

Vienna, April 19, 2007

Esteemed Members of the United Nations Security Council,

The Regional Women's Lobby for Peace, Security and Justice in Southeast Europe would like to request a meeting between our representatives and the UN Security Council fact-finding mission scheduled to visit Pristina and Belgrade in April 2007.

The Regional Women's Lobby is comprised of women political leaders as well as civil society advocates from all countries of Southeast Europe, including leaders from Kosovo and Serbia. We are dedicated to advocacy for political action to achieve long-lasting peace and security in our countries and in our region. Our efforts are also dedicated to advancing the full implementation of UN Security Council 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (October 2000)¹.

In defiance of the unjust exclusion of women from the negotiations on the future status of Kosovo, the Regional Women's Lobby was formed as a venue for women leaders to exercise their right to have a say, and to influence key political processes that stand to shape the future of Kosovo, of Serbia, and of the region.

We take this opportunity to convey the following messages from our members:

1. The Regional Women's Lobby joins the international community in expressing wholehearted support for the proposal on the future status of Kosovo, submitted by UN Special Envoy, Mr. Marti Ahtisaari to the Security Council. We encourage the Council to pass a new resolution that fully adopts all points in this proposal, thereby paving the way to resolving this issue and advancing peace and security throughout the entire region.
2. We encourage the Security Council to ensure that a new resolution on Kosovo recognizes that human security for all women and men is a cornerstone of sustainable peace in Kosovo and in the region, and must also be ensured. Recalling the failure of the Serbian side to contribute to implementation of resolution 1244, the Security Council is urged to be forthright in moving the agenda forward by referring directly to the right of the Kosovo to independence.
3. We welcome the high standards Mr. Ahtisaari's proposal sets for protection of the rights of all ethnic and religious communities and their full integration into Kosovar society. We further welcome the commitment of the government and institutions of Kosovo to fully implement this proposal and we urge the government of Serbia to

¹ Article 1 of UNSCR 1325 "*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"; Article 15 of UNSCR 1325 recognizes the importance for Security Council missions to ... "take into account gender considerations and the rights of women, including through consultation with local and international women's groups".

likewise accept the proposal as a critical step for the Serbian people in putting the painful legacy of war behind and looking to a peaceful and prosperous future.

4. The absence of women in the future status talks represents failures by the United Nations to fulfill UN SCR 1325 which should be corrected in future. Looking ahead, we urge the Security Council to show resolve in ensuring women's participation and women's contribution in the implementation of the proposal on the future status of Kosovo.
5. The Regional Women's Lobby recognizes the right of displaced citizens to return to Kosovo as well as the duty of the Kosovar government to support their integration. However, we note our concern that a politically motivated mass flow of returnees could give rise to tension and threaten security. We call on the UN Security Council to ensure that the return process not be used as a strategy to advance short-term political gains that go contrary to the best interests of the displaced and of peace.

Over the past year, the Lobby has supported efforts to advance integration of the Serb community living in Kosovo and the Albanian majority with active support of Lobby members from Pristina as well as Belgrade. We look forward to meeting you're your delegation and sharing insights and offering recommendations that draw on our work on the ground to advance peace and gender equality.

Yours sincerely,

Ms. Nekibe Kelmendi (Kosovo), Head of the Parliamentary Commission for Public Services, Local Administration and Media

Ms. Teuta Sahatqija (Kosovo), Vice President of the ORA (political party) Chief of the parliamentarian group of ORA.

Ms. Igballe Rogova (Kosovo), Executive Director of Kosova Women's Network, member of the Kosova Women's Lobby, member of the Women's Peace Coalition

Ms. Luljeta Vuniqi (Kosovo) Executive Director of Kosovar Gender Studies Center
Member of Kosova Women's Lobby, member of the Women's Peace Coalition

Ms. Nada Drobnjak (Montenegro), Head of the Government Gender Equality Office

Dr. Maja Kostic-Mandic, (Montenegro), Member of Parliament

Ms. Sonja Biserko (Serbia), Director, Helsinki Committee for Human Rights

Ms. Natasa Kandic (Serbia), Director, Human Rights Fund

Ms. Natasa Micic (Serbia) President, Civic Alliance of Serbia

Ms. Vera Markovic (Serbia) Vice-President of the Social Democrat Union

Ms. Stasa Zajovic (Serbia) Coordinator Women in Black Network, member of Women's Peace

Ms. Liljana Radovanovic, Women in Black

Ms. Marieta Zaqe (Albania) Deputy Minister in the Ministry of Social Welfare and Equal Opportunities

Ms. Irina Pockova (Macedonia) President of Women's Chapter, Social Democratic Alliance political party in Sv. Nikolla

Ms. Gordana Sobol (Croatia), Head of the Parliamentary Commission for Gender Equality

Ms. Biljana Kasic (Croatia) Coordinator, Women's Studies Center

Ms. Memnuna Zvzdic (Bosnia and Herzegovina) Director Zene Zenama

Ms. Meliha Alic (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Minister of Education and Science

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