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Kosovar

Women's Voice

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announcements

KWN Bimonthly Meeting.....
.....ATRC, 11:00, Sept. 4

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GRAVE TË KOSOVËS



KOSOVA WOMENS
NETWORK

www.womensnetwork.org

Serbian, Kosovar Women Unite: Issue Statement

The Kosova Women's Network and Women in Black Network Serbia, formed the Women's Peace Coalition (WPC) on 7 May; their mission, to empower a joint coalition which raises the visibility of women's perspectives in the political affairs of Serbia and Kosova.

In their first major action, WPC issued a statement to the status negotiation team advocating for the preservation and protection of the cultural heritage of Serbia and Kosova. WPC stressed the need to identify and preserve cultural sites like churches, mosques and cathedrals from physical degradation and political exploitation. In their statement, the WPC said, "...cultural sites are linked to the cultural heritage, history and communities of all ethnic groups, and thus all ethnic groups have the right to share, preserve and protect these heritage sites."

Striving towards just and sustainable peace, WPC works for the inclusion of women in peace-building processes as equal partners, stressing citi-

zen initiatives founded on women's solidarity that cross the divisions of ethnicity and religion, as well as state borders and barriers. Working closely with the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), WPC emphasizes the following core principles:

- o Strengthening the coalition
- o Concrete actions at the local, regional and international level
- o Raising the visibility of women's perspectives through

actions undertaken by the coalition, especially at the international level

- o Mutual sharing of information (between Serbia and Kosova) regarding political developments

- o Sharing mutual comparative research experiences

The next WPC meeting will be held in June, in Belgrade. The meeting will focus on future endeavors between WPC and UNIFEM.



Representatives from Women in Black Network, KWN and UNIFEM met at KWN in Prishtina on 7 May to strategize for future cooperation as the Women's Peace Coalition.

KWN, KWL Advocacy Leads to UNMIK Apology

Statements and press releases issued by KWN and the Kosova Women's Lobby (KWL) brought international condemnation of the violence committed against the people of Krusha e Vogel village by UNMIK police. KWN and KWL efforts spurred UNMIK to issue a public apology and members of the assembly to condemn police violence.

On 25 May 2006, a UNMIK police convoy transporting Serbian former residents of Krusha e Vogel arrived in the village unannounced. When UNMIK police refused to let local women talk to the former residents, the women blocked

the convoy from entering the village. In response, the UNMIK police forcibly removed women from the road using riot batons and tear gas. The women retaliated with stones, and the convoy left, throwing teargas at women and children as they exited the village. Three men and 33 women were admitted to the hospital and 22 children were treated for injuries resulting from tear gas.

A KWN representative took statements from citizens hours after the incident. These statements exposed the truth beyond official UNMIK police reports and local government

statements, which originally called the violence an "ethnic incident."

Citizens emphasized that they reacted against UNMIK police violence, not Serbs. UNMIK has since issued statements condemning police violence and its failure to inform local institutions of the visit.

This advocacy effort reached the highest levels of the United Nations and KWN has received responses from activists and organizations around the world. For the full text of the statements and press releases, please visit: www.womensnetwork.org.

April Meeting Notes

The KWN Executive Director began the meeting by detailing member activities regarding the involvement of women in Kosovo's final status negotiations. (For more info, see http://www.womensnetwork.org/shqip/raporti_ks.htm)

The Kosova Business Alliance and Economic Chamber "Oda" are developing local consulting mechanisms to contribute to the Vision and Development Plan for Kosova 2020. These mechanisms will include the expertise of KWN's member organizations.

The Kosova Police Service (KPS) presented its new Gender Structure towards gender mainstreaming within KPS, which began in April 2006.

Doctors of the World, USA, presented their project "Women's Wellness Center" opening this September in Prishtina. The gynecology clinic will offer medical examinations, laboratory tests, psychological and other health related services.

Kvinna till Kvinna announced that the OSCE is cooperating with UNDP to organize a series of meetings throughout Kosova to discuss security, the economy, family violence and health issues in Kosova.

The Office for Gender Equality requested that the Prime Minister organize regular meetings with civil society.

At the end of the meeting, KWN thanked the presenters and expressed enthusiasm for continued cooperation among KWN member and partner organizations.

SHE-ERA Releases Report on Women Farmers

SHE-ERA, a KWN member dedicated to economically empowering women, launched a report on 4 May entitled "Gender Budget Analysis and Impact of Fiscal Policies on the Poverty of Rural Women." The report details where rural women's needs are excluded from policy making and the impact this exclusion has on the population. It provides recommendations for more gender balanced design and implementation of policies at the local, national and international levels. Ultimately, SHE-ERA hopes that the recommendations will increase economic opportunities for rural women, empowering them to overcome poverty.

The report identifies significant strides forward in the economic empowerment of women, as well as many unaddressed needs. Based on this research, SHE-ERA proposed key areas to better involve rural women in decision-making processes. For example, though the government regularly held meetings to discuss programs, the meetings failed to enact significant change or involve rural women. In contrast, separate, town hall meetings involved citizens in open debates about development and budget planning.

SHE-ERA also observed that collection points for farming products facilitated women's participation in economic development. Recommendations for continuing this program included the estab-

lishment of milk collection points and increased access to refrigeration for female farmers.

The report recommends in-depth research as to the challenges facing rural women farmers and a long-term sustainability plan for Gjakova's six farming communities. This plan should include a jointly funded irrigation canal for the area, they said.

SHE-ERA cooperated with the local government, NGOs, UNIFEM, banks, microfinance institutions and the media to distribute the report in Kosova and abroad. SHE-ERA's report and the potential for a new sub-agency of UNDP to implement recommendations in the long-term were discussed at a meeting on 19 May.

Citizens Demand Women's Role in Status Talks



Women and men gathered at the National Theatre in Prishtina on 8 March to demand women's participation in talks concerning Kosova's final political status.

On 8 March, KWN and KWL organized a demonstration to say, "We Want Power, No More Flowers," in front of the national theatre in Prishtina. Famous Kosovar singers and actors performed songs and skits written for the occasion, which

focused on United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 and the importance of involving women in talks concerning Kosova's final status. Passers-by received printed materials about UNSCR 1325. RTV21 aired a 10-minute

program which documented efforts and demonstrations around the world to advocate for greater involvement of women in decision-making. Highlighting the KWN and KWL demonstration, RTV21 aired a 30-minute special on UNSCR 1325. Following the event, participants hung a banner outside the Kosova Parliament reading "Resolution 1325 guarantees us the right to participate in final status talks." It continues to hang for all citizens and politicians to see. UNIFEM supported the event.

In preparation for the protest, Kosovar women activists and local organizations composed a letter to local and international decision-makers demanding women's inclusion in the team negotiating Kosova's final political status. This letter was read at the protest and sent to: UN Special Envoy for the future status process for Kosova Martti Ahtisaari; UN Security Council, SRSG Søren Jessen-Petersen; President Fatmir Sejdiu; Prime Minister Agim Çeku; KFOR Commander Giuseppe Valotto, the negotiation team, and others. Women politicians and NGOs from Albania also sent letters of support.

Safete Rogova: Artist with an Activist Spirit

For more than fifteen years, Safete Rogova has melded her love of art and people into her activism, bringing information, love and hope to thousands.

Safete's acting career began in 1968 when she joined the National Theatre in Prishtina. Her accomplished repertoire includes a wide gallery of characters from more than 100 roles. A member of Kosova's second generation of actresses, she brought a unique spirit to the company.

Safete later melded her love of art and people into activism. Together with her late husband Nuredin Loxha and her sister Igballe Rogova, she founded the Association for Women's Education "Motrat Qiriazzi" in 1990. Through its diverse programs that often involved art and culture, MQ supported ru-

ral youth in furthering their education, brought men's and women's voices into decisions about their community and empowered women to take ownership of their future.

Throughout the 1990s, while the Serbian regime restricted higher education in the Albanian language and burned Albanian books, MQ founded schools and secretly opened libraries in rural areas like Has, Drenica and Shala e Bajgores. Despite oppression against Albanian culture, Safete and other MQ activists used culture to spread messages about the importance of women's education through story tapes played on buses, underground art shows, theatrical skits and music.

When Kosovar Albanians were expelled from their homes,



In 1978, Safete Rogova plays Mrika in "Besa e Madhe" (Big Faith).

Safete regularly visited people in camps, first in Kosova and then in Macedonia. She provided counseling for grieving people and a sense of normalcy by organizing group activities. Safete involved other famous artists in performances in various refugee camps, providing an escape from the drudgery of camp life and bringing smiles to adults and children alike.

After the war, Safete lent her talents to KWN's work by writing and performing in plays that brought light to issues of violence against women, women's legal rights and how women can access help. Through culture, she provided simple messages, transforming the suffering of others into solutions and hope for a better future.



On 8 March, Safete reads the letter to Kosovar and international leaders, demanding women's inclusion in final status talks at the demonstration in Prishtina.

Activists Submit Shadow Report on UNSCR 1325 Implementation to United Nations

On 30 March, activists sent a "Report on the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 in Kosova" to the United Nations - New York in an effort to "inform the UN of events and activities undertaken by local organizations and their supporters in relation to the overall implementation of UNSCR 1325 in Kosova" since 2001. Local activists took the initiative to compile the report after the United Nations Mission in Kosova "overlooked or disregarded local initiatives towards the resolution's implementation in its reports to the United Nations." The report attempted to "fill any voids in information." For the full text, see: www.womensnetwork.org.

Kosova Police Service Introduces Gender Mainstreaming Initiatives

At the KWN membership meeting in April, Kosova Police Service (KPS) Consultant on Gender Issues Hysni Shala introduced a new program towards integrating gender mainstreaming into units at all levels of the police force. The Unit on Gender Issues aims to include a gender perspective in KPS activities through communication, supporting activities and accountability. KPS will also organize a TV debate to discuss domestic violence, trafficking, or child abuse. He stressed the importance of cooperation between KPS and KWN.

Women Need to be Involved in Democracy Building, KWN tells International Leaders

On 7 April at the Vienna conference on gender and conflict, organized by the Austrian Development Agency, a KWN representative discussed United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 with international leaders, including Elizabeth Rehn, former UN special representative on Human Rights and Ambassador Mette Kongshem, Norwegian representative to the OSCE. KWN stressed that implementing resolution 1325 is essential for inclusive democratic processes and that failing to include women would jeopardize future stability in Kosova.

Members Finalize Code of Conduct

In an effort to be more transparent and improve the quality of its work, KWN will implement a voluntary "Ethical and Accountability Code." On 15 May, members discussed the draft code of conduct. After incorporating their suggestions and pending board approval, KWN staff will visit members where the organizations will review and sign the code for continued KWN membership.

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www.womensnetwork.org

Civil Society Uses 1325 in Letter to Ahtisaari

March 8, 2006, Prishtina

To: UN Special Envoy for the future status process for Kosovo

Dear Mr. Ahtisaari,

We welcome the recent important steps taken towards the resolution of Kosovo's final political status. Resolving Kosovo's final status is a vital issue for all Kosovars which will shape the political, economic, and social advancement of our country. As this peace process deals with the future of our country, we demand that women be also included in it.

We consider that Kosovo women have the right to fully and actively participate in the final status talks. This legitimate claim is based on the rich legacy of women in peaceful and political activity within the struggle for freedom and independence of Kosovo but; it is also legally supported by the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security.

Women's involvement in peace processes is a basic provision within United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, applicable to Kosovo. The resolution "Urges Member States to ensure increased representation of women at all decision-making levels in national, regional and international institutions and mechanisms for the prevention, management, and resolution of conflict." It also "Urges the Secretary-General to implement his strategic plan of action (A/49/587) calling for an increase in the participation of women at decision-making levels in conflict resolution and peace processes.

Since the beginning of the status talks, we have written many letters on behalf of the women of Kosovo, requesting that women be included in this peace process. We have also raised this issue in the meeting with you, Mr. Petersen and the UN Chief negotiator Mr. Ahtisaari. However, the negotiating team established for the status talks of Kosovo remains without any woman, so far.

The women of Kosovo are concerned that their voices have been ignored or marginalized by both national and the UNMIK leadership. It is so, in spite of its remarkable role in past and present. As known, for more than fifteen years women have been and they continue to be important actors in all aspects of Kosovo's efforts towards freedom, democracy, and independence. Therefore, women can and should bring their ideas, experience, and energy into this very important process that will shape their future as much as it will shape the future of the rest of the society.

In accordance with resolution 1325 and as equal and praiseworthy Kosovar citizens, the Kosova Women's Network, which represents 85 women's organizations of all ethnic groups (Serb, Roma, Ashkali, Turkish, and Bosniak) from throughout Kosovo, the Kosova Women's Lobby comprised of 26 woman leaders from all sectors, and supported by following organizations signed below, demand :

oThe immediate inclusion of the representative of Kosova women in the negotiating team of Kosova for the final status talks, conducive to Resolution 1325 and taking into a consideration women's extraordinary contribution for the achieved peace and freedom.

Women must be given an opportunity to take part in this peace process that will design the future of Kosova and the region. If women and their expertise are excluded, the negotiating process as well as the inclusiveness of future democratic processes will undoubtedly suffer. Building sustainable peace by partnership of both genders lays the foundation of bright future.

We thank you in advance for your attention to this letter.

Sincerely,

Igballe Rogova, Executive Director, Kosova Women's Network
Lujeta Vuniqi, representative of Kosova Women's Lobby
Behxhet Shala, Executive Director, Council for Defense of the Human Rights and Freedom
Rreze Duli, Executive Director, Advocacy Training and Resource Center
Bashkim Rrahmani, Executive Director, Foundation for Democratic Initiatives

Sent also to:

UN Special Representative to the Secretary General Mr. Søren Jessen-Petersen
Fatmir Sejdiu, President of Kosovo,
Lieutenant General Giuseppe Valotto, KFOR Commander
Phillip Goldberg, Head of USA Office
Giorgio Mamberto, Head of European Commission in Kosovo
David Blunt, Head of British Office
Eugen Wollfarth, Head of German Office
Thierry Reynard, Head of French Office
Patrick Mura, Chief of Italian Office
All the members in the negotiating team