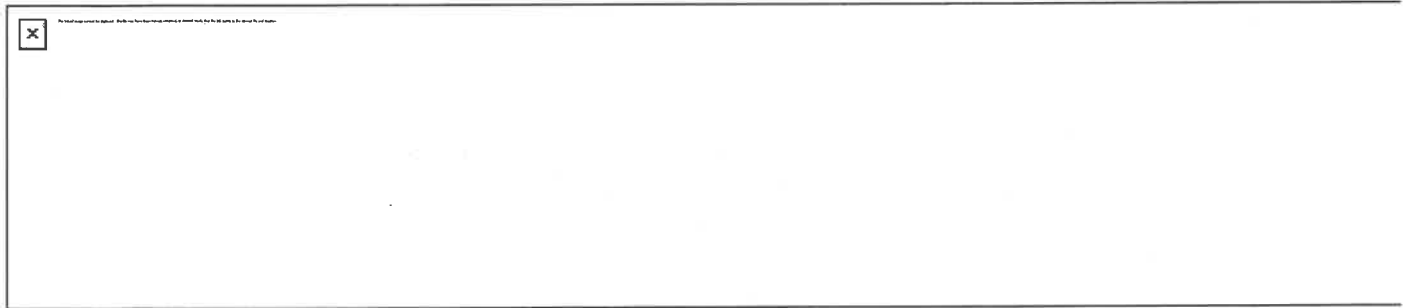
*Paschal*

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**From:** BRENNAN Padraig (EEAS) <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Wednesday 25 October 2023 12:17  
**To:** Adrian O Murchu <[adrian.omurchu@defenceforces.ie](mailto:adrian.omurchu@defenceforces.ie)>  
**Cc:** Paschal Hanrahan <[paschal.hanrahan@defenceforces.ie](mailto:paschal.hanrahan@defenceforces.ie)>  
**Subject:** Canadian Armed Forces Chaplaincy Service

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Do not click on links and do not open attachments unless the sender is known and trusted.

Good afternoon Sir

During our recent deliberations on the DF Chaplaincy Board, I had the pleasure of getting to know a Humanist Chaplain from the Canadian Armed Forces, Capt. Marie-Claire Khadij. In my call with her she stated that she was involved in the drafting of a Public Reflection Policy for their Armed Forces. This policy has been published and Marie-Claire was kind enough to share a copy with me (see attached).

In her words:

*This new directive states that during public functions, defined as "7. (...) a setting in which CAF members are required to attend in the execution of their duties", CAF chaplains will provide a reflection that is "8. (...) inclusive in nature, and respectful of the religious and spiritual diversity of Canada. The reflection must ensure that attendees are reasonably able to identify with the words being uttered. Chaplains shall endeavour to ensure that all feel included and able to participate in the reflection with a clear conscience, no matter their beliefs (religious, spiritual, agnostic, atheist).*

Additionally, she is involved in a project on secular care in the military and has attached an Info Note on those countries involved and the structures of their Chaplaincy Services.

Regards

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