

“Through Women’s Solidarity to a Just Peace”

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A Report Based on the Women’s Peace Coalition Second Annual Conference





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Women’s Peace Coalition

Acknowledgements

This publication resulted from the hard work of more than sixty activists who attended the Women's Peace Coalition's second annual conference. Without their energy to participate in actively identifying the coalition's obstacles and priorities, knowledge of the issues facing their communities, and dedication to cooperating to build a future together, this publication would not have been possible. Special thanks to them for making the conference an energetic event with valuable results.

The Women's Peace Coalition appreciates our international partners who provided moral support for our efforts and brought their own experiences into conference discussions: the United Nations Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation, the Urgent Action Fund, Women in Black - Israel, Rachel Wareham, and the Global Fund for Women.

Importantly, the United Nations Democracy Fund (UNDEF) provided the financial support necessary for organizing the conference and producing this publication.

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Introduction

This publication describes the proceedings, outcomes, and recommendations from the Women's Peace Coalition's second annual conference entitled "Through Women's Solidarity to a Just Peace," which was held in Struga, Macedonia on August 31 - September 3, 2007. With financial support from the United Nations Democracy Fund (UNDEF) and moral and technical support from the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the Kosova Women's Network and Women in Black Network - Serbia organized the conference to evaluate the work of the Women's Peace Coalition to date, plan future joint initiatives between Serb and Kosovar activists, and produce this report, containing a strategy for the coalition's future work. Altogether, 69 women from Serbia and Kosovo, as well as international guests, participated in the conference.

History of the Women's Peace Coalition

The Women's Peace Coalition was established by the Women in Black Network and Kosova Women's Network in March 2006 as an independent citizens' initiative founded on women's solidarity that crosses divisions of ethnicity and religion, as well as state borders and barriers. The coalition acts based on the following principles:



The Women's Peace Coalition strives towards just and sustainable peace and works for the inclusion of women in peace building processes as equal partners, stressing the fact that women are not victims, but survivors of war and dynamic actors in peace movements.



The Women's Peace Coalition advocates strongly for the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security and the advancement of women's political, economic and social position, while opposing country-specific tendencies and regressive processes detrimental to its goals.



The Women's Peace Coalition works with and includes all allies relevant to its cause, whilst maintaining its autonomy.

Since its inception, the Women's Peace Coalition has initiated a number of advocacy efforts, primarily related to monitoring negotiations on Kosovo's final political status. The coalition has sought to present an analytical and alternative opinion on the status of Kosovo from a human, as opposed to a political, perspective. The coalition's first statement addressed the failure of decision-makers from Kosovo and Serbia to include women in the negotiations process regarding Kosovo's political status. The second statement sought to inform negotiators as well as citizens in Kosovo and Serbia regarding the coalition's stance on the

protection and preservation of cultural heritage, which was, at the time, the issue being discussed by negotiators in Vienna.

As a member of the coalition, WiB has been involved in monitoring court proceedings in relation to war crimes and actively supported witnesses and victims while they have testified, as the speeches of Women in Black activists later in this report describe in detail.

Issues Identified during the First Women's Peace Coalition Conference

In addition to its other activities, the Women's Peace Coalition (WPC) held its first annual conference on the subject "United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 - Women, Peace and Security," on 1-2 September 2006 in Struga, Macedonia. The conference was organized by KWN in cooperation with WiB with support from UNIFEM.

The 66 conference participants representing organizations from cities and villages throughout Serbia and Kosovo discussed four major issues:

- * Facing the past and exchanging the experiences of women activists from Kosovo and Serbia
- * Security and peace-building from women's perspective
- * Women's reproductive rights and security
- * Planning future WPC activities

The conference involved plenary sessions with speakers on each of these issues as well as workshops for further discussion and strategizing.

One result of the conference was a basic strategic plan for future coalition activities, which involved:

- * Increasing the level of the participation of women in all decision-making processes with the aim of creating a just and sustainable peace.
- * Using the cooperation of KWN and WiB women activists to increase the dialogue between women of all ethnic groups in Kosovo, while organizing meetings and discussing issues in relation to security, the final political status of Kosovo, and the necessity of including women in all levels of decision-making.
- * Increasing the frequency of common networking activities between KWN and WiB member organizations.

At the conclusion of the conference, the coalition issued the following statement:

This conference as well as all other WPC activities aim to shed light on the activities of women's movements, whose goals are to create a proper and sustainable peace in the region. During the conference, which took place at the same time as the negotiations for the final political status of Kosovo between Prishtina and Belgrade, 60 activists from Kosovo and Serbia came to the conclusion that peace in the region is not possible without the active participation of women. Also, the Women's Peace Coalition strongly supports the independence and the territorial integrity of Kosovo as a functional state, which ensures that:

- * The needs of all citizens form the basis for peace and security.
- * Relevant institutions accept the concept of human security, especially gender-based security, in compliance with United Nations Security Council' Resolution 1325.
- * Women are involved in all levels of the decision-making processes.

Different from official politics, the Women's Peace Coalition continues to work towards building trust, solidarity and mutual support. Our joint activities contribute to the construction of true and long-term peace in the region.

In addition to this statement and the strategic planning that occurred, the conference provided an important space for activists to share their personal experiences of the war and begin healing processes. WiB activists issued the first ever public apology for the crimes committed against Albanians in 1999 and the years leading up to the war. Their statement was later broadcast on Kosovo tel-



Participants in the first annual Women's Peace Coalition conference in Struga.

evision station RTV21, and citizens told KWN that they cried when they saw the apology, seven years after the war. The WPC's future efforts would be built on the foundation of trust established during the first conference.

The Purpose of the Second Conference

Following the first conference, WPC members set out to implement the strategic goals identified during the conference. They continued to pressure the governments of Serbia and Kosovo as well as international decision-makers to involve women in negotiations concerning Kosovo's political status. With support from UNIFEM, representatives expressed the coalition's views during a meeting with President Martti Ahtisaari, Special Envoy for the Kosovo Future Status Process, as well as during an informal meeting with a UN Security Council delegation that was visiting Kosovo. Coalition representatives also visited Serb enclaves in an effort to increase the dialogue between women of all ethnic groups in Kosovo.



Unfortunately, individual organizations represented in WPC were not able take part in additional horizontal networking as the coalition had planned. Two major obstacles were a lack of funding for civil society groups and the lack of appropriate travel documents for Kosovar activists, who therefore could not enter Serbia for networking activities.

Realizing these issues and seeing the need to develop more concrete strategic goals for coalition's future work, KWN and WiB organized the second annual Women's Peace Coalition conference with the aim of creating a more concrete, long-term strategy for the coalition. The conference would also bring together activists from Serbia and Kosovo, further strengthening ties and cooperation across national, ethnic, and religious borders.

A Strategy for the Future

The main purpose of the second Women's Peace Coalition conference was to establish a strategy for the future work of the coalition. The conference conclusions and recommendations are presented here in the form of an initial strategic plan, which includes a summary of the main obstacles to transitional justice processes and the achievement of a just peace; strategic objectives; and proposed programs and activities for the coalition from 2008-2010. The Women's Peace Coalition will continue to work on finalizing this strategy in the future.

Main Obstacles to Transitional Justice Processes and the Achievement of a Just Peace

In the government and among local political leaders:

- Lack of justice for those who committed crimes, especially the state that committed crimes in the name of citizens
- Serbia's political elite and the state refuse to identify, admit to, or take responsibility for crimes committed in the past; there is a lack of responsibility taken by Serbia's authorities regarding the production of war and war crimes
- Massive liability makes justice difficult: genocide requires an organized structure involving numerous organizers and actors, including legal and political actors. It is difficult to punish such a large infrastructure that organized and carried out these crimes, which is especially pertinent to Serbia.
- Lack of laws, legal measures, and reforms, such as a law on sanctioning and naming hate crimes or hate speech. There is a culture which glorifies criminals in both societies and on two levels, in institutions and among people.
- Government of Serbia continues to have much influence over Kosovo Serb community members
- Government focuses more on "political races for preserving or strengthening power" than on the "wellbeing of the population" in both societies.
- Lack of institutional recognition of the needs of victims of sexual violence and gender-based violence in both societies, which would facilitate the drafting of legislation that would benefit these victims, as well as their integration into society
- Lack of public and decision-makers' support for women dealing with transitional justice processes; Serbia's political elite and the state "dehumanize" members of civil society and their work, especially women. This is especially true in Serbia, because the WIB network remains outside and at a distance from the political and national consensus, while the Kosovo Women's Network is within the state-building and social consensus.

In society, especially affecting future generations:

- Potential violence by citizens in Serbia or Kosovo following a decision regarding the political status of Kosovo. The risk is particularly serious for the WIB network because they are "traitors," as activists who remain far from the national and political consensus.
- Families and traditional social practices that make women remain silent about the sexual crimes committed against them, which means continued traumatization for victims and lack of justice for those who committed the crimes. Further, a lack of acceptance in communities for women who have suffered sexual violence, and potentially further violence perpetrated against them (e.g., "they have already been raped, so why not rape them again?") because rape is interpreted as "a loss of honor for a woman" instead of being seen as an intolerable crime against a woman's dignity.
- Kosovo Serb community's refusal to cooperate and integrate themselves in the new state of Kosovo, which is a result of the influence of the government in Belgrade. However, this refusal may be connected to a both real and imagined issue of security for the Serbian and other minority communities in Kosovo.
- Insufficient information among the population, especially a lack of information and communication between Serb and Albanian communities in Kosovo and Serbia
- Educational systems in both societies nurture a nationalistic discourse, ignore the past, and do not take responsibility for the past; formal education does not include a culture of peace or democratic values
- Young people in Serbia do not make use of the possibilities that civil society offers in terms of dialogue for peace

Among international administrators, institutions, and decision-makers:

- Failure of the international community to support an immediate decision regarding Kosovo's final political status; the lack of global political will for defining the political status of Kosovo
- Failure of the international community administering Kosovo to ascertain the fate of missing Kosovo Albanians and ensure the return of all bodies of Kosovo Albanians killed during the war, as well as the bodies of victims of other ethnicities.
- Lack of support from international institutions, especially related to dealing with crimes, facing the past, and transitional justice
- Pressure from international administrators or donors to conduct interethnic and conflict resolution projects that do not address real needs
- International community's failure to communicate and involve in planning processes local actors, activists, experts, and citizens regarding the best methods for transitional justice processes

- International community imposes plans from other countries not based on consultations and assessment of local needs
- The international community insists that activists from Serbia communicate with and use the channels of their institutions, but activists consider Serbia's institutions nationalistic and contradictory to the values they represent

For civil society groups:

- Activists do not feel sufficiently safe in the conditions in which they live; women activists from Serbia are especially in danger of repercussions
- Administrative problems like passports, especially for women from Kosovo to visit Serbia because they do not have the necessary documentation. The lack of passports or travel documents impedes healing and transitional justice processes
- Lack of adequate time for discussing the past and healing processes, including short and a limited number of meetings
- Lack of consensus within civil society in Serbia, especially regarding the Serbian regime's responsibility for war and war crimes in the former
- A lack of adequate solidarity among groups and activists
- Inadequate funding or financial conditions for the civil society sector



Strategic Objectives

- I. Improve the quality and influence of transitional justice processes, including court proceedings, legal mechanisms, justice for victims of sexual violence and broader transitional justice processes that reach all levels of society
- II. Increase the international community's awareness regarding best practices for supporting current and future post-conflict integration and interethnic cooperation
- III. Increase information-sharing and improved interactions between Kosovo Serb and Albanian communities, including increased security for Serb civilians as promised by Albanians
- IV. Improve the capacity of WPC to address emergency situations and promote peace through the development of a strategy



Proposed Programs & Activities for 2008-2010

The proposed programs and activities for 2008-2010 correspond directly with the strategic objectives. Each program or activity seeks to address obstacles to transitional justice identified during the conference.

- I. Improve the quality and influence of transitional justice processes, including court proceedings, legal mechanisms, and broader transitional justice processes that reach all levels of society
 - 1.1 Citizens' forums organized by Albanian and Serbian women in Kosovo and Serbia where citizens speak about the crimes committed in their name and the crimes committed against them, as an alternative transitional justice process.
 - 1.2 Street performances to bring attention to cooperation between Kosovo Albanian, Kosovo Serb, and Serbian women and the possibilities for citizens to reach out to other citizens from different ethnic groups.
 - 1.3 Monitor court proceedings on war crimes committed in Kosovo and write reports on court proceedings, as a form of civic responsibility and responsibility towards peace.
 - 1.4 Provide moral support to Kosovar Albanian families during court proceedings at the Special Council for War Crimes at the District Court in Serbia, as well as moral support to the Serbian families from Kosovo, who are victims of war crimes.
 - 1.5 Draft and advocate for law sanctioning and naming hate crimes and hate speech in Serbia and establish effective legal mechanisms for realizing the rights of victims and their families.
 - 1.6 Advocate for legal mechanisms with human approaches for the punishment of sexual violence crimes committed during the war.
 - 1.7 Public awareness campaign that recognizes sexual violence as a crime and educates society to eliminate the stigmatization of victims of sexual violence. Also, through public awareness campaign, encourage victims to break the silence and document crimes against them.

- II. Increase the international community's awareness regarding best practices for supporting current and future post-conflict integration and interethnic cooperation
 - 2.1 Advocacy campaign involving letter writing to decision-makers and article writing in foreign newspapers, which calls for an immediate decision regarding Kosovo's political situation.
 - 2.2 Advocacy campaign involving letter-writing and meetings with political leaders in Kosovo and Serbia, as well as international decision-makers demanding immediate resolution of the issues of missing persons and bodies
 - 2.3 Report with lessons learned from the international community's support of interethnic cooperation in Kosovo, with specific recommendations for future post-conflict and peace-keeping missions. The process takes time and needs to take place according to the terms set by the people most affected.



WPC plans to organize more public demonstrations, like this one held during the conference in Struga. Activists dressed like caterpillars to signify transformation.

- III. Increase information-sharing and improved interactions between Kosovo Serb and Albanian communities, including increased security for Serb civilians as promised by Albanians
- 3.1 Seminars with Serb women in enclaves in Kosovo. At first, general discussions. Later, exchange of information, discussing common experiences, and opinion-sharing. During site visits, Kosovo Albanian activists “extend a hand” to Serb communities, sending the message that Kosovo is their home as well. Also, awareness campaign with public demonstrations involving posters with political messages, conducted in cities throughout Kosovo; the campaign encourages Albanians in Kosovo to protect and ensure the security of Serbs in Kosovo.
- 3.2 Educational program that raises awareness about “the other” and breaks prejudices, including: 1) radio programs in Serbia with Kosovo Albanian women telling their stories and providing information about the position of Kosovo Albanian women; 2) Women from Serbia speaking about the bombing and their experiences to audiences in Kosovo; and 3) publishing a book with stories of activists from the two networks.



In the future, WPC hopes to promote more information-sharing between activists in Serbia and Kosovo.

- IV. Improve the capacity of WPC to address emergency situations and promote peace
- 4.1 Develop WPC emergency strategy: a proactive plan for individual and group safety, including possible positive and negative outcomes of a decision on the final status of Kosovo and how WPC will act in each scenario. The strategy shall include a system with specific tasks undertaken by individuals on each side for regularly informing each other about violent incidents and human rights abuses, including procedures for writing and immediately issuing common statements that condemn such acts of violence. The strategy will also include procedures for a bimonthly reporting system on the political situation, including a system for reacting immediately with joint declarations, especially in Serbia because of security issues. The plan shall be discussed with the Urgent Action Fund in advance in case negative consequences occur.
- 4.2 Establish two mailing lists for women in Kosovo and Serbia to properly distribute and get information about what each network is doing; Exchange profiles of organizations in the coalition.
- 4.3 Two to three-day seminars focusing on the past called “Meet Me to Understand Me” where activists from Kosovo and Serbia will share personal experiences, have workshops to identify steps toward peace, and become familiar with each other’s current work; make visits public through the media

Conference Agenda

Day I Theme: Transitional Justice

Facilitator of the day: Marija Perkovic

- 9.00 - 9.30 Welcome and summary from the last conference (Osnat Lubrani - UNIFEM, Igballe (Igo) Rogova - KWN, and Staša Zajovic - WiBN)
- 9.30 - 10.30 Panel Speeches:
 "What is transitional justice? Why is a feminist approach important?" - Staša Zajovic
 "Models of transitional justice: The experience of Women in Black" - Miloš Urošević
 "From non-punishment to responsibility and justice" - Veprora (Lola) Shehu
 "Transitional Justice: The Role of Civil Society, Difficulties and Challenges" - Nexhmije (Cuca) Fetahu
- 10.30 - 11.00 Coffee break
- 11.00 - 11.30 Discussions
- 11.30 - 12.00 Forming working groups
- 12.00 - 13.00 Working Groups: "Models of Transitional Justice: The Experience of Women in Black"
 Four workshops conducted and facilitated by WiBN
- 13.00 - 14.00 Lunch
- 14.00 - 15.30 Continuation of working groups
- 15.30 - 16.00 Coffee break
- 16.00 - 17.00 Presentations from the working groups
- 19.00 - 20.00 Street performance:
 "Women Peacemakers: We Go Slowly to Get There Safely"
- 20.30 - Dinner and Party

Day II Theme: Security and Horizontal Networking

Facilitator of the day: Violeta Selimi

- 9.00 - 9.30 Summary of Day I - Marija Perkovic
- 9.30 - 10.30 Panel Speeches
 "Women's Solidarity: Good Experiences and Challenges" - Marija Perkovic and Jasmina Mitrinovic
 "Women, Peace, and Security" - Mima Rašić and Igo Rogova
 Regional Aspects of Security" - Flora Macula
- 10.30 - 11.00 Coffee break
- 11.00 - 12.30 Working groups: Horizontal networking
 The theme of all four working groups is horizontal networking. Facilitators of the working groups are: Marija Perkovic, Emina Škrijelj, Igo Rogova and Veprora Shehu
- 12.30 - 13.30 Lunch
- 13.30 - 14.30 Presentations from the working Groups
- 14.30 - 15.00 Coffee break
- 15.00 - 16.00 Summarizing, next steps and conclusions
 - Staša Zajovic, Igo Rogova, and Flora Macula
- 16.30 Trip to Ohrid
- 20.30 - 21.30 Dinner

Day I. Transitional Justice



From left to right, Marija Perkovic, Staša Zajovic, Osnat Lubrani, and Igballe Rogova open the conference.

Opening Remarks

The conference was opened by [Osnat Lubrani](#), Regional Programme Director of UNIFEM. She said she would continue to mobilize support for the efforts of the Women's Peace Coalition. "I know the work is not always easy," Lubrani said. "And we at UNIFEM continue to be behind you."

Then [Staša Zajovic](#), Coordinator of Women in Black Network Serbia, summarized the current context and steps made since the last Women's Peace Coalition conference in 2006. "We are here offering support and solidarity in difficult times," she said. Since the last meeting, coalition members have tried to further their relations, she said. While a series of meetings had been organized in Belgrade and Prishtina that involved some members of the coalition, they wanted to hold a larger gathering that include more members. Zajovic believed that the conference would provide an opportunity for participants to work together to brainstorm future ideas for the coalition and its activism. "We activists of civil society want to take responsibility for peace and respecting human rights," she said. "We want to work together and realize our right to peace. Besides being visible to each other, we want to be visible in our communities. With our relations we want to have relations between the countries from which we come. We wanted to hear words different from the homogenized media."

Citing the coalition's "feminist ethics," Zajovic later commented that Serb activists were coming from a state responsible for ethnic cleansing. "People from Kosovo were victim to those ethnic politics," she said. She continued:

We cannot forget. This is a fact that shows our peaceful policy; we are marginalized in our country due to the extremely political stance. We are traitors in relation to the Kosovo status issue. We wanted to respect the Kosovo population. As feminists we need to know what is relating us and connecting us. We are connected not only because we are women, but also because we are from civil society, from Serbia and Kosovo. We have been excluded from the negotiations for the future status of Kosovo. We are connected, both countries, we both have the rooted patriarchal culture and discrimination against women. The not democratic political tradition is existent in both communities. The presence of nationalism and militarism is also present. In both countries is the issue of impunity. We from Serbia are taking on this issue.

[Igballe Rogova](#), Executive Director of the Kosova Women's Network continued, stating that in 2006 activists began the very important process of dealing with the past. "We are gathered here together to pick up where we left off last year," she said. Rogova then recognized the guests present at the conference, who "demonstrated their willingness to support" the coalition's work. First, she noted the special role that UNIFEM has played in supporting WPC, especially Osnat Lubrani and Flora Macula. She then thanked Christina Wassholm and Ida Udovic from the Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation, Ariella Futral from the Urgent Action Fund, Haya Shalom from Women in Black Israel, and Rachel Wareham for participating in and supporting the conference.

After the opening remarks, the moderator for the first day, [Marija Perkovic](#) from Women in Black, opened the first panel discussion, which dealt with transitional justice. The speakers included Staša Zajovic, Biljana Kovacevic - Vuco, Miloš Urošević, Vepre (Lola) Shehu, and Nexhmije (Cuca) Fetahu. Their speeches follow.

Transitional Justice - A Feminist Approach The Experience of Women in Black

By Staša Zajovic

Why is it necessary to confront the past?

Feminist ethics mean that I always have to be conscious of where I come from, from which emotional, moral, and political point I address others—from an aggressor state, in the aftermath of a criminal regime. It is quite accidental that I am a member of one ethnic group, but the previous regime intentionally, deliberately, and systematically organized and committed crimes in my name. The decision to ceaselessly, clearly, and publicly oppose that is part of my feminist ethics. My decision is to know, to repeat, and to seek accountability for the innumerable crimes committed in my and our name. I will enumerate only some of them here.

- Serb armed formations' siege of Sarajevo that lasted 1,425 days;
- The genocide in Srebrenica in July 1995, when more than 8,000 Bosniaks were killed.
- Operation Horseshoe' in Kosovo in 1999 - Serb armed formations burned 127,000 houses belonging to people with Albanian names and killed more than 12,000 people. Nearly 2,000 people with Albanian names were convicted after the Kumanovo Agreement (in June 1999) and held in jails throughout Serbia. All of their proceedings were politically rigged.
- The Sarajevo Research Center has gathered the names of 25,000 people who participated or collaborated in crimes in Bosnia-Herzegovina.
- In Bosnia-Herzegovina, nearly 300 mass graves have been found.

Will we be able to build a future with such a deranged value system today in Serbia? A system in which criminals are glorified and those who seek accountability for crimes committed in our name are demonized and criminalized? Of course not!

Can the criminal past be sent in a package to The Hague? Can we do something else? Only use the international community, international courts? Of course not! The Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences (SANU), The Serbian Orthodox Church (SPC), and many other institutions that created the cultural and ideological conditions which produced, justified, and excused war and war crimes remain in Serbia.

Can the criminal past be closed in an archive so we can open a door to a bright future? Of course not! The criminal past is a vortex. It cannot be passed by. It always returns to us in different forms. 'From Danube Refrigerator Trucks to The Hague Tribunal,' in the words of Nenad Dimitrijevic. Danube refrigerator trucks transported the corpses of Kosovar Albanians across Serbia.

Is addressing the criminal past only pragmatic, necessary because for integration with the international community and getting foreign credit? Of course not!



Confronting the criminal past is predominantly a moral category, necessary for us alone. Creating a new values system is independent from transition and from international integration. Involvement with the criminal past is a precondition for creating moral integrity and dignity. It is an obligation to victims of the crimes committed in our name. It is relationships among ourselves in Serbia.

Without serious confronting with the criminal past there is not justice. There is no future without democracy! Consequently, transitional justice is an imperative of our feminist ethics.

Staša Zajovic rings a bell during the WPC demonstration in Struga, Macedonia.

The Role of Civil Society from Serbia in Transitional Justice and Models of Transitional Justice

By Bilijana Kovacevic - Vuco

Transitional justice initiatives have been initiated by civil society in Serbia. The international community accepted a full model of integration of civil society into institutions. ... The enemies of transitional justice are the elite who do not want to break from the past, not only what Milošević has done, but what our government has done. I think this is the main obstacle in the negotiations.

The non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the NGO sector in Serbia were established during a tough period when Serbia was conducting wars in our name. NGOs were having campaigns for war deserters. Nothing was regulated, and we wanted to end the negative obstacles and fighting against desertion. ... Albin Kurti was released from prison at that time. This happened thanks to NGOs and the pressure of the international community.

Another model from that time: we had a program of demilitarization. We had a movement of negotiators. We organized a list of signatures and tried to set up functional changes. ...

There are many models of transitional justice. There is a risk of creating stereotypes. ... What was necessary to be done was not done. Milošević politics had the general support of the international community. At that moment, it was thought to leave Serbia as it is now. ...

We had persons who were fighting the new system of values, creating systems of transitional justice, dealing with the past, and creating a new system to overcome crimes. NGOs and civil society that are dealing with this have not had any kind of support. They have become victims of double discrimination by the political elite and the state, which have dehumanized the main civil society actors who were fighting for political justice. Political leaders bring stereotypes against women fighting for transitional justice. They are pushing us in a systematic way and creating a moral inversion of the crimes and negative things that Serbia did at that time. Now, being distanced from the crimes committed in our name, the negative events and the serious behaviors, the justice is very minimal. ... According to our personal experiences and examples, we are now the "victims" and victims rarely play the role of changing the system. You can be active and you can change the system. Trials are made against us, and we have not committed a crime. ...

We have many dilemmas. We have an organization dealing with human rights. ... We are denouncers and responsible. We are not being allowed to work with

this because the organization dealing with human rights cannot deal with transitional justice ... We need to denounce the holders of criminal policy. ... They should be the holders of the policy. They should deal with the policy that has brought about big crimes.

Another part of the story is that the people who deal with transitional justice are women, and they are not supported morally from those who should follow these values in Serbia.



Bilijana Kovacevic - Vuco at Ohrid Lake during the conference.

Models of Transitional Justice: The Experience of Women in Black

By Miloš Urošević

The first actions were in the streets: the demonstrations against war crimes in Croatia and Bosnia from 1991 to 1995 and then in Kosovo. These were commemorations, and every year we mark the anniversary of Srebrenica and in Strpce and Suhareka.

Campaigns: These have not been funded, meaning we were acting without funds, apart from the campaign against the law on aiding the Hague Tribunal. We have also submitted petitions to the courts.

Visiting of crime scenes where crimes were committed on our behalf: We have visited the scenes of crimes committed on our behalf. We are trying to show women's solidarity and to recognize crimes committed in our name. Women activists have been visiting commemorations.

Also, we recognize important dates. We remind people of dates in relation to different anti-war initiatives and initiatives against patriotism.

Public testimonies: in 2005, on the anniversary of Srebrenica, we organized testimonies with women in Srebrenica. We shared stories of the war.

Following trials: We have followed many trials: Flora Brovina, Albin Kurti, [and others]. We monitored the proceedings of the Special Court founded in 2003.



Women from our organization have been with the families of persons who died in Srebrenica. We also followed the trial of the Scorpions for crimes committed in 1995. Also, we followed the trial related to Suhareka when Serbia killed 48 civilians. We spent 41 days with the cousins of the civilians who were killed.

Educational activities: Peace and democracy bridges in 1998 - 2002. We organized 30 lectures on The Hague Tribunal: for and against. We are also organizing workshops on the topic of "addressing the past." We have had promotions of authors, video projections, "see no change" documentary films on unarmed resistance to war with examples from Serbia, and remembering women's resistance. About 3000 people have participated in these activities.

From Non-Punishment to Responsibility and Justice

By Vepore (Lola) Shehu

They use their mouths to break your spirit
Like he invaded your womanhood and broke your body
I use words to build your soul
And bring life to you again...

You can be more than what you are today
You will reach a higher mountain than ever before
You are a survivor, a fighter, a conqueror
Stand on the mountain of pain and stigma in triumph

You matter, you count
You are important, you make a difference
You are here in the today
Despite the wrongs and pains of yesterday

I open this presentation using verses of the poet Janah Ncube from Uganda who dedicated this poem to 300 women, young mothers who marched on the roads of Gulus on 25 May 2007 to bring to attention the position of survivors of sexual violence.

Every war and conflict in the world has used sexual violence as a strategy to transform men into weapons and women into battlefields. The victims, mainly women and young girls, remain with tortured bodies and souls, crippled, broken, and traumatized. Their families and society make them feel ashamed, stigmatized, and victimized for the crimes committed against them. At the same time, those who perpetrated these crimes remain free from punishment. Sexual violence exercised toward our women has to this day remained a silent crime. Silence for them is a safe way out, and an instrument for protecting dignity.

Medica Kosova has supported many women who have been through horrible experiences of violence during the war in Kosovo. Some of the clients still carry physical traces of violations, while the psychological and emotional consequences are severe. Despite the desire to report the perpetrators of sexual crimes during the war and after it, they prefer to remain silent. "To me justice should be reached firstly within the society, where we take part every day," one of our clients said.

"We seek equality with men while I do not feel equal with other women because I have gone through a shameful experience to women and their role in the society," said a Medica client who is currently at The Hague awaiting resettlement in

a European Union country. She experienced many traumas during the war; she witnessed the massacre of three of her family members and was systematically raped for two weeks, held captive somewhere in Prishtina. Although heavy security measures were taken during her first testimony in the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, she faced horrific consequences after returning to her village. Most people understood the true reason for her trip to The Hague. "Why wasn't it a public hearing when you went to testify about the murder of family members?" the villagers commented. She narrowly escaped rape from two Albanians from her village, whom she heard say that she was raped once so it wouldn't be a problem if she was raped again. This was the reason why her second testimony at the Tribunal was conditioned with the possibility of her resettlement in a third country or at least asylum in Holland.

Up to this day, sexual violence in armed conflicts is prosecuted mainly at the international level through ad hoc courts established by the United Nations, such as The Hague Tribunal and the International Criminal Court for Sierra Leone. Human rights activists around the world have welcomed the establishment of war crimes courts and the recognition of rape as a war crime and crime against humanity, sharing the opinion that the impunity of this crime will come to an end, and that a new phase will be born of intensive punishments against perpetrators of sexual crimes. However, the number of people judged for these crimes is still quite low compared to the high number of rape cases during the war in Kosovo and other conflict countries. Until we denounce the authors of these terrible crimes, why these crimes being perpetrated, and who gave them the power and authorization to commit these crimes, we are not in a position to touch the impunity surrounding these crimes.

Realistically, most interventions linked with gender-based violence are initially focused on supporting the victim and fulfilling their needs for psychological and health care; building of self-esteem and self-appraisal; and sensitizing the society regarding the position of victims of this type of violence. Yet, governments and judicial systems have failed at different levels to recognize the influence of violence on victims, the special effects this violence has on women, and their special needs in order to overcome the consequences of this violence. Many women and girls, victims of gender-based violence, believe that men are above the law and that to begin with prosecution they will be faced with different accusations, including those of provocation, re-traumatic procedures of documentation, and even embarrassment in front of their family and society.

Many advocating activists of our association, whether through their own initiative or joint campaigns with the Kosova Women's Network, have focused on eliminating taboos surrounding the sexual violence committed during the war and gender-based violence after the war. Although society in general is becoming

more sensitized, there has been a lack of institutional recognition, which would facilitate not only the drafting of legislation that would benefit these victims, but also their integration into society. "When government officials ignore the rapes perpetrated during the war and prefer to pretend like nothing has happened, who are we to raise this issue?" said some women who heard the comments of government officials immediately after the war. It is true that institutional recognition was missing, and it continues to be lacking all these years after the war. Medica has made efforts to integrate these women in the existing law on civil victims of war, but continues to wait for the government to focus on the wellbeing of the population rather than political races for preserving or strengthening power. Still, women activists will develop a strategy for documenting sexual crimes by breaking the silence and identifying the perpetrators of these crimes. Documentation is a decisive means in the building of individual, national, regional, and international mechanisms to end impunity and to realize justice.

Therefore, comprehensive measures must be taken for us to end impunity for sexual crimes. It is our responsibility as activists to educate society to eliminate the stigmatization of victims of sexual violence. It is the responsibility of the state to recognize these crimes and to put in place legal mechanisms with human approaches for the punishment of these crimes. And it is the responsibility of



survivors of these crimes to break the silence and document the crimes against them.

Breaking the silence is the price that the victims will have to pay to end the agony and to frighten potential future criminals from committing further crimes. We know that silence does not provide security, but opens the way for action and the punishment of criminals. "The birth of my words could be the death of my shame and agony" is a saying taken from the world women activists during the process of supporting the survivors of sexual violence.

Transitional Justice: The Role of Civil Society, Difficulties and Challenges

By Nexhmije (Cuca) Fetahu

It is the right of any society to clearly address during the transition phase human rights violations. During the transition from a repressive system or a period of conflict or war towards peace and democracy, the state and civil society must undertake various actions which lead towards the ascertaining and the recognition of these violations and their punishment.

In order to rebuild trust and coexistence in a new democratic state, the type of state we desire to have in Kosovo, Kosovar society must face the heavy burden of the past in order to move forward to a phase where its citizens may feel peace and justice.

Many analysts have studied this issue, striving to find the best way to achieve righteous peace in post-conflict countries. The question is: how to make a family that has lost loved ones feel that justice is occurring and that criminals are being punished? This is an issue that has preoccupied many students of modern times, and, as a result, different mechanisms have been created which aim to realize the rights of victims and their families.

Despite the many voices that are suspicious about the role of mechanisms established by societies for realizing justice in transitory periods (such as war crimes tribunals, etc.), the necessity of these mechanisms is obvious. Such mechanisms are needed to attempt to punish crimes and bring feelings of peace to citizens. I say "attempt," because unfortunately so far these mechanisms have not proven to be successful in their mission. Societies must work continuously to find other effective forms of punishment, so that people can carry on with their lives.

It is impossible to build the future without cleaning the past.

The role of civil society is great in realizing the right of citizens to a future with as little baggage from the past as possible. As an alternative voice, a voice that is closest to the people and recognizes people's suffering, civil society activists are obliged to deal with this problem, to find ways to support citizens in their search for their right to a peaceful future, with themselves and others.

Kosovar society was very active immediately after the war. Many organizations and civil society activists made several efforts to assist citizens in a new beginning. Civil society in Kosovo, thanks to a long history of activism before the war, was willing to continue its activities immediately after the war in building a new Kosovo.

Kosovo faced a very difficult situation with tens of thousands dead and over 3000 missing, mass destruction, an international administrative mission, confusion, and disorganization in every field of life. On the one hand people felt euphoria and joy for freedom, while at the same time many Kosovar families felt the pain and tragedy of having lost loved ones. Those who continue to have missing loved ones even to this day have had an even harder time.

There was an urgent need for civil society to raise its voice to support these families and to seek justice on their behalf. One of the first forms of activism after the war in Kosovo was the organizing of nationwide protests to hold international decision-makers accountable for ascertaining the fate of missing persons. Many human rights activists were mobilized for this cause, including many women activists and citizens. Protests lasting several days were organized, as well as letters and petitions to local and international decision-makers. KWN member organizations such as Medica, Motrat Qiriaz Has, and many others were engaged in direct fieldwork with women heads of families who had missing husbands. Many civil society organizations aimed to open interethnic dialogue in Kosovo, had several initiatives for conflict resolution, and concentrated on finding common areas for interethnic cooperation.

However, the work of civil society organizations was not easy after the war. In those times, one of the largest barriers civil society faced was international organizations that came to Kosovo with set plans for "reconciliation" between people of different ethnicities. It was entirely illogical and improper to work on reconciliation when people were so hurt from the war with deceased family members or missing loved ones!

The request or ultimatum given by the international community in Kosovo after the war was "forget the past and carry on with your lives"! Who can build a future in such a way? Peace and coexistence cannot be built on such a fragile basis. Such a peace would be unsustainable, such a coexistence unhealthy.



Why did it happen in Kosovo? Simply because the international community failed to communicate with local actors, activists, experts, and citizens. Local actors were not included in common planning! The mission in Kosovo failed because it did not conduct a proper situational analysis, but rather used plans taken from other countries and experiences without considering the specific nature of this conflict. How could trust be built on artificial grounds? The international community in Kosovo asked Albanians after the war to build trust and a common life with Kosovar Serbs. But the same international community has not taken the slightest action to accomplish legitimate Albanian requests, starting with the most pragmatic requests, such as ascertaining the fate of the missing and the immediate and complete return of the bodies of Albanians killed during the war. Further, it has not taken definite action to determine the final status of Kosovo as a necessary basis for building the future.

Justice has to be accomplished from different aspects, whether legal or non legal, to heal wounds and enable social reconstruction. We must always consider the unique social and cultural contexts of societies emerging from wars or repression and undertake actions in line with these contexts in order to make possible a new beginning for a wounded society, to restore trust between citizens and communities, and to prevent future human rights violations.

Civil society in Kosovo faces numerous challenges to accomplishing its mission in this transitory phase. Civil society recognizes its primary duty is to seek the achievement of human rights. However, to achieve its mission it must overcome many barriers such as the unclear political situation, the lack of global political will for defining the political status of Kosovo which leaves room for confusion, and local institutions' failure to accomplish its obligations, instead avoiding responsibility.

Another challenge civil society in Kosovo faces is the Serbian community's refusal to cooperate and integrate themselves in the new state of Kosovo. Unfortunately, although eight years have lapsed since the war, the government of Serbia continues to have much influence over Kosovo Serb community members. This negatively influences not only the Serbian community, but all Kosovar society. Therefore, this will be one of the greatest challenges for civil society activists in Kosovo, namely to integrate the Serbian community after Kosovo's status is decided.

Many initiatives and activities have been taken in cooperation with the Serbian community. KWN considers extending a hand of cooperation to Serbian people in Kosovo a high priority. We have to make it clear to the Serbian community in Kosovo that Kosovo is their place, that they have to work and live in Kosovo,

and that by bettering the economic and social situation, they and their families will have improved conditions.

In relation to transitional justice and establishing mechanisms for transitional justice, I also consider analyzing the international community's mission a task for civil society in Kosovo. Analysis and recommendations for upcoming missions are a necessity. Making small recommendations may lead to big changes in future missions following other conflicts in the world. Approaches toward transitional justice must be based on the rights and needs of victims and their families.

Such an approach has not been realized in Kosovo; effective mechanisms for realizing the rights of victims and their families have not been established. On the contrary, victims were asked to be patient, willing to forgive, and to coexist on the very first day after the war! What an irony. These are lessons learned that might be helpful in future international post-conflict missions, which, unfortunately, will continue to exist.

We, activists, have to work in two directions. First, we must continue to pressure our government officials to ensure the implementation of existing mechanisms for realizing the rights of victims and their families. Second, we must continue to work in the field toward establishing a tolerant and healthy environment where citizens can build a future upon the basis of a just peace.

Summary

Marija Perkovic summarized the first panel session on transitional justice: "The international community helps us in the region, but sometimes it does not consider the situation in which we live." She emphasized the importance of targeting both international and local institutions with future advocacy efforts.

Working Group Recommendations on Transitional Justice

Following a coffee break, participants divided into working groups that focused on “Models of Transitional Justice and Experiences of Women in Black,” “Visiting Sites of Crimes Committed in Our Name and the Policy of Forgiveness,” “Forgiveness: Feminist Ethical Concerns and Following Trials,” and “Working Group 4: Feminist Ethics of Responsibility: Civil Society’s Role in Transitional Justice.” After a two and a half hour discussion, including a break for lunch, participants reconvened to hear the following presentations from representatives of the working groups.

Working Group 1: Models of Transitional Justice and Experiences of Women in Black

Our group analyzed what had been done to date through individual and group work. Then we presented a film on what Women in Black has done so far. After the lunch break, the group came up with the following concrete results.

The negative aspects or obstacles to transitional justice are:

- Serb police
- The indoctrination of Serbian policy in Serb enclaves in Kosovo
- Lack of information and communication between Serb and Albanian communities
- Lack of adequate finances
- Administrative problems like passports, especially for women from Kosovo to visit Serbia because they do not have the necessary documentation
- Short meetings
- Limited number of meetings, perhaps partially due to a lack of documentation
- Lack of safety for activists

The transitional justice initiatives we can undertake together are:

- Joint visits and activities to exchange information about what has happened, common experiences, common stories, and opinion-sharing
- Include men who can be allies in our common work
- Change women’s position
- Use others (intellectuals and the possibility of shows in the media). We have heard information from outside, such as the experiences of activists in Palestine and Israel. We have the possibility to have a clearer view of what is happening there and in our countries.

Working Group 2: Visiting Sites of Crimes Committed in Our Name and the Policy of Forgiveness

Our group had ten participants (five Albanian and five Serb), which was positive because we could share information and experiences related to visiting crime scenes and the policy of forgiveness. We discussed our expectations and posed questions as to why participants chose this particular workshop and what they expected from it. What was striking was the expectation to speak openly about evil crimes and criminals. In this, Albanians and Serbs were sad. Why? The crimes committed in our name were terrible. Through the workshop, we [Serb activists] asked forgiveness from the Albanian women there.

Then, we shared personal experiences from the 1990s, especially during the bombing campaign, but also before 1999. We also shared experiences as to how we can impact our environment so that the truth will be found. Afterward, we discussed whether we can jointly visit the places where crimes were committed. I was sad because the Albanian women said that there was not a problem as far as they were concerned, but maybe because of the crimes it could be difficult for victims. They said that perhaps it was too early for something like that to be done.

Regarding the policy of forgiveness, we gave eight basic principles of this policy:

- 1) The development of the will to hear the truth in relation to crimes committed in our name, which in Serbia does not exist among the majority of Serb community members
- 2) Recognition and acceptance of the truth in relation to crimes committed in our name
- 3) Empathy and solidarity with the victims and families of victims of these crimes
- 4) Individual and group liability for crimes committed on our behalf
- 5) Moral reliability
- 6) During the workshop, we agreed that by being silent about the crimes committed on our behalf, we are condoning that silence. Crimes need to be labeled as such.
- 7) Visiting the places where crimes were committed and appealing to victims who survived to forgive us for everything that was done, especially in relation to Kosovo, and especially in relation to the crimes committed by police



Veproje Shehu, ... discuss in the working group.

Working Group 3: Forgiveness: Feminist Ethical Concerns and Following Trials

Through personal examples we have shown our ethics of awareness and how we care about others. What we have concluded, and I think we will speak more about tomorrow, is to plan some joint actions. We can use next year for these activities that were not finished, unfortunately, but that we have at least started thinking about. We have decided to discuss it informally. The next 365 days won't pass only with meetings, but with concrete actions together.

Women from Kosovo said that they wanted to come to Serbia to follow the court proceedings on war crimes committed in Kosovo and to give moral support to Kosovo families. Advije Gashi said she would like to be informed about the court session dates and what we wrote about this. I believe in September a group from Kosovo will come to visit Belgrade.

Working Group 4: Feminist Ethics of Responsibility: Civil Society's Role in Transitional Justice

We discussed transitional justice and the stereotypes that are preventing the development of models of transitional justice:

- 1) Criminal responsibility is not individual. It is group responsibility
- 2) Genocide requires collective responsibility because it is a well-organized structure, it has political support, numerous minds behind its organization, and executors
- 3) Lack of clarity related to the notion of collective responsibility
- 4) Officials should be held responsible
- 5) People running the government are active carriers of the politics of crime
- 6) The state of Serbia did not identify the crime. Therefore the crime cannot be punished
- 7) The justice system is not supporting justice (avoiding institutional responsibility with the support of the international community)
- 8) Elections are an important instrument, but not enough for democracy
- 9) The role of civil society is to pressure the state
- 10) Lack of political consensus within civil society regarding responsibility

During the second part of the working group, we discussed the ethical policies of Women in Black. First, I will introduce the first session of the workshop on guilt and responsibility. We discussed criminal liability. We had a law expert among us, and we came up with an important law to help us deal with individual and collective liability. We mentioned that for genocide, which is systematic and structured, an individual cannot be held responsible. Genocide requires an organized structure and many actors and brains, so here we have massive lia-

bility. Legal persons and political actors are responsible. One problem is that the state did not identify the evil, and therefore the evil cannot be punished. One of the responsibilities of the state is to identify the crime or evil and then to punish. We saw that in our legal system we have gaps. The law is not satisfying justice. For this, we need support from the international community. Elections are important too, but not important enough for the implementation of laws. The role of civil society is very important in transitional justice. Within civil society we need to achieve consensus regarding liabilities and to speak about liabilities.

Next we spoke about obstacles:

- Lack of law and reforms
- Denial of hate crimes
- Educational reform = culture of peace
- Lack of consensus related to responsibility within the community
- International community interprets just democracy very formally because there is no clear stance in relation to the real problems in the region
- International community requests or requires NGOs and institutions to work according to its standards, methods, and priorities
- Lack of solidarity

Finally, we discussed the principles of Women in Black, and how they are implemented in individuals' work and in activists' work.



Advije Gashi listens to a speaker during the first session.

Concluding Remarks

Igballe Rogova: During these presentations, I heard from two groups the importance of more networking and joint activities. I want to explain that this is something we will discuss tomorrow. Working groups with representatives of Women in Black and KWN members will work together tomorrow afternoon to strategize on this issue: horizontal networking. Last year we said we were going to organize, but it didn't happen. The political situation had its impact. Tomorrow we have the opportunity to discuss how we can do these activities. It doesn't mean that they have to be influenced by someone or to come from outside pressure, but it could be done spontaneously. Certainly we can organize visits to people who were victims of crimes in Serbia and Kosovo.

Nada Dabic: In the evening there will be a demonstration. We will have military helmets and food. We will ask the question: which is a better use of money: for military or social programs? First, women with written messages will stand in front of the centre stage for 15 minutes in silence. Afterward, we will bring the helmets and put the baskets with food. We have caterpillars. In the second part, they will turn the helmets over into flower pots, creating a symbol of peace. In the meantime, other women at the spot will deliver messages of peace. Women from Serbia need to have black clothes. For guests, come as you wish.

Other Activities

In the early evening, participants demonstrated in the town centre of Struga, Macedonia, according to the description of the demonstration. The performance drew a crowd of more than one hundred onlookers, including a tour group from Turkey, which literally applauded WPC efforts toward peace. Passers-by were intrigued by the performance and paused to ask questions of demonstrators and to take photographs of the performance.

Later in the evening, following supper, participants came together at a dance party held in the nightclub in the basement of the hotel. Music was prepared by Igballe Rogova, especially for the occasion. Many participants danced until early in the morning.



DAY II. Security & Horizontal Networking

Opening Remarks

Marija Perkovic opened the second day of the conference with a summary of the first day. Following the speeches, the first working group that dealt with “Models of transitional justice and experiences of Women in Black” described the obstacles and what Women’s Peace Coalition members could do jointly. Obstacles included the policy of the Serbian authorities, which has impacted the Serbian political elite, insufficient information among population, and inadequate funding or financial conditions of the civil society sector in Serbia. Another obstacle is the lack of passports or travel documents, which impedes Kosovar activists from crossing the border. A further obstacle is that there is never enough time. Finally, there is the issue of security; none of us feel sufficiently safe in the conditions in which we live. We can do several things together. We propose visiting the sites of crimes, exchanging opinions, and including men and other potential allies, especially progressive women and men intellectuals.

The second working group on “visiting sites of crimes committed in my name and the policy of forgiveness” made one specific proposal, which we will discuss more today: visiting the sites of crimes.

The third working group on “forgiveness: feminist ethical concerns and following trials” also discussed visiting the sites of crimes committed in our name. Women from Kosovo also wanted to visit the courts in Serbia and to provide moral support to families that suffered losses.

The fourth working group “feminist ethics of responsibility: civil society’s role in transitional justice” presented the task of civil society: to pressure institutions at the national and international level to change the system of values in our societies. An obstacle to the work of civil society is lack of support from international institutions, especially related to dealing with crimes, facing the past, and transitional justice. A second obstacle is the dehumanization of part of the civil sector. Third, an issue within civil society, which is a problem when we work on transitional justice issues, is working with a high level of loyalty to the ethnic groups we belong. There is also a lack of consensus within civil society. Then, there is the degree of responsibility that our authorities take in the production of war and war crimes. We need to work on this issue. Another obstacle is the lack of laws, like a law on sanctioning and naming crimes like hate crimes, which include negating crimes that have been committed. Another obstacle to achieving justice is the bad educational system, which doesn’t include a culture of peace; democratic values are not included. A further obstacle is the formal approach of the international community, which looks at us to satisfy a form, not to meet the val-

ues that we want to achieve. An obstacle is that the same international community insists that we communicate with our intuitions, which are nationalistic and contradict the values that we represent. The lack of solidarity is another obstacle to our joint work. I believe we will discuss this issue further in the next panel, and we will work more on the issue of women’s solidarity.

The Urgent Action Fund

After Marija Perkovic concluded her summary of the first day, Ariella Futral provided information about the Urgent Action Fund and how it could potentially support members of the Women’s Peace Coalition. She said that the Urgent Action Fund provided three types of support:



Ariella Futral provides information about the Urgent Action Fund.

- 1) Response to armed conflict, escalating violence or politically volatile environments.
- 2) Potentially precedent-setting legal or legislative actions, or actions that aim to protect a precedent that has already been set.
- 3) Protection and security of women human rights defenders.

The Urgent Action Fund requires 72 hours to respond to grant applications and one week disperse funds. Ariella Futral made informational materials available in Serbian, Albanian, and English for conference participants.



Following the opening remarks, the moderator for the day, Violeta Selimi, introduced the speakers for the panel discussion: Haya Shalom, Marija Perkovic, Jasmina Mitrinovic, Mima Rašić, Igballe (Igo) Rogova, and Flora Macula whose speeches are printed below.

Violeta Selimi moderates the panel discussion on security and networking.

Redefining Security: The Experience of Women in Black Israel

By Haya Shalom

Haya Shalom told a story based on her experience working with Women in Black Israel.

The minister of education initiated a law that women should participate in negotiations, but it did not have teeth. It was more of a declaration. Then, two days after the kidnapping of soldiers, women had a conference on women and security. Women made a list with hundreds of women who could participate in negotiations and gave it to the minister. Immediately after, activists asked what was happening. The minister said the kidnapping was an issue of national security and they needed to respond to it immediately. She voted for starting the war. In one hand, she supported women's involvement in peace processes. She was one of the former leaders of Peace Now, a big popular movement in Israel for peace. From this story, you can see how women get trapped in militarism and nationalism in our country.

After this, a women's peace coalition started a project called "What is Security?" about everyone's security. We wanted to re-define security, from national security to civil security. We wanted to really change the concept within civil society as a start. The project is mostly educational in all cities of Israel.

In the last year, three to four high ranking officials were sued for harassing and raping women. For months a general in the army raped a soldier who was under his command. The minister of justice harassed a woman (soldier) by kissing her and pushing his tongue to her mouth. Third, a woman who worked in the president's office accused the President of raping her. As part of our campaign on security, the women's peace coalition started a campaign directly related to these sex crimes. The coalition built a bigger coalition. Since the women's peace coalition was mostly women for peace, it was enlarged to eleven women's organizations. The campaign was to remove all people of rank in the regime from their position, to prosecute them, and to imprison them. Usually the strategy was to talk and focus on the victim, not the attacker. Here we changed it by attacking the people who were in high ranks, the people leading the country, and saying, "No. You are not going to get out of this crime."

For example, the Prime Minister wanted to promote the Minister of Justice to a higher position. We had a campaign to put him on trial and then to oust him from the government. What was interesting was to see how the media changed. At the same time, the President, Minister, and General were feeding the media saying, "These women are only for women. They want to use us. They want revenge. They want to be in the newspaper headlines. Nothing happened. If

something happened it was because they initiated it." Many people swallowed these arguments. But because of our campaign, discussions, and speaking numerous times in the media, the media started to change its attitude. Media became more sympathetic to the victims or sex survivors, but they also started changing this concept of what is security. In this country the war continues because of national security, but people also need security in economics, work, and personal security, to be defended from these sexual crimes.

A shocking part of the campaign was when twelve women who were sex survivors came in front of the parliament and had a vigil. It was the first time ever that survivors with no veil, with open face, open eyes, looked into people's eyes and said, "We're not living in secret. We are not going to live underground. We are challenging you, and you need to change the policy and attitude toward women, women and violence, and sexual violence." This influenced and impacted society. Then a deal was made in the justice system: the prosecutor and president made a deal. The president would admit that he raped the girl, and he would basically get out of it, following some social service.

Then three to five more women sued him because he continually harassed and raped women while he was in the government. The people were so angry that there was a spontaneous gathering of people in the main square of Tel Aviv following only one ad in the paper and some emails. There was no arrangement for people to come, for example in buses. However, thirty to forty thousand people came by car or public buses to say they did not agree that the president would get out of these crimes. It was very new. Usually you see the same people at demonstrations, but it was new people. The case is still in high court. In a



week or two there will be a decision whether the president can accept the deal or not.

While women's organizations sometimes fight, they came together for this initiative.

Also, the President resigned, the general was imprisoned, and the minister is doing social services.

Haya Shalom shares experiences from the work of Women in Black Israel.

Women's Solidarity: Good Experiences and Difficulties

By Marija Perkovic

I think that we can say that the phrase “women’s solidarity” is currently interpreted in at least two ways. First, the “Essentialist Interpretation” calls for solidarity with all women on the basis of the simple biological fact that we all belong to the female sex. From this understanding, women’s solidarity leads to action which, on one hand, “empowers women” (psycho-social support) and, on the other, focuses on the state legal system, demanding equal legal treatment for both sexes. Although this interpretation labels patriarchy responsible for the unequal status of women, it most often does not consider the complex societal reality that contemporary patriarchy creates; our class differences; and national, religious, and racial identities, which are centuries-old excuses for repression and war-making. To not consider all of our differences and diversity, but only those and all mechanisms which patriarchy uses to control women (as well as men), the essentialist interpretation of women’s solidarity has no means of criticizing capitalist patriarchy. It does not possess the power to create solidarity which would demolish the complex patriarchal system.

Second, the “Critical Interpretation” tries to include all the complexity of patriarchy and recognize all the forms and mechanisms of domination and exploitation of the patriarchal system. Engagement based on such an understanding of women’s solidarity does not start by demanding institutional recognition of the equality of women and men. On the contrary, a critical approach criticizes institutions (the state) and the prevailing values system based on competition and violence (society). In this case, women’s solidarity exceeds solidarity with women; it includes solidarity with everyone who is marginalized or deprived of their rights. Since the question of why we talk so much about “women’s solidarity,” and not only about “solidarity” still exists - it was already being asked among the left in the 19th Century - I think we must talk about the reasons for viewing the vigilance of feminists to recognize all points of repression (which our leftist comrades have not taken into consideration because this work, for example emotional exploitation of women in romantic relationships, is banal to them), and the way of expressing women’s solidarity which does not end with formalism, but tries to create fullness of our interpersonal, political and emotional relationships.

Consequently, Women in Black’s practice of women’s solidarity is based on the ethical and political values that we share, not biological facts. The feminist ethic of care and the feminist ethic of responsibility are based on our political involvement, which recognizes militarism, nationalism, clericalism/fundamentalism, homophobia, and neo-liberal imperialism (globalization) as patriarchal forms of repression.

I would like to remind you that the feminist ethic of care deconstructs the patriarchal role of the woman who exclusively cares about her male relatives. The feminist ethic of care, in contrast, does not discard the idea of care for others, but it offers me the freedom to choose who I will care for, outside of the dictates of patriarchy. The feminist ethic of responsibility deconstructs capitalist ideas of self-sufficiency (or egoism) of “one state, one nation” and the role of citizens in such states. Similarly, the feminist ethic of responsibility deconstructs blind membership and loyalty to the state and nation, but also to a religion, race, or class. It offers me the possibility to independently define my community, as well as to adopt critical, responsible relationships towards communities which claim me by my birth (including states, nations, and religions).

The political engagement of Women in Black, the concrete practice of women’s solidarity, grows out of such ethics. Feminism recognized that militarism and nationalism are the direct products of patriarchy. Consequently, the political engagement of Women in Black is antimilitarist and antinationalist. In the case of antimilitarist involvement, besides obvious solidarity with those who are victims of war all over the world, women’s solidarity is reflected in the creation of alternative cultures of peace and nonviolent relationships. Women’s solidarity also means disloyalty to militant structures in one’s state and society.



Marija Perkovic moderates the first panel discussion

For me, as a Women in Black activist from Serbia, antinationalism is most important at this moment. My reality is that I live in an aggressor state in which national identity and the supposed endangerment of the Serb nation was the excuse for hegemonic politics and numerous wars in the former Yugoslavia. In this case, antinationalist involvement means disloyalty to the nation which claims me and to my own state. As long as it is my ethical principle to care for others (which is really a deepening of the oldest universal moral law, "do not kill") and I am a self-aware, responsible person who in every moment wants to distinguish good from evil, to me there is no such "higher goal," "national interest," or "state interest" that can compel me to do evil. A step further which I make, on the basis of these ethical principles, is my aforementioned antinationalism, which means refusing all romantic notions about the nation, notions which are really dangerous and openly chauvinist. These political and ethical principles which I have accepted from Women in Black also obligate me to ceaselessly oppose the glorification of criminals who led wars and committed crimes in my name.

Additionally, antinationalism means internationalism, which leads to solidarity with women and men of other nations and states. By discarding blind loyalty to my nation, I discard all prejudices about other nations. My women's solidarity means that I connect myself to all the women of the world, allowing for our differences, but insisting on the values in which I deeply believe are universal and are the only response to ever-present violence. This means that I, as a feminist and activist in Serbia, offer support to victims created by my government and support to victims of other beliefs and ethnicities. That means gathering with them, following trials for war criminals, "going out on a limb" for them, and listening to them. Together, we try to create a different space and different values. Together with them constantly, I remember that crimes were committed. Together with them, I demand justice.

As long as women thoughtlessly accept the forms of patriarchy listed here (militarism, nationalism, and others) as their own convictions, these forms will be obstacles to women's solidarity. Nationalism demands loyalty from women based on ethnic belonging; this divides women. As long as we recognize nationalism, (militarism, clericalism, and fundamentalism) as something that divides us and as something that is falsely presented to us as emancipation, (nationalism really negates women's right to choice, and reduces her to a machine for reproducing members of the nation and ethnic group, a thing which belongs to men) we can cross borders which appear like nationalism and create a world truly in solidarity. Refusing all forms of patriarchy is a condition for women's solidarity and shows the true practice of Women in Black and the associations and coalitions which they have created in the Balkans and throughout the world.

Am I a Woman with Solidarity?

By Jasmina Mitrović

When did I begin to act in solidarity? Am I in solidarity? Has someone been in solidarity with me, heard my story? The significant issue is that every woman is in solidarity to the degree that she is ready to confront her own reflection in the mirror, to accept herself as she is and share a small part of herself with other women who need a story, advice, or a handshake without a false smile.

Solidarity is a choice that I have made and share with those who were or are in solidarity with me, who understand their special qualities and my special qualities. When I hear a story, I try hard to understand every word and to hear what is said by facial expressions, clasping hands in one's lap, strange pauses between two sentences, and intentions to stop, begin another track, or hush up what hurts.

And at the end of the story, silence resounds bitterly and boldly, not ready for more truth. I learned to also hear silence. A frightened smile which quivers on the lips relates a story. That story prompts my change, my decision to accept the ethic of care as my choice to act as I am, to talk only with people similar to myself in this way. This is the choice of the ethic of care, guidelines for the solidarity values of equality in statements and thoughts.

All of this retelling, hushing up, jotting down, and even hiding stories prompts us to constantly learn who we are emotionally, socially, and politically from the beginning. We are on our own to resist values and rules of life imposed by patriarchy and to avoid and prevent discrimination. We should constantly learn who is "the other" in our story and if we are an "other" in some other story.

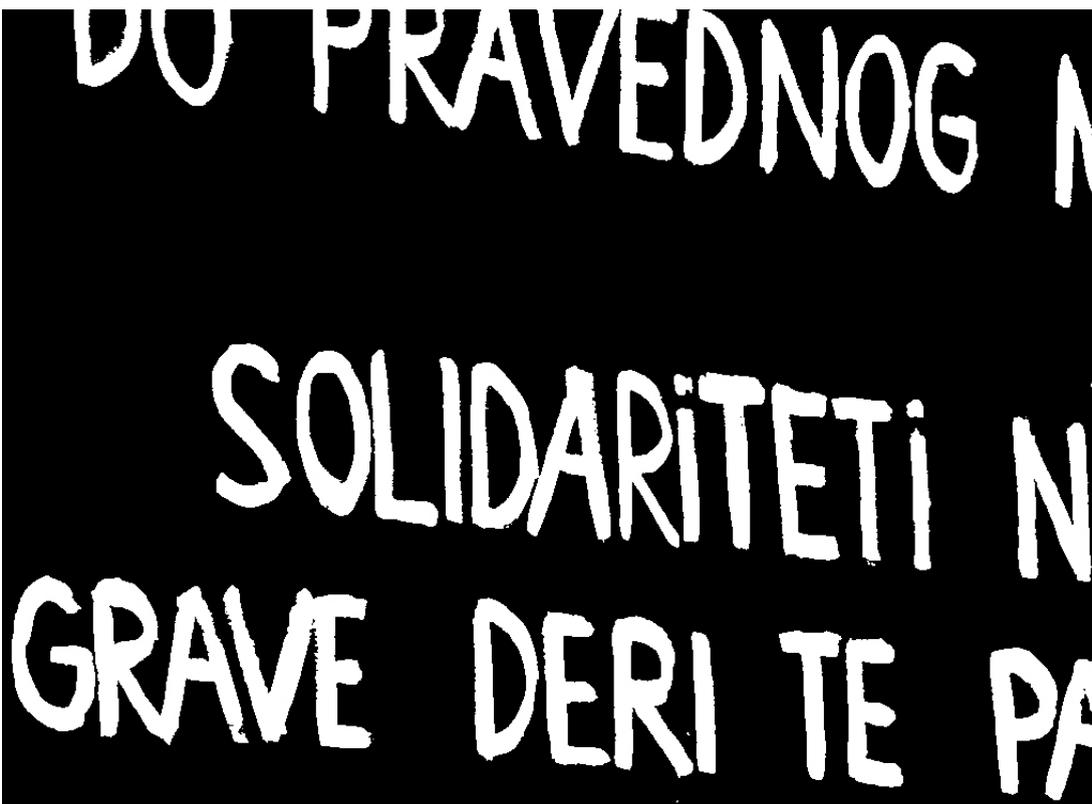
I constantly ask myself different questions because of all of the things that have happened that we did not want. Will I again have the strength to confront the expressions of women from Pristina, Bujanovac, and Preševo? Will I be able to look them in the eye and say that I am sad that someone, in my name but without my knowledge, destroyed dreams, took away freedom, and stained honor? I don't know; I just ask.



Our women's solidarity is only the beginning of the defascization of all of us. We choose understanding over judgment, smiles over tears, and empathy over hate. The enemy does not expect that of us. Women's solidarity is a policy of antifascism because our pain is the pain of others.

Women's solidarity is international because national identity is only one of the differences in the world. To be part of women's solidarity means to say no to patriarchy, tribute, discrimination, and the decisions of others. I choose to be disloyal to patriarchy because that is the beginning of my women's solidarity. I learn to care equally about myself and others politically and emotionally. I choose solidarity because it is feminist politics. Feminists are not born; feminists are made.

Greetings to all women in solidarity!



Women, Peace and Security

By Mima Rašić

Women are trying to create a different type of human security. Women have several different approaches to security. The first or most important approach is anti-militarism. Then there is the feminist approach to security, which is related to United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 as a special approach to security. This is the most important. ...



Women in Black is an anti-militaristic group committed to disarmament. In our experience, we have seen that women do not feel secure. Women want to have economic security and social security. However, the state's security is related only to a militaristic budget planned only for the security of borders and not the security of women. We must include gender issues. Patriarchy and militarism affect women's human rights by increasing militaristic expenditures and taking away women's reproductive and social rights; women are supposed to serve as mothers for the army, for men, and for the church.

Since the beginning, Women in Black has worked with war deserters and established one of the biggest campaigns to raise awareness.

Also, on 31 October 2005, Women in Black delivered a draft resolution "Women, Peace, and Security," based on United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, but converted to meet our conditions. We identified the genocide in Srebrenica and helped families who are testifying at The Hague. Women in the south are preparing the biggest action: protection of human rights. As defenders of human rights, we have completed a draft of the rights of human rights defenders in Serbia.

Prosecution deals with the criminal past. From the beginning, Women in Black has worked on this issue through the international day of peace and international day for women's reproductive rights. We connected these days, considering that militarism directly influences women's reproductive rights. During these days we organized actions in the streets.

We also have books related to security. One book, Always Disobedient, include sections about security, peace, women, health, and disarmament.

Women, Peace and Security: Kosovo Women Activists' Efforts to Implement UNSCR 1325

By Igballe Rogova*

Since UNSCR 1325 was passed, Kosovo women activists have worked to raise awareness about the resolution and how it could be implemented in Kosovo, locally, and internationally.

During bimonthly KWN meetings, the 85 network members regularly discussed the resolution and its implementation. KWN often writes articles about UNSCR 1325 in its quarterly e- and print newsletter "Kosovar Women's Voice," which reaches nearly 5000 readers. In addition, KWN and KWL regularly inform citizens about UNSCR 1325 through the electronic and print media; hundreds of debates, interviews, and articles about UNSCR 1325 have been written and/or televised since the resolution was passed.

The women of Kosovo have made their voice heard in regards to different issues by writing letters and meeting with various decision-makers.

In June 2001, a United Nations Security Council delegation came to Kosovo. UNMIK representatives preparing the delegation's schedule said that the delegation did not have time to meet with Kosovo women. Women activists noted that UNSCR 1325 gave them the right to meet with the delegation, and they advocated for a meeting through the Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children in New York. Ambassador Anwarul K. Chowdhury who was leading the delegation agreed to meet with women at 9:30 p.m., after the delegation's other scheduled meetings. At the meeting, Kosovo women presented a formal letter to the delegation with their recommendations.

In December 2002, a United Nations Security Council delegation visited Kosovo. When UNMIK failed to inform or invite local women to meet with the delegation, Kosovo women advocated and succeeded in securing a meeting after their regular hours. Women activists began by discussing issues related to Kosovo's final political status. The UN ambassador interrupted, "Status is an issue for political parties. Let's talk about women's issues. For example, let's talk about Resolution 1325." Kosovo women were surprised at the ambassador's obvious lack of knowledge that according to UNSCR 1325, women should be involved in negotiating Kosovo's final political status. They asked, "Don't you think that status is an issue that affects women? This is directly stated in Resolution 1325." They still voiced their concerns and ideas regarding Kosovo's final status, as well as presented a formal letter with their recommendations.

* Igballe Rogova's speech was based on a short report on the degree to which UNSCR 1325 had been implemented in Kosovo, prepared by KWN in 2006.

Starting in June 2002, at the initiative of Kosovo women and with support from UNIFEM, different stakeholders gathered to discuss and initiate the drafting of the National Action Plan for the Achievement of Gender Equality (NAP) in Korcula, Croatia. Following a ten-month consultative process that included dozens of working group meetings and involved local and international experts, including women from NGOs, politics, and the media, the plan was launched at a discussion on 22 November 2002 in which Prime Minister Bajram Rexhepi participated. After a thorough review process in which everyone from citizens to international decision-makers commented upon the draft, it was finalized during a meeting in Tirana, Albania in late March - early April 2003. Following months of advocacy work on behalf of local activists, the government adopted the plan on 14 April 2004.



Igballe Rogova tells conference participants about the Kosova Women's Network's efforts to implement UNSCR 1325.

On 4 March 2005, four delegates from Kosovo participated in the Beijing +10 conference in New York. As panelists in three events and as participants, they raised awareness about UNSCR 1325 and shared how Kosovo women have used UNSCR 1325. They also advocated for implementation of the resolution at two Urgent Action Fund launchings of Rising Up in Response: Women's Rights Activism in Conflict by Jane Barry - at a NGO side event and at the United Kingdom mission to the United Nations, as well as at a Women Waging Peace discussion in which Ambassador Anwarul K. Chowdhury spoke about his experience in Kosovo in 2001 as head of the UN Security Council delegation. KWN publicly applauded Ambassador Chowdhury for his work in pushing for and towards implementing UNSCR 1325.

In April 2005, RTV21 produced the first ever documentary film about UNSCR 1325, based on a regional workshop in Sarajevo. In the film, regional women leaders speak about the importance of the resolution and how they have used it. The documentary was aired on RTV21 as well as in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia, and New York by UNIFEM and DPKO. After airing the film, RTV21 organized a debate in which KWN members and government representatives discussed the film and implementing UNSCR 1325 in Kosovo.

Starting in May 2005, UNIFEM, KWN, and Zene Zenama (Sarajevo) cooperated to research and write a report on the degree to which UNSCR 1325 has been implemented in Kosovo and Bosnia. In Kosovo, interviews were held with different local and international, governmental and non-governmental organizations to find out about their efforts to implement UNSCR 1325, including SRSG Søren Jessen-Petersen. KWN and Zene Zenama sent a summary of the draft report with recommendations to the United Nations - NY on the resolution's fifth anniversary. The draft report is being revised and will be sent to the UN and other decision-makers this fall. The interviewing process in itself, served to raise awareness in the government about UNSCR 1325, and supported transfer of information between governmental and non-governmental bodies. New partnerships were subsequently forged. The establishment of a gender unit within the Kosovo Protection Corps is one direct outcome of this process.

Since June 2005, UNIFEM has worked with the gender units within the Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC) and Kosovo Police Service (KPS). The units were formed following trainings by UNIFEM on gender equality and UNSCR 1325. UNIFEM, in cooperation with KWN and KFOR continues to support KPS and KPC through training on gender and legislation, workshops on gender equality, and by building the capacity of the gender units and top management.

On 28 September 2005, in a meeting facilitated by UNIFEM, five KWN representatives met with UNIFEM and top Department of Peacekeeping Operations

in United Nations (DPKO) officials, including Wolfgang Weisbrod-Weber, DPKO Director of the Europe and Latin America Division. KWN representatives presented their concerns regarding the lack of gender mainstreaming in UNMIK and women's participation in status talks. DPKO officials agreed to future cooperation and help in influencing the agenda of high level missions to ensure that they scheduled official meetings with women's organizations in the future.

In December 2005, key leaders from civil society and politics in the region met in Dubrovnik to discuss peace and security. They focused on Kosovo and Serbia, discussing ways to use UNSCR 1325 to ensure the involvement of women from both countries in decision-making. This meeting was initiated by UNIFEM and it led to forming the Regional Women's Lobby for Peace, Security and Justice in South East Europe.

In September 2005, Kosovo women met with UN Special Envoy Ambassador Kai Eide. Women activists started the meeting by discussing the issue of including women in talks concerning Kosovo's final political status. Ambassador Kai Eide replied jokingly, "Do not talk to me like men." Local activists were shocked and responded by saying that UNSCR 1325 gives them the right to speak about Kosovo's final political status. They emphasized the importance of involving women in final status negotiations.

The Kosovo Police Service (KPS), Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC), UNIFEM, KFOR, UNMIK police, and Kosovo Women's Network (KWN) have initiated cooperation towards advancing the implementation of UNSCR 1325. More specifically, UNIFEM and KWN will support the gender units in KPS and KPC through training, information-sharing, and cooperation around activities that address women's role in decision-making, trafficking, and domestic violence. Overall, the initiative aims to increase communication between women and the police and security sectors.

On 3 March, Kosovo women met with President Martti Ahtisaari and highlighted the need to include women in negotiation talks surrounding Kosovo's final status. Kosovo women advocated for this meeting to take place while meeting with top officials from the Department of Peacekeeping Operations in United Nations (DPKO) in New York.

On 5 March, KWN signed a memorandum of understanding with Women in Black - Serbia, whereby they will monitor the negotiation process regarding Kosovo's final status to ensure that women's voices are taken into account during the negotiations. Their joint initiative led to forming the Women's Peace Coalition.

In the week leading up to 8 March, representatives of KWN and Kosovo Women's Lobby (KWL) appeared in more than fifteen electronic and print media (e.g., televised talk shows, news articles) with Kosovo-wide audiences where they increased citizens' awareness about UNSCR 1325 and its importance for including more women in decision-making, especially during negotiations concerning Kosovo's final political status.

On 8 March, KWN and KWL organized a demonstration in front of the national theatre in Prishtina. Famous Kosovo singers and actors performed songs and skits written for the occasion, which focused on UNSCR 1325 and the importance of involving women in talks concerning Kosovo's final status. KWN distributed 200 copies of printed material about the SCR1325 to people in the streets. All three Kosovo-wide television stations covered the demonstration on the main news that evening. Following the event, participants hung a large banner that read "Resolution 1325 guarantees us the right to participate in final status talks" outside the parliament building in the center of Prishtina, where it continued to hang for weeks for all citizens and politicians to see.

Kosovo women activists and local organizations sent numerous letters to local and international decision-makers demanding women's inclusion in the team negotiating Kosovo's final political status, as per UNSCR 1325. Letters were sent to: UN Special Envoy for the future status process for Kosovo Martti Ahtisaari, UN Security Council, SRSG Søren Jessen-Petersen, President Fatmir Sejdiu, Prime Minister Agim Çeku, KFOR commander Giuseppe Valotto, the negotiation team, and the contact group of five foreign offices in Kosovo. The letter was also read aloud during the aforementioned demonstration.

Last June, KWN came to an agreement with the Multinational Taskforce to deliver a series of information sessions on some KFOR bases. These talks commenced in the month of July with KWN staff and members delivering lectures on Kosovar society, women in Kosova, and UNSCR 1325 on KFOR bases throughout the region cover by the Multinational Taskforce. There have been six sessions at the Finnish, Swedish and Irish camps. The talks were carried out by KWN staff, and an organisation working in the area covered by the troops provided information about the problems facing citizens in the area. The informational sessions were seen as a positive development on all sides, allowing for some networking to occur. The sessions provided the camp with a contact for referring any cases they came across in their patrolling work in the area.

Regional Aspects of Security Related to Resolution 1325

By Flora Macula

Women's groups and networks at the grass-roots level have developed many activities for effective conflict prevention, during the conflict, and promoting reconciliation through informal processes. However, women are not present at the formal negotiating tables, and their participation at formal peace negotiations processes continues to be denied. With the aim to strengthen the impact of women's perspective in peace building processes, women activists are using international norms and standards to promote protection during armed conflict and their participation in peace and security decision-making.



Flora Macula describes UNIFEM's work in the region toward implementing UNSCR 1325.

Two sets of standards exist. UNSCR 1325 on women, peace and security and CEDAW have been used as tools for moving the gender equality agenda forward in conflict and post-conflict situations. UNSCR 1325 indicates that the Security Council has recognized the relevance of women's experiences of conflict to its peace and security mandate, and it engages the Security Council in advancing women's rights in conflict resolution and peace processes.

We are in a post-conflict phase, but in our region the political situation is very fragile and not sustainable. Building relationships across ethnic and political lines, across borders, and within individual countries, is essential to achieving peace and stability. The women's movement in the region has been at the forefront of efforts to initiate cooperation and restore mutual trust within and among communities and between countries. UNSCR 1325 on women, peace and security refers to post-conflict situations and peace-keeping missions, and engages the Security Council in advancing women's rights in conflict resolution, peace and development processes. The resolution contains 18 provisions to support women's participation in peace negotiation and consolidation, and calls for an increase in the representation of women at all levels of decision-making in institutions promoting security. The resolution additionally calls on all parties in conflict and peace-building to: respond to women's needs in post-conflict justice and governance institutions; address women's needs in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration efforts; to protect women and girls from sexual violence; and to end impunity for crimes against humanity affecting women.

Implementation of UNSCR 1325 in Kosovo and SEE Region

UNIFEM and other partners support activities in three sectors: Civil Society, Security Sector, and Women in Politics in SEE Region. Efforts to build relationships between all these sectors were made through several common activities. Activities focus on four main elements:

- 1) Integration of women into decision-making positions in peace processes;
- 2) Women's human rights and elimination of violence against women;
- 3) Training the security sector on gender equality (including small arms);
- 4) Monitoring UNSCR 1325, using UN reporting channels

The Civil Society Sector

Since 2003 - 2004, as part of its ongoing project in Kosovo, UNIFEM in collaboration with Kvinna till Kvinna supported a group of women leaders from the Balkans to convene and review the status of the implementation of UNSCR 1325 and to brainstorm on opportunities to advocate for advancing its implementation. A regional working group comprised of representatives from Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia, FYR Macedonia, Serbia & Montenegro, and Kosovo was formed to plan and organize a regional training and planning workshop on UNSCR 1325, which was held in Sarajevo. At the workshop, women identified that the promotion of the UNSCR 1325 is needed and expressed their strong interest and commitment to invest in further efforts to monitor the implementation of UNSCR 1325, particularly in Kosovo and Bosnia and Herzegovina, where the UN continues to play a prominent role in the post-conflict peace-building process. UNIFEM subsequently supported the preparation of two monitoring reports on the status of the implementation of UNSCR 1325 by groups working in Kosovo and Bosnia and Herzegovina. By the end of this year we expect to receive reports from KWN and Zena Zenama from Bosnia and Herzegovina. A documentary film about the UNSCR 1325 workshop in Sarajevo produced by RTV21 was presented and delivered in all SEE countries, especially in Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Croatia. The documentary was broadcasted via RTV 21 during an open TV debate on security and women.

Women's groups in Kosovo under the KWN umbrella have engaged in advocacy for their inclusion in the future status talks, sending letters and reports to high level officials, organizing protests, and other activities. The Serbia branch of the Women in Black network and the Kosovo Women's Network also announced their intention to engage in monitoring the negotiation process between Belgrade and Prishtina and advocate for women's perspectives to be adequately reflected. The support to Women in Black Serbia and Kosovo Women's Network to establish a Women's Peace Coalition was provided.

Since then, the Women's Peace Coalition has issued statements to high level officials in the region and at the global level. In September 2006, 60 members of the coalition from Kosovo and Serbia met in Struga, Macedonia as another round of negotiations was simultaneously underway in Vienna. The meeting was devoted to dialogue towards building trust and addressing the need for reconciliation, as this was the first time since the war that women from Serbia and Kosovo had come together.

The participation of Women's Peace Coalition members in the Vienna Regional Women's Lobby meetings and in other peace-building events was very impressive. At the same time, both the Kosovo Women's Network and Women in Black are developing different activities on peace and security within their countries.

Women's Lobby for Peace, Security and Justice in South East Europe Responding to demand, UNIFEM supported a group of prominent women to come together in December 2005 for an informal dialogue on women's security and rights in the context of the political changes occurring in the region and in anticipation of the start of the Kosovo status talks. This initial meeting fostered a climate of trust between the women, and subsequently, from 16-19 July 2006 in Zagreb Croatia, a second informal consultation among women from both the political and civil society sectors of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, and Serbia was organized. As a result of the consultations, the Women's Lobby for Peace, Security and Justice in South East Europe (RWL) was formed.

UNIFEM assisted the RWL to participate in high level activities in Vienna in September 2006, including a panel discussion entitled "Women's Impact on Sustainable Peace in the Balkans" opened by UNIFEM Executive Director Noeleen Heyzer. In addition the group met with Austrian government ministries and participated in a workshop entitled "Negotiation Processes and Beyond: Women's Summit for Sustainable Peace in the Balkans." Following the meetings in Vienna, UNIFEM arranged for three representatives of the Regional Women's Lobby to meet with Mr. Martti Ahtisaari, the UN Secretary-General's Envoy for Kosovo Negotiations to discuss the negotiation process. Recognizing that resolution of the status of Kosovo is critical to lasting regional stability the Regional Women's Lobby provided Mr. Ahtisaari an open letter calling on him to support a just and sustainable peace for Kosovo. In addition to the letter to Mr. Ahtisaari the Lobby issued a statement expressing concern about the lack of freedom of expression in Serbia and the safety and security of Serbian women activists. UNIFEM continues to support the Regional Women's Lobby in their 2007 advocacy and action plan.

Furthermore the RWL meeting in Vienna organized by KWN and supported by UNIFEM took place on April 19-20, 2007. In addition the RWL members (two of them from Serbia) lobbied during the Security Council ambassadors' fact finding mission in Kosovo.

There are more activities that I did not mention in this speech, but hopefully during these two days you shared information, learned more about all efforts, and decided how you will continue to work together to contribute to peace and security.

UNIFEM has been cooperating with its partner in Serbia, Women in Black, on peace-building and security with a country specific proposal that addresses the effects of religious fundamentalism on women's rights, advocacy based research on reproductive rights and reproductive security, and monitoring of war crimes trials within Serbia with the goal of confronting a past of nationalism and violence. UNIFEM supported Medica Kosova to bring about an amendment to the law on civilian victims of war that would provide survivors of wartime rape the same public benefits and status as other civilian victims of war and NGO NORMA (an association of women lawyers) to provide inter-ethnic workshops for women in Serbian enclaves. For the workshops, Serbian women were brought to Pristina in order to increase their familiarity with and access to Kosovo government institutions. One of the workshops was attended by UNIFEM's Goodwill Ambassador (GWA) Nicole Kidman during her field visit to Kosovo in October 2006. It was attended by two RWL members from Serbia, MP Natasa Micic and Sonja Biserko. As a follow up, the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights, Regional Women's Lobby for Peace and Security, and NORMA, organized a meeting in one Serbian community with the aim of building bridges between Serbian women in enclaves and women MPs. As a result, parliamentarians took steps to ensure the village bakery in the Serb enclave received a generator so that bread could be baked even when electricity was unavailable.

Support for Gender Training and Capacity-building for the Security Sector

UNIFEM signed memorandums of understanding to provide gender training to the Kosovo Academy for Public Safety, Education and Development (KAPSED). Technical and financial assistance was provided to the Kosovo Police Service (KPS) and the Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC). The aim of these trainings was to mainstream gender issues in these three institutions. So far KPS and KPC have established gender units at high levels, which will be tasked with advancing UNSCR 1325 implementation within these institutions.

In 2006, UNIFEM's support focused on building regulations based on the gender equality law by providing an expert consultant to work in conjunction with KPC's legal team. As a result, the Kosovo gender and security task force was established (KWN is a member).

Lately, with the aim of expanding the work of the security sectors in the region, UNIFEM in collaboration with the Kosovo Small Arm Control Programme and South Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons organized a regional consultation workshop entitled "Gender Mainstreaming in the Security Sector and Small Arms Control" for security sectors and women's research organizations from Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania, and Montenegro. A common action plan between these countries was developed.

KWN is collaborating closely with KFOR by providing two-hour trainings in KFOR military camps. Also, UNIFEM is in the process of supporting an activity that will include 11 Serbian women's NGOs.

Starting in December 2006, through the Kosovar Gender Studies Centre, Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian (RAE) women activists started coordinating their activities. Further, meetings with members, experience exchange, network meetings, and capacity-building for the network were realized.

In the context of talks surrounding Kosovo's status, in 2006 the Women's Peace Coalition conference in Struga brought visibility to the work of local activists struggling to create a stable and just peace in the region.

In spite of the work initiated by advocates, in all post-conflict countries of South East Europe, there is still a lack of awareness about UNSCR 1325 among decision-makers as well as the general public. In a period in which the political situation remains very fragile, advocacy around UNSCR 1325 presents an opportunity to bring women and men across ethnic and national boundaries to discuss and promote a political agenda that adheres to principles of peace, human rights, and justice. UNIFEM is looking to support women's activism for peace and actions to implement UNSCR 1325 in all South East European countries.

Working Group Recommendations: Horizontal Networking

Following the panel discussion, conference participants divided into working groups to strategize concrete ways for horizontal networking between activists in Serbia and Kosovo. The four working groups were all tasked with identifying specific, concrete activities for the remainder of 2007 and for 2008. The recommendations made by working groups would result in the foundation on which the Women's Peace Coalition's future networking and activities would be based.

Following an hour and a half session and a lunch break, each working group presented on their discussion and recommended future activities.



In working group name, (left to right) discuss future horizontal networking activities for WPC.

Working Group 2

The working group discussed networking experiences and how they defined horizontal networking. One example made was the campaign against breast cancer. The group recommended the following actions:

- Contact war victims in Kosovo and work with women in the Serb community to assist them with integration into life in Kosovo. During the first six months of next year, the coalition should start joint activities defined in detail by the Kosova Women's Network and Women in Black.
- Hold seminars with Serb women. At first the seminars can involve general discussions. Later, discussions can focus on facing the past and trying to detach from the past.
- We do not believe we should go directly into the residences of war victims. I told about some obstacles in my community in Gjakova. Instead, we should take victims who are willing to go somewhere on an excursion for lunch or something, which could be defined.
- The same thing could be done with Serbian women. For example, Sevdije Bunjaku said she knows and works with 12 Serb women organizations. We don't think it would be difficult to reach out and make contact with organizations willing to do such a thing. Organizations that work toward peace are willing to cooperate. We thought the first months could be focused on these activities, and the second half of the year could involve visits to victims of war.

Working Group 3

The nineteen working group members which had representatives from Kosovo and Serbia identified the following actions:

- From now on we need horizontal working among members within the coalition, especially between Serb women from Kosovo in the Women's Peace Coalition and women in Serbia.
- We need an action called "meet me in order to understand me." We have decided that four activists representing two or three groups from Kosovo should visit women in Serbia and visa-versa. We will organize gatherings and networking between the groups where we will have two to three days to work. We will have workshops like we have here for women to identify steps toward peace.
- We need to establish two mailing lists for women in Kosovo and Serbia to properly distribute and get information about what our networks are doing. Kosovo representatives volunteered to translate materials if necessary.
- Solidarity between groups of women. We agreed that we are not informed enough and solidified as colleagues and friends. For example, activists have been attacked by the media. We need to react and support each other.



- One of our biggest problems was how to cross borders. We want to take action so that women from Kosovo can have access to Serbia.

- Most importantly, the issue of youth was raised. The group insisted on activating more students and pupils, so they can be involved in the project as well.



Working Group 4

During the working group we identified common areas of activity and differences. We know that decisions regarding Kosovo's political status could change the framework and how our group works, especially in relation to security. We identified the following activities to take together:

- Mutual visits of women's groups with the purpose of becoming familiar with each other's work.
- We can start to do this by exchanging profiles of the groups. We recommend exchanging profiles by September so both networks will have profiles of members.
- We think that by November we should conduct a visit. Women from Serbia should visit Kosovo, especially Suhareka. Both parties will work on organizing. There can be cooperation between Women for Peace in Leskovac and Prizren organizations, for example. We will see the needs and talk about possible issues, so visits will not be of a type, but on specific topics. The visits will also be made known to the public at large.
- Visit the sites of crimes, especially in Suhareka. Women in Black attempted to contact families during the trials. The best way forward would be to have the Kosova Women's Network mediate discussions, which will have political weight and a degree of seriousness. Then the families of Suhareka can deal with the Kosova Women's Network and not only with Women in Black. We will be consistent in our approach, and this will be important in such a moment.
- Visit Serbs after Kosovo's status is determined. When this change occurs, we need to approach this in a serious way.
- There is insufficient information in relation to political events in our areas. Every second month, our organizations need to send a report on the political situation.
- We need to react immediately with joint declarations, especially in Serbia because of security issues. It is a minor part of Serbia that wants to cooperate and their security is in danger. In case of a political change, their security will be even more endangered.
- We should establish proactive plans for individual and group safety, including possible positive and negative outcomes. We could discuss these plans with the Urgent Action Fund in advance in case negative consequences occurred. In this way, we could be proactive.



Marija Perkovic writes the working group's priorities.

After the presentation, [Rachel Wareham](#) added that she felt that activists from Women in Black were really pushing for visits to communities like Suhareka, but that it did not sound like citizens from Suhareka were ready for such visit. "I don't think both sides are being honest," she said. "It is not the right of an outside group to meet families of victims." She said that Albanian and Serb activists needed to listen to what was not being said during the working group meetings. She felt that Albanian women were not thoroughly expressing their concerns about such visits. "I think this is a complex issue, and I urge Albanian women to talk openly to Stasa about potential obstacles," she concluded.

[Violeta Selimi](#) agreed that there was a need to ask women in Suhareka before visiting their community. Otherwise the coalition would not know whether women were ready for such a visit.

[Flora Macula](#) then added that if a Serb community was attacked in Kosovo, the group agreed that to regularly inform each other about such incidents and then to issue common statements on behalf of the coalition, condemning such acts of violence.



In working group four, name, Rachel Wareham, translator, Ariella Futral, and Flora Macula (left to right) discuss future horizontal networking activities for WPC.

Working Group 1

The Women's Peace Coalition was established because of the political situation in Kosovo. For this reason, we need to continue to react on the situation of Kosovo. We cannot refer to the coalition in the context of you, Women in Black, and we, KWN. This is a coalition. Therefore we have thought of activities that will show the public that we are a coalition. We have sent joint letters and statements, but last night in Struga we saw that we have a lack of public visibility as a coalition. Last night the activity was done by Women in Black, but as a coalition we need something public of that kind. We have this idea last night. Let's think of making our message public, without the Kosova Women's Network or Women in Black. Instead, the banners that say "Albanian women are our sisters" need new statements regarding the political situation, but also as a coalition. We should have the ideas jointly and have the public performance in all Kosova. Public presentations are important for two reasons. First, we sent let-

ters, but we need to be physically seen with posters saying that we want Kosovo independence and integration Serbs. Second, it is the Albanians in Kosovo who will give security to people. It's not the police and armed forces. When they see that we are giving a peaceful message, they will be more aware.

Regarding visits to sites where violence occurred, [Rachel \[Wareham\]](#) mentioned an important point. We need to ask them [the people living in these communities]. Before we asked them and they said "no" to such visits, but it was the anniversary of the massacre. They said "no" because the Prime Minister was there and they didn't want him or the public to see someone from Belgrade there. We need to ask them again to get an answer if they accept. If they accept, we can arrange a visit. And we can have public performances. We can even paint the buses like UNHCR did when they brought refugees.

Women in Black alone may be seen as enemies, but as a coalition we can organize something. For example, the meeting with [Sonja Biserko](#) was successful because Albanian women and Serb women were there together. We need to go together as the Women's Peace Coalition, not Women in Black or the Kosova Women's Network. The events can take place together, and we can save money that way.

Finally, we discussed the issue of discussing the past. We will never have enough time. We should organize two to three-day seminars that focus on this topic alone. We can organize an educational program. For example, in Serbia they still say Albanian women do not go out of their houses and have ten kids. They do not know about what has happened in Kosovo. The same thing can happen with Albanians. Violeta [Selimi] offered to go to Serbia. Through education programs, we can use the radio and why not publish a book? Haya Shalom told our group about publishing a book with their stories: what both parties have been through together.

After the final presentation, Radosava Mirkovic recommended that the coalition include a further message in its public campaign in Prishtina, "Serbians are our sisters." "Then we [Kosovo Serbs] will have a kind of safety," she said. "That the network is behind us and that they will help us."

[Veprorë Shehu](#) added another element, which had not been concretely defined, but was part of networking, she said. She suggested that they network with the Kosovo women's association Jeta - Vita, which dealt with women's health, especially breast cancer. "We could exchange information about preventing breast cancer," she said. She also further emphasized the importance of visiting war victims and securing their consent before bringing visitors. "We cannot impose," she said. "The visits should be meaningful. The women should not only say 'OK, we agree because the organization requesting the visit supports us.' It should come from the depth of the heart."

Conference Summary, Conclusions, and Next Steps

By Staša Zajovic

Yesterday was full of activities. We had lots of different posters, and we could not use all of them during the street demonstration. I imagined that this should be a joint performance. "Albanians are our sisters" is an emotional and political message for us. In 1995 we displayed this message and could not imagine not showing that poster. We wanted to enter the history together and create our own alternative history. Our feminist need is to enter into everything that we experienced in the past, and to register what we did in this protest and the last protest. We have a lot of experience in history. It would not be responsible if we did not record this in the history. We will record this history.

We have worked on two levels jointly, trying to create a balance between the policy of emotions and the policy of efficiency. Also, we have reflected and thought about ourselves and our desire, building upon our experience and writing and creating theories. These theories are in accordance with our emotions, and we want to give value to these theories and emotions. From the moment we took this journey and we saw all of you in the hotel, we had a huge happiness to come into this house with you. This is the alternative to going into houses or homes. We were efficient because we openly talked about issues.

We have a lot to do in the future. We were visible to each other long ago, but we must become visible to political leaders making decisions and the community. This is our civic and feminist duty, as well as our duty to contribute to justice. We can do this through women's solidarity. We will never neglect what we feel for each other thanks to this trust that we are creating.

By Flora Macula

As always, I've tried to be pragmatic about the proposals that you offered. I have one important remark: there is something missing and that is the pro-active planning. The issues you work on are sensitive. We don't know what will happen after December. This coalition needs to have solutions to react if different scenarios happen. There needs to be preparation. If everything is fine, you've offered what you can do. However, due to non-proactive planning, you have failed to show where you are going. Building peace is generic. You should sit together as a coalition and take into account what might happen and how you may have to react.

Igo [Rogova] mentioned activities with visits to women in Kosovo, performance by the coalition, if possible a visit to Suhareke, and visits to enclaves. I believe that this might be realizable. We need to have an exchange of information: mailing lists, determining profiles of NGOs, spreading information regarding the polit-

ical situation, established systems of information exchange so cooperation is not discontinued after a few weeks. This is necessary. If you have a good plan, this will include reactions to things in Kosovo and Serbia. You should have credibility to react against all breaches of human rights.

Seminars on facing the past: we need to think who does what and what can be done commonly. Many women from Kosovo cannot go to Serbia and speak to women there. Finally, a book that would include tales from all sides would sensitize people in Kosovo and Serbia regarding how people suffered and how people witnessed these circumstances. We definitely need to include more youth in these activities.

The initiative "know me to understand me" can be done. You can also add to this initiative.

I congratulate you for the work you have done and I think you've moved forward a lot from the first position.

By Igballe Rogova

Although the coalition started in 2006, our networking started in the 1990s, perhaps not as networks, but as organizations like Motrat Qiriazhi and Women in Black. We have always been impressed by the courage of Women in Black, and this networking was enabled by individuals. These individuals still have ways to break boundaries. It was not easy to travel then. We were called traitors, but there was great courage among women in Belgrade to go in the streets. Even today they go in the street, and they are in danger as women who speak against injustice and offer a voice that differs from the main political voice.



On behalf of the Kosova Women's Network, she gave awards to activists for their bravery and commitment.

Lepa Mladjenovic receives an award from the Kosova Women's Network for her ongoing activism and networking.

Future Cooperation: Post-Conference Impressions & Expectations



On the Wings of Political Forgiveness: Impressions and Expectations of Activists after the Second Year in Struga

Prepared by Miloš for Women in Black

“Others are tracks For our trains...” - Marina Cvetajeva

This was our second time in Struga. The first time was last year; our first meeting of women from Serbia and women from Kosovo. Then, we made the text, Tears and Laughter. The same activists, again crossing borders after meeting with other women from another country, women whose voices are still heard so far away, in their language, shared testimonies of their impressions and expectations...

Impressions about exchanging stories and getting to know the experiences of others...

“My impression of this meeting was that our relationships were more open than last year and we spoke more sincerely about the problems we each face in our own surroundings. I had the occasion to learn many things that I did not know had developed in Kosovo.” - Nena, Leskovac

“I think togetherness, based on last year in Struga, is very important. Women showed a lot of enthusiasm for seeing each other and cooperating. This promises that our meetings will be more frequent and that we will start something. Very concrete suggestions were taken from the workshops. We established a joint path and now we just need to follow it.” - Marina, Kruševac

“This was my first meeting with Kosovar Albanians who thought the same as me and Women in Black.” - Srna, Velika Plana

“I went with the thought that we were from two different worlds. We do have two different experiences, but when I saw how Serbian and Kosovar women greeted each other, it was clear to me that [we through this conference have] done an enormous job and started down an important path. For the first time, I am now part of that process. Maybe during breaks I should have asked women more about their personal experiences, about the suffering they survived, but I did not dare. I will do that another time. It was very important to me that I was there. I will no longer hold misconceptions about these relationships after the experiences we shared.” - Jovanka, Velika Plana

“The performance was one of the best because we were together, holding hands.” Ljilja, Belgrade

“I have many impressions, but the first is the stable relationships of friendship, trust, warmth, and openness. The discussion about one of the most complicated topics, confronting the past and accountability, was very serious and full of respect for one another. That was constantly present. Diversity and the different positions of women from these two countries, not only was not an obstacle, but we constantly discovered that we shared these challenges. There is an enormous desire to work together.” - Staša, Belgrade

“My most important impression from the meeting with the Albanian women is the warmth, care, and love with which I was surrounded. The presence of Biljana, Haya, Christina, and Rachel in panels and workshops, repeated our good practice. At the party, I had a problem when I saw the dance and songs. The question was why and how did such things happen in this space. I do not have an answer to that question.” - Senka, Belgrade

“It was very special for me to see my friends from Kosovo again. I was very sad

that I did not see Arijeta and Luljeta, but I hope to see them soon. For the first time, I held a banner written back in 1995 'Albanian women are our sisters.' That meant a lot to me emotionally." - Miloš, Belgrade

Serbian Women's Impressions of Specific Kosovar Women...

"My biggest impression is the woman from Klina who is still searching for her missing spouse. She created an organization of women who are searching for their husbands." - Goca, Leskovac

"The biggest impression was when I came to Struga. I was not there last year; I did not meet Kosovar Albanian women. Now, it is very special to me that I have created personal contact with Nafija from Pristina. I promised her some things, and I will keep my word. I met some other women with whom I twice had lunch at the same table. We spoke very honestly." - Ljilja, Leskovac

"I am overjoyed that my friend Sevdije forgave me. She needed a year to think about why I sought forgiveness from her for the crimes committed in my name. I am happy about that because she and Igo told me to greet my family and that I should no longer seek forgiveness from them. They have forgiven me. That is a big step for me." - Svetlana, Vlasotince

"I am happy that I had a chance to see my Kosovar Albanian friends again. It is sad that this year I saw only Rada and Milena and no more Serb women who live in Kosovo. I am happy that my friend Rema shared her story with me; I shared mine with her. Even though we drank coffee without sugar, the coffee we drank in Room 407 was the sweetest that I have drunk with my friends from Kosovo." - Jasmina, Vlasotince

"For me, it was most important that Igballe made a step forward. Until now, we have worked as the Women in Black Network - Serbia and the Kosova Women's Network, but not together. That is a step forward." - Lepa, Belgrade

Impressions of the Women's Peace Coalition, the Kosova Women's Network, and the Women in Black Network - Serbia

"I think that we have moved ourselves out of what was imagined last year, but stayed marginal and uncertain. Horizontal networking became a central topic." - Slavica, Belgrade

"I am, of course, completely happy because this coalition means a lot to me. For me personally, it has a long-term and wider perspective. I see it as a model for peacemaking in the Balkan region." - Nuna, Sarajevo

"A coalition of women from Kosovo and Serbia. For me personally, the biggest

impression was the two Serb women who came with the Albanians. I did not expect that there currently existed such cooperation. My biggest impression was the organization of Women in Black. They came from all of Serbia. They are the only organization in the region with that authority to do this work. Women in Black was successful." - Biljana, Belgrade

"I am fascinated by what the Kosovar Albanian women do, especially their retraining of the international community. A lot can be learned from them." - Dušan, Belgrade

"For years, I have not left a meeting feeling so pleasant. It is a return to our golden age of activism. Everything functioned well. Women from Kosovo excited me with their energy and their view of the future. They know what they want. I hope that they will not be fooled by their own. I hope that we will be able to continue to collaborate. My friends from Women in Black were brilliant. I don't know who to single out." - Senka, Belgrade

"I met new women from Kosovo. I would also compliment our women. The panels were successful. My biggest impression was my friend Biljana because she has consistently been with us. She actively participated. The workshops were excellent. I heard more difficult stories from women; that was touching. We all agreed on everything. We worked well. The disco was wonderful." - Ljilja, Belgrade

Women expect joint work, interpersonal cooperation, mutual visits, and socializing. Women want horizontal networking between groups. They want the Women's Peace Coalition to make its way, to write itself into an alternative history...

"I think that we will soon see the women and have more contact. I hope for deeper, very close cooperation." - Nena, Leskovac

"My expectations are concrete actions to continue cooperation with Kosovar women." - Goca, Leskovac

"In contrast to last year, when we only met women from Kosovo, this time we were specific. We started discussions and will start working in November." - Milka, Leskovac

"My expectations are that my expectations will be realized." - Ljilja, Leskovac

"Expectations are that each side do what we discussed." - Svetlana, Vlasotince

"I expect further cooperation and socializing with Kosovar women. I expect that the step of cooperation that we made grows into a march toward success and truth. I would like us to see each other more often." - Jasmina, Vlasotince

"I expect further meetings with Kosovar people so I can hear their ideas." - Srna, Velika Plana

"My expectation is that horizontal networking will happen this year." - Slavica, Belgrade

"I expect that this coalition becomes structured and that the obligations which its members take on are fulfilled." - Nuna, Sarajevo

"I expect that the coalition will develop and that it will become a path to good relations in the region. It will set standards which others will adopt." - Biljana, Belgrade

"I expect that joint work will be continued." - Dušan, Belgrade

"I expect that we will do actions together. We wrote letters, but now we will do performances. That is a step forward, following the process that we started together. We mix and socialize more. We are no longer 'us' and 'them.' We are much less 'us' and 'them.' We are much closer to one another. The step of political actions, going out in the street together as a coalition, continues the emotional process that we started." - Lepa, Belgrade

"Now the women know each other better and are personally connected. There should be personal cooperation with all groups in Kosovo." - Ljilja, Belgrade

"My expectations were to hear something new. That would have been pleasant to me. Those expectations were fulfilled." - Senka, Belgrade

"My expectations now for the upcoming period are really in the framework of horizontal networking, that we will actually put this in practice by organizing meetings and agreeing on activities. We will work very seriously and persistently on that. I am very, very satisfied and feel very pleased, as we did some very important things. We continue where we stopped, now much more than before." - Staša, Belgrade

"I expect that I will go to Tahira's in Klina, to Ljolja's in Đakovica, and to Violeta's, Igo's, and Sevleta's in Pristina. I expect the justice of the independence of Kosovo." - Miloš, Belgrade

Thirty-four activists participated in this meeting, from Belgrade, Novi Sad, Vrbas, Velika Plana, Kruševac, Kraljevo, Zajecar, Novi Pazar, Leskovac, Vlasotince, Preševo, and Niš. The meeting lasted two days. The theme of the first day of the meeting was "Transitional Justice: A Feminist Approach." It was divided into two parts: a panel discussion in which the topics were "What is Transitional Justice? Why is a Feminist Approach Important?," "Transitional Justice and Civil Society," "Models of Transitional Justice in the Experiences of Women in Black," "From Impunity through Accountability to Justice," and "Transitional Justice: The Role of Civil Society - Difficulties and Challenges." The second part was workshops. Four workshops were held, on "The Feminist Ethic of Responsibility," "The Feminist Ethic of Care and Following War Crimes Trials," "Visiting the Sites of Crimes Committed in Our Name and Political Forgiveness," and "Models of Transitional Justice: The Experiences of Women in Black." That evening, a street performance entitled "Women Peacemakers: We Go Slowly to Get There Safely" was held in which women from Kosovo and Serbia participated together.

The theme of the second day was security. A plenary session was held with the topics "Women's Solidarity: Good Experiences and Obstacles," "Resolution 1325 Women, Peace, and Security and the Experience of Women in Black," and "Regional Aspects of Security." During the second part of the day, workshops were held on horizontal networking.



Belgrade, 10 September 2007

Letter to Kosovo women activists following the second conference in Macedonia, in fall 2007, entitled:

AN ENORMOUS WISH TO WORK TOGETHER

Dear Kosovo activist,

We are still retelling our impressions. We still picture our encounters as we wonder and plan all the things that we could do after our second conference in Struga. To sum up, we seem to have come closer together and we have succeeded in building mutual trust among us. After nearly 20 years of Serbian policy of exclusion and crushing everything that is Albanian, we have taken a historical step! These were not separate encounters among a few of us, therefore, this was not an exception or a one-off instance - this is a coalition!

The emotional exchanges that took place last time, the disclosure of our personal recounts has made possible this trip; it created the wish to work together, not only because it suits us politically, but also because we feel an emotional urge to do so. Full of ideas and enthusiasm to create a different policy of everyday life, where, instead of nationalistic contaminations, we would create spaces open to exchanges, where we are ready to hear one another, where we want to be different together in concrete actions, not merely as a phrase, but by moving the barriers of political awareness about Serbia and Kosovo. It has already become clear that we have overcome the notions of "us" and "you" and that we increasingly search for spaces that allow for political encounters, in order to transform them into action. On one hand, our personal stories are confronted, while on the other we hold hands and it becomes indiscernible who is who in the street, because we have a common political goal! This is our coalition!

Thank you for all the warm hugs you greeted us with, for the exceptional organization of the conference, and for the great party!

Your sisters in peace,

Activists of the Women in Black Network Serbia / activists of the Peace Coalition

Prishtina, 19 October 2007

Letter to Serb women activists following the second annual Women's Peace Coalition conference in Struga, Macedonia

Dear Friends from the Women in Black Network - Serbia,

At our meeting in Struga we once again demonstrated that women's solidarity and love stretch far beyond geographic, religious, or ethnic borders. As our discussions showed, although we live in different surroundings we feel similarly about the issues facing us. We stand up for people in need. We raise our voices and cry out at injustice. We fight to make our voices heard.

The time that we have spent together has helped us better understand the reality of others, the importance of supporting each other, and our road ahead as a coalition. We look forward to moving ahead with the activities we planned during the conference in Struga. We have confidence that the initiatives identified through the conference will help us continue to support citizens in crossing borders, reaching beyond ethnic and religious divisions. Through these initiatives we will continue the coalition's efforts to build a truly just and peaceful future for Kosovo, Serbia, and the region.

We would like to share with you that our time together was an inspiration. The conference renewed our energy and provided further motivation to continue our efforts toward peace and justice.

Our path ahead will not be easy. We will face many obstacles. We are surrounded by hate and ignorance. But these shall not stand in our way, for we are women activists. We believe in our activism. We believe in peace. We believe in justice. And most importantly we believe in each other and the future we can build together.

In peace and love,

KWN members

Further Reading on Issues Related to the Conference

The Feminist Ethic of Responsibility

By Milka Rosic

Women for Peace - Leskovac

During the breakup of Yugoslavia, fear was planted in me. I felt paralyzed and couldn't do anything. I thought that nothing depended on me and other people had the right to decide in my name about my future. I was not conscious of the fact that each of us as individuals can make our own acts of rebellion. The people around me were asleep. There was not even a ray of hope that the craziness would somehow be stopped. I thought that nothing depended on me, but I was misled. When I met Women in Black, I learned that there were women and men throughout the country who, in different ways, tried to stop the war which took more life from our area every day. Only then did I understand that my fear could be expressed differently, through nonviolent rebellion, through clearly stating that I don't want anyone to kill in my name. I escaped a vicious circle. With other women, I decided to start to remember the events of our recent past, call them by their true names, and punish them in court so that they will never happen again. Through workshops and street activism with my friends from the Women in Black Network -Serbia, I learned many things that I was not conscious of. This caused feelings of bitterness, shame, fury, and guilt in me, as a member of a nation that did so much evil. Every time I meet women who suffered horrors because of the mistaken policies of the former regime, I feel guilty and disappointed with myself because, at the time of these events, I sat at home with my family and watched the televised lies that poisoned our minds. Now, I know that I must convert those newly-awakened feelings into action. Through acts of resistance and civil disobedience, I constantly warn people around me and those in the government to never again start on the path of mistaken politics.

For me, going to Srebrenica with Women in Black means showing solidarity and offering support to the families of the victims through political solidarity and building trust. You feel ashamed because of the crimes committed by your nation. Nevertheless, you are proud when you see the sincerity in their eyes. They believe in what you do and say, "Hat's off to you! You are the best women in the world." While we stood in Potocari and showed respect, I felt furious again, remembering the previous day, the comments, insults, and threats in Belgrade. In contrast, while we were in Srebrenica, people warmly approached us and thanked us for coming. During our stay, the sadness, fury, and chill in me was replaced by the song of the boys, the speech of the imam, and the mother's story. This is another act of confronting the recent past done in my name.

We create deeper knowledge and familiarity with the problems of confronting the past and transitional justice by showing filmed testimonies and feature films. Our fellow citizens have the chance to also work to change consciousness and awaken citizens' responsibility so that there will be more strong women, ready to change traditional and assigned values which influence our future in the service of patriarchy.

Following War Crimes Trials: The Punishment of Crimes - The Path to a Just Peace

By Gordana Stojiljovic
Women for Peace - Leskovac

Nowhere is the character of the aggression against Bosnia-Herzegovina as clearly expressed as Srebrenica, the site of the perfidious, brutal, and largest genocide. Nowhere is it as public as that place, where, despite the presence of UN soldiers, Bosniaks were massacred. At the beginning of the aggression against Bosnia-Herzegovina, many Bosniak refugees from neighboring Vlasnica, Bratunac, Zvornik, Rogatica, and Višegrad gathered there. Escaping Chetnik knives, they tried to find safety in Srebrenica, not suspecting what would happen after it was proclaimed a UN Safe Area. A terrible genocidal murder of Bosniaks was committed. Serbian fascists expelled, arrested, or massacred the residents of Srebrenica and thousands of Bosniak refugees from the area along the Drina. Only witnesses and mass graves remain. Unfortunately, not all mass graves have been discovered. The survivors cry in vain for the thousands and thousands of missing persons, children, parents, brothers, husbands, and other relatives. It is impermissible to deny the truth about the terrible genocide against Bosniaks in that area or to relativize it. A massacre was committed by Serbian fascists. Throughout the occupation of Srebrenica special forms of war and genocidal destruction, such as denying water and blocking and prohibiting the delivery of humanitarian aid, medicines, electricity, and everything biologically essential for life was directed against the isolated Bosniak population. All of this happened under the command of Ratko Mladic, Arkan, Šešelj, and Serbia's political and government leaders with the blessing of the Serbian Orthodox Church. Today, even after tremendous pressure from the international public and the establishment of The Hague Tribunal and domestic Courts for War Crimes, criminals still freely walk among us; we who work for the punishment of crimes are called traitors. The Special Court for War Crimes in Belgrade is the only institution in Serbia that addresses war crimes and attempts to try criminals objectively. Women in Black has attended many trial sessions for members of the Scorpions paramilitary unit accused of the murder of Bosniak civilians during the Srebrenica genocide in July 1995. Many women from all parts of Serbia who believe that the only way to revive our country is to confront the past followed this trial. I was one of them. Recently, we also follow the trial for the crime perpetrated by Serbian Interior Ministry staff against Kosovar Albanian civilians in March 1999 in Suva Reka. Additionally, contact with the families of the victims, support and solidarity with them, is an extremely important part of these activities. Political forgiveness, seeking forgiveness for crimes committed in our name, is a group of actions that recognize crimes committed in our name and demand justice and punishment for criminals. At the trials, we had the opportunity to listen to public testimonies about crimes and the suffering of the victims. At the trials, it can be clearly seen that Serbia's police, military, and state institutions were behind the crimes.

My new friends spoke about what happened in Godinjska Bara, in cottage country, where civilians were escaping from Srebrenica towards the hills. There, men and boys were caught by the Scorpions and killed atrociously twice. They were shot. Then, their bodies were taken to a weekend cottage and killed another time; their bodies were burned. The perpetrators acted as their commander ordered. "The packages were liquidated." Among the victims were three boys, including 17 year old Sajo, the son of Hana Fejzic, and 13 year old Alvedin, the brother of Safeta Muhic, who is now a housewife and mother of two children. At the trial, Safeta described her last meeting with her brother, his last hug. Her younger brother said, "Sis, I cannot lead you away, nor can I stay with you." He left with their father. Safeta, her mother, and grandmother set off towards Potocari to seek safety with the UN. There, the Chetniks often went into the factories, leading men away and separating pretty girls. They separated my friend Safeta, even though she was only 13. Her mother begged that she be released to her family. Finally, one of the Chetniks released Safeta. She remembers, "It is difficult to talk about. On the way to Potocari, we trudged passed the dead, the exhausted, and old people. We choked on the whimpers, yells, and wails of thousands and thousands of people. Everyone was killed. Airplanes flew over Potocari and shot artillery at us." Her tragedy was not finished. Her desire to know her brother's location is strong. That is a human desire; it would be important to me. The first time she heard something about him was in 2003. The truth about him became known when, during a trial in The Hague, a cassette recording of his death was shown. Even after eight years of emptiness and silence, her hope was still alive. She was so young, but had to identify and confirm to herself and others that she would never see her brother's face again. It was their last parting. I understand her pain and feel compassion for her. I tried to help her through my activism, urging the state that I come from to confront and acknowledge all the evil deeds which were committed in the name of the whole nation. At the trial, Safeta turned and asked, "Are they human? What are they?" Her face was full of pain; her injured voice trembled as she survived trauma once more. Over coffee in the afternoon, I recognized in her a strong and mature person. These events ended her childhood and forced her to grow up without a happy childhood.

Nura Alispahic lived in Srebrenica before the war. She had two sons. One of them, Admir, was killed by a shell at the gate. She sent the other, who was 16, to relatives in the hills because she heard that the Chetniks were taking away all men and boys over seven years old. The last time she saw him was on the cassette shown in The Hague Tribunal, which B92 broadcast. He jumps off a truck with his hands tied behind his back. Nura says, "I would love to know who killed

my child with his hands tied behind his back.”

In this story, I wanted to evoke for you a small part of the truth, similar to thousands of other stories. I ask myself about the thousands of their peers who are also without one or both parents and the warmth of their home and their mother's bosom. Their childhood and right to life was taken away from them. Truth and justice are a tragedy today. Justice means respecting the interests of the victims, their families, and the welfare of society as a whole. We have to consistently work to widen political consciousness about the need to replace the official truths. Every crime must be punished because that is the only path to a just peace.

Our confrontation with the past is visiting the sites of crimes, compassion for the victims of war, and building peaceful relationships among women. For us, confrontation with the past means transitional justice mechanisms in war and in peace. We do this consistently in our activities. We do this through visiting the sites of crimes, attending commemorations, and creating platforms for peace in Bosnia, Croatia, and Kosovo.

From Organized Crime to an Organized Lie: On the trial of Suva Reka

By Miloš Urošević

1987 - 1998 - Apartheid; rigged political trial; the change of provincial leadership; “the kidnapping” of the language; the suspension of Kosovo's autonomy; the closing down of Albanian language schools and university departments and the dismissal of professors and medical workers; police and military brutally break up all demonstrations; hundreds of dead; the massacre in Mališevo; the Klina and Podujevo killings; and the killing of miners at Stari Trg in Trepca.

1998 - The massacre of Albanian civilians in Drenica (Donje Prekaze, Likošane, Gornje Obrinje, Lausa, Cirez, and Rogovo).

1998 - 1999 - War or armed conflict: the Yugoslav Army and special police units against the Kosovo Liberation Army.

1999 - The massacres of Albanian civilians throughout Kosovo (in Racak, Podujevo, Suva Reka, Dubrava, Meja, Velika Kruša, Mala Kruša, Celine, Pusto Selo, Gornja Sudimlja, and Donja Sudimlja), mass deportations of 960,000 Albanians, repeated state-organized ethnic cleansing, the murder of prominent Kosovar Albanians (including Fehmi Agani and Bajram Keljmemendi)

1999 - 2001 - Rigged trials in Serbian courts of prominent Kosovar Albanian leaders (Albin Kurti, Flora Brovina, the Đakovica group, the Mazreku brothers, and some Albanian students)

October 2-5, 2006 - Today, before the board of the district court in Belgrade, the trial for the Suva Reka crimes began. On the first day of court, the indictment was read, and the defendants made their pleas. The trial is being monitored by Women in Black Network activists. First and foremost, we Women in Black activists are monitoring this trial in order to be with the families of the victims. This act respects the victims' dignity, shows solidarity with the families, and acknowledges the crime committed in our name. In doing so, we are trying to sympathize with their pain caused by the loss of their loved ones. We are talking with the families, exchanging information, drinking coffee, and laughing.

Violence: Stages:

State organized crime

On March 26, 1999, in Suva Reka, in the Kalabrija pizzeria and the Pur Restaurant, members of a Serbian Ministry of Internal Affairs special police unit: Radoslav Mitrovic, a colonel and aide to the commanding police officer; Radojko Repanovic, an aide to the police station commanding officer; Nenad Jovanovic,

a detective inspector; Sladan Cukaric, a policeman; Milorad Nišavic, a member of the State Security Police; Miroslav Petkovic, a reservist; Zoran Petkovic, a reservist; and Ramiz Papic, a policeman from Sjenica, killed 48 people, 46 of whom were members of the Berisha family. Shireta, Vjolca, and Gramos Berisha were the only survivors. The bodies had been buried in one of the mass graves in Kosovo at a military rifle range in Prizren. A week later, they were transported to Serbia and buried in Batajnica at the orders of General Vlastimir Djordjevic, a Hague defendant. From here, the bodies were returned to their families in Kosovo.

The defendant Radosav Mitrovic had commanding authority in the Suva Reka region and is therefore held responsible, since he ordered the lower-ranking employees of the Serbian Ministry of Internal Affairs of Serbia, according to the indictment, "Get moving! What are you waiting for? Kill! Drive! Am I supposed to do that for you?" From his behavior, it is easy to conclude that he is a professional, well-trained cog (in the words of Hannah Arendt) in the death machine, the Serbian Ministry of Internal Affairs. He was decorated with a medal of the Yugoslav flag with a star due to his war merits. He was the third commanding police officer, obedient, an executor. This crime, like many others, was organized, carried out and executed by the state. The state is always the first to excuse itself and say it is sorry to the victims' families. (October 2-5, 2006)

Velibor Veljkovic, a policeman, a witness, who has confessed, described the whole crime, "on March 24, a war crime occurred. That is why I am here today." He said that he had refused a mission to kill Albanians since he considered it a crime. He added that there were no conditions in which the police could use arms under their rules of employment. This further proves that the crime was organized by the state, that the state carried it out; it is also evident that there was intention. It was no accident. He said regarding the defendants, "They know exactly what they have done." (November 7- 9, 2006)

An unnamed witness said, "There was a special police unit in Suva Reka led by Veljko Radenovic. People who came from Kruševac assisted it. They were called Cegrovi. The special unit's commanding officer was Radoslav Mitrovic (Cegar #1)." This proves that the ethnic cleansing of Kosovar Albanians was organized by the state. (January 10-12, 2007)

Another unnamed witness said that there had been a lot of army members in the area, armed KLA, armed Serbian civilians, police reservists, regular police forces, special police forces, special police units, and the regular army. Yet another unnamed witness said that the situation in Kosovo had been "a regular state of emergency." (February 1-5, 2007)

"There has been a massacre at the trade centre!" said witness Trajko Trajkovic, a Roma who was 16 at the time. (June 4-8, 2007)

"I don't remember whether there was shooting. I don't remember if inhabitants were expelled. I didn't see any looting. I really can't remember a thing. I haven't a clue. I can't remember when I became a member of the Special Police unit." This witness ended, saying, "Almost all Serbs down there were reservists." Starting in 1989, there were only Serb police. There was great repression of the Albanian population. Police are the true champions of apartheid. All Serbs in Kosovo have been policemen. (July 2-5 2007)

War on civilians

Prosecutor Vitorovic asked defendant Mitrovic if he had said, "If there was bombing, there would not be Serbs, but there would certainly not be Albanians either." The defense objected.

The second defendant, Radojko Repanic, was the commanding officer of the police station in Suva Reka. He claimed that a huge region had been controlled by the terrorist and separatist KLA. It is difficult to believe that underage Genci, Granit, Dafina, Drilon, Vlorjan, Edon, Doruntina, Majlinda, Herolinda, Altin, Redon, Ismet, Eron, Kushtrim, Arta, Zana, Merita, Hanumsha, and Mirat were all members of the KLA. They were only children, caught in a moment in history and a maelstrom of war and ethnic cleansing because of their names. (October 2-5 2006)

Witness Velibor Veljkovic, disloyal to his own, firmly stated that Albanians had not fired at them and that all the victims were civilians. All the corpses were civilians; no one was wearing a uniform. Nataša Kandic, the lawyer for the victims' families, asked one of the witnesses, "Have you heard of the mass destruction in Mala Kruša, Velika Kruša, Pusto Selo, and Celin? Those were the killings that happened in Prizren municipality." Veljko Đurđić, a defense lawyer, replied, "If we pose questions about the whole territory of Kosovo, we will be stuck here for five years." (November 7-9 2006)

"Civilians had not been made to go to the police station while running away from the police itself. I couldn't help the wounded, since I was afraid. The police were defending the Serbs, so I couldn't help the Albanians. The policemen behaved like cowboys. Nobody could tell them a thing. We were quiet as mice," said A, a protected witness. (December 2006)

Witness A repeated many times that one could see a lot of women and children in the photographs. This is proof that the Serbian army and police had not been waging war on the Kosovo Liberation Army, but a war on the civilian population.

Thus, it could be concluded that all the murdered children from the Berisha family were terrorists. This is absurd. (January 10-12, 2007)

Witness A said that the police had orders to fire at members of the KLA, but he also added that not one gun had been fired. This confirms that the Serb police in Kosovo was not at war with armed members of the KLA, but that it was waging war against civilians. (February 1-5, 2007)

There wasn't KLA in Suva Reka, which confirms that Serb armed forces and police were not at war with the KLA. Rather, they were killing innocent civilians. (April 2-5, 2007)

Victims all of a sudden turned into executioners and the executioners turned into victims. (May 15-17, 2007)

"Our aim was breaking up the terrorist groups." Simultaneously, it had been a state terrorist machine, constantly terrorizing the Albanian population. (July 2-5, 2007)

Coordinated acts of ethnic cleansing

The defendant, Radosav Mitrovic, showed off his role in breaking up demonstrations in Kosovo in the 1980s, much like the ones in Serbia in the 1990s. He stated that his ancestors have always given blood for his country when it has been necessary. He was in Kosovo from February 1998 to June 14, 1999. We have witnessed ethnic cleansing as a state-organized crime. Today, on October 3, the first defendant continued his testimony, "I was cleaning the territory with my men." In Prizren region, Orahovac, and Suva Reka, ethnic cleansing of the Albanian population was conducted. "My forces occupied the region. They conquered it. I was promoted to colonel. I was not under army command. I was in charge of my three companies. All the orders came from the commanding station in Pristina." The defendant constantly repeated that they had only been cleaning the region of "Albanian terrorists." Once again, the expression ethnic cleansing has been relativized. (October 2-5, 2006)

All those innocent people who in a particular moment in history bore a certain name have been the target of state-organized ethnic cleansing and killing. One of the witnesses testified that ethnic cleansing was organized by the state and that the goal was an ethnically pure territory without people with a specific name. Velibor Veljkovic, a witness, also mentioned various work groups. The first to work was "the killing group." Then, "the body-collecting group" came. In the end, there was the cleansing group. (November 7-9, 2006)

When the defense posed the question, "Did the police follow orders?," the

defendants and the witnesses reply affirmatively. The question, "What exactly does it mean to follow the law as a police officer during wartime?" has not been posed. It is understood that things such as killing an enemy, Albanian civilians, are allowed, even desirable, without room for justice. Through the ethnic cleansing, an ethnically pure space without people and language has been created. None of them hoped that they would be held responsible for their crimes. When asked, "Was the police just doing its job?," one of the witnesses agreed. None of them mentioned that the law meant killing as many Albanians as possible and creating as large an ethnically cleansed space as possible. (May 15-17, 2007)

"My son Zoran used to drive a bus for an Albanian. Only Albanians had firms there," the woman witness repeatedly used the word "Shiptar," a slur for Albanian, without fear of the consequences. Her speech, hate speech, was the language which blazed the trail to the ethnic cleansing of the Kosovar Albanian population. No one responded to this word, not even the judges. I start asking myself, what does it mean to be obedient in the police? It means unquestioningly executing all of their so-called tasks, murder, ethnic cleansing, and rape. (July 2-5, 2007)

The conspiracy of silence, the crime of silence, the burden of silence, and the lies organized by the state

Defendant Radosav Mitrovic stated that he hadn't paid attention to whether the houses surrounding the police station had been burnt down. He also hadn't noticed the lines of people, Albanian refugees leaving Kosovo. That had been the duty of the traffic police. Ethnic cleansing was the task of the police force, but he, the commanding officer, didn't bother with it. He stressed that he had commanding authority. He had only been in charge for his own subordinates. "If we are at war, everyone is at war. Then, we have a collective spirit. I have been a brave officer and have always gone with the ranks." He was only being a professional, respecting his duty. (October 2-5, 2006)

The presiding judge, thinking of the killing of Albanian civilians, asked, "Did anyone stand up to it?" Witness A replied, "Who dared to confront them?" (December 2006)

After the testimony of one of the witnesses who said that the police had been providing the Albanian population with protection, the prosecutor Vitorovic asked, "How is it possible that on a day when 48 people were killed, there was not any police protection?" To the question of the lawyer for the victims' families, Nataša Kandic asked, "Did the police take money from Jashar Berisha?" An unnamed witness replied, "Our policemen have not been taking money." This is a denial of a widely known fact that, during the ethnic cleansing, police took money from people in exchange for their lives. The repudiation of well-known

facts, the concealment of commanding responsibility, and the denial of any kind of responsibility whatsoever has continued. An unnamed witness continued the practice of the previous witnesses, doing their best to conceal the rigged policy of crime and hide the responsibility of General Obrad Stevanovic. (February 1-5, 2007)

The unnamed witness has also continued to deny any knowledge of the murder of the Berisha family. Like the majority of the previous witnesses, he was trying hard to protect the state and its representatives from the indictments. Unprotected Roma witnesses were not afraid to publicly state all that they knew. They have been the only ones to show humanity even though they have had a hard time. (April 2-5, 2007)

Defendant Radosav Mitrovic praised the professionalism and honesty of his superiors, namely, General Obrad Stevanovic and General Sreten Lukic. Defendant Radosav Mitrovic pleaded "not guilty" to war crimes against the civilian population and cited his qualifications and training. "The regular police did its duty in Suva Reka. The Albanian population moved out, pressured by the terrorist KLA." This is falsification, rationalization, and straightforward denial of the crime. Defendant Radosav Mitrovic stated that his people had a mission to "defend their country and homeland." He added, "I am a highly-educated professional commanding officer." (October 2-5, 2006)

An unnamed witness claimed that the reason for the population movement had been the war and NATO bombing. (November 7-9, 2006)

An unnamed witness denied Serbia's involvement in organized ethnic cleansing actions. When asked by the judges panel if there had been any burnt down Albanian houses, the witness replied, "They were burning their own homes and running away." This is proof of state-organized lies. (February 1-5, 2007)

All of the following witnesses tried very hard to conceal the facts. First and foremost, they wanted to protect themselves, and then their superiors, and the state of Serbia. Repudiating the existence of the crime, that is their knowledge of it, they wanted to conceal the responsibility of the state of Serbia, who organized the crimes in the first place. (March 5-9, 2007)

The killing of Kosovar Albanians is presented as a normal thing to do. It has not been talked about as if it had never happened. It has been justified by the so-called war on terrorism. Amnesia, being silent about the crimes organized by the state, is the witnesses' political choice. They have chosen not to know, not to remember, and not to mention anything. They want to protect themselves, their superiors, and the state. They do not feel empathy toward the victims; the

Albanian victims do not exist. Among these witnesses, it is considered essential to not know what was happening to Albanians. They have chosen to be silent. They have chosen not to know, not to remember. An unnamed witness did his best to conceal that what we are dealing with here is ethnic cleansing organized by the state. The fewer facts about state crime revealed, the better it is for the state. (May 15-17, 2007)

This witness, the former Suva Reka municipal mayor, is a very cunning and skillful liar. He knows exactly what to say. He can lie artfully and convincingly. Moreover, he is certain that he will never be held responsible for his dishonesty. This witness, as an official of the criminal regime, is the executor of the laws which approve and support lies. The witness is like a common German farmer who worked in the field by Auschwitz and who claimed, after the war, not to have known what had been going on there. He chose not to know or not to remember. The witness denies and negates his role as a cog in the machine of state-organized ethnic cleansing, executed with the aim of completely cleansing the territory and getting rid of unwanted people, unfit names, and an inappropriate language. The aim was the creation of a purged territory with certain names and a language banished. This is evidence that there was no lawlessness, autocracy, or anarchy in Kosovo during the NATO bombing. On the contrary, there seems to have been a real system at work. State officials or employees of the state institutions lie, not only in their own interests, but also in the interest of the state they want to protect. All of them have only one law to obey, the law of the shameless lie. (June 4-8, 2007)

Witness Vera Petkovic, the mother of two defendants, Zoran and Miroslav Petkovic, said, "I am not at all familiar with the suffering of the Berisha family since I live far from the alleged crime scene."

"There wasn't anything odd to attract my attention. I don't remember any arson," said one of the police witnesses. The Ministry of the Republic of Serbia is lying. Their professional task had been to kill, expel as many Albanians as possible, and not know anything about the matter afterwards. Lying was, has become, and remains one of their perfectly executed missions. One witness, a high state official, claims that he was not aware of any other police forces in Prizren, "I have only heard of the Special Police units." He finished his testimony by saying, "My unit did not kill. It completed its duties conscientiously and responsibly." Indeed, we are all familiar with this. When it came to the police, to complete one's duty conscientiously and responsibly really meant to expel and kill as many Albanians as possible. Their special task has been the ethnic cleansing of the Kosovar Albanian population. Approximately 960,000 Albanians were driven out of Kosovo in 1999. (July 2-5, 2007)

Assaults on human rights activists

Before the trial began, the defense lawyers asked for the disqualification of the presiding judge. They have also tried to discredit Nataša Kandic by proposing her as a witness, so as to prevent her from taking part in the trial. The defense has also tried to discredit the prosecutor, Dragoljub Todorovic, saying, "Who made him leading prosecutor?" Furthermore, the defense constantly verbally assaulted Nataša Kandic. "She isn't a graduate of law... She hasn't been called to the bar... She is not an expert... She can't ask questions... We demand her exclusion from the courtroom..." This shows how human rights activists, such as Nataša Kandic and Women in Black, are assaulted in this country, instead of criminals. (October 2-5, 2006)

Defense lawyer Goran Petronijevic has once again tried to discredit the attorney of the families of the victims, Nataša Kandic, but she answered that she had already proved her expertise. Once again defense lawyer Goran Petronijevic verbally assaulted Nataša Kandic, but she defended herself admirably.

Defense lawyer Goran Petronijevic again tried to discredit Nataša Kandic, saying "She can't pose a question." He added that the police kept forcing the population to go back to the villages. Nataša Kandic said that the people had been forced to go back on April 14, 1999, but that on April 27 they had been stopped in Meja and slaughtered. (November 7-9, 2006)

Prosecutor Vitorovic explained the indictment, saying that the responsibility to the victims supersedes all other responsibilities. He is extremely patient and is doing his best to lead the witness to say all that they know about the events in question. His undisputed moral virtue and judicial consistency are constantly tried by the defense. Prosecuting attorney Dragoljub Todorovic and Nataša Kandic, the attorney for the victims' families, insist on finding out as many facts as possible related to the situation in Suva Reka, as well as Kosovo as a whole. Nataša Kandic firmly insists on mentioning other mass killings of Kosovar Albanians. However she is interrupted by the defense lawyers as well as the presiding judge. The panel of judges seems to not want the truth of other suffering to be made public in this trial. (March 5-9, 2007)

The families of the victims and journalists from Kosovo commented on changes in the workings of the panel of judges. In the beginning, the presiding judge was trying very hard to find out what really had gone on, but now it seemed that someone has stopped the whole process. The prosecutor is not allowed to directly question witnesses; he is forced to do so through the presiding judge. The presiding judge seems to be making effort so that the witnesses reveal little information, which could damage the state of Serbia. (April 2-5, 2007)

Visiting Places Where Crime Was Committed in My Name

By Ljiljana Radovanovic

My name is Ljilja, and I have been a Women in Black - Belgrade activist since 2000. That is when my active resistance to the criminal regime of the state of Serbia, headed by Slobodan Milošević, began. Until then I had opposed everything that was being done in my name; I disapproved of and felt strongly against, all that evil, violence, fascism, militarism and growing clericalization of the society and state, which had engulfed our country.

I was born in a village near Belgrade and, luckily, my grandfather, father, and brother were exempt from regular military service, so they did not participate in any war. Therefore, in my childhood I was spared from wartime stories; males bragging about their adventures, either during the war or in the barracks, as subordinates of their superiors sporting metal stars on their shoulder straps. In the late seventies, a nationalistic craze began, launched by the Academy of Science and Arts, calling for the creation of a Greater Serbia under the slogan "All Serbs in one state." I started harboring anxiety, fears, and horror because the rattling of arms had begun; threats were articulated about "the other" and "the different." I simply felt that Yugoslavia would not disintegrate in a peaceful way, and unfortunately, this came true. We all witnessed the atrocities that ensued.

As I had been brought up in an anti-militarist spirit, with the idea that all people are equal regardless of their ethnicity, nationality, race, and religion, I did not succumb to that nationalistic hysteria that had pervaded in Serbia. The media also greatly helped the spreading of racial, religious, and ethnic hatred, so that all others were vilified, dehumanized, and proclaimed to be enemies. The state machinery of the warmongering propaganda was sending us the message that "everybody hates us and wants to destroy us." All those coming from Serbia who were of different opinion were treated as bigger enemies than the whole world, who, according to state television, was "plotting against the entire Serbian people."

First, because of my political opinions, I came into conflict with my close and distant relatives, and then with my close environment. Then at one point, in the nineties, the majority of people from my surroundings were against the regime of Slobodan Milošević, but our motives were not the same. For them, he was to blame for the hardship, poverty, hunger, inflation, and unemployment; I was outraged because he was organizing and ordering crimes. People were being kidnapped from trains, tortured, and shot; people were being banished from their homes just because they had different names.

At Women in Black I found allies, friends, and sisters in peace. With them, I could talk about the ongoing events; we condemned the Serbian regime in solidarity, and I found the strength to speak out loud. I was not alone any more; I had found like-minded persons. I felt good and could articulate my ideas loudly and publicly. In my environment, I was a stranger who stuck out of the religious and national consensus. I was a misfit who was not defending "ours" by "theirs." I was an outcast, an enemy, and a traitor to the Serbian nation and the Serbian people.

During the war, Women in Black had been visiting trouble spots and war-affected areas. My first trip to a site of crime that was committed in my name was to Srebrenica in 2002, when we were denied entry by the police of Republika Srpska. In September 2002, we traveled to Sarajevo. Before the sight of burnt down houses, window frames blown out by mortar shells, blackened apartment blocks and bullet holes, I was seized by a cramp and overwhelmed with shame and mortification. I started shaking and crying. Jadranka said, "Calm down. You have not done anything." I know that I did not do anything, but could I have done more to prevent this from happening?

We travel by bus with women coming from over twenty cities in Serbia. We leave very early. There is commotion and talking, "Ljilja, give me a sandwich." "Please pass the water." "When are we going to have a break for coffee and cigarettes..." Then we arrive at Srebrenica. We approach the Memorial Center slowly and silently. People make way for us, come up to us, thank us for coming, and comment, "These are Women in Black; they are with us." I follow our women. Nobody speaks. Only sobs are breaking the silence. No one minds the heat of July. Children approach us with juice and water. Something comes over me, feelings of shame and guilt; it becomes even more difficult to bear as they treat us with respect. I keep repeating, why, why, why, who are the monsters, who could have engineered, ordered, and committed such a crime? We all enter the bus silently and wait for departure. Senka is crying and I ask her why now, what happened, and she answers, "This is terrible. Look, the children are waving to us, and they can see the bus and where we come from." There is no talking. Nobody asks for anything. We all sigh speechlessly, thinking about the pain of the families we encountered. This is what happens when we visit Srebrenica, Prijepolje, Priboj, Višegrad, Tuzla... I have been to Prijepolje twice, for the commemoration of the crime in Štrpci, when 19 civilians of Bosnian nationality were kidnapped from a train, tortured, and killed. I remember the procession through the city and us holding banners with the words: "We remember" and "For all the victims of war." Then we threw white roses into the Lim river. The pain and suffering of the victims' families dwell in me for a long time. I visited Priboj once, for the commemoration of the Sjeverin crime, when 16 passengers, also of Bosnian nationality, were taken off a bus and killed. Once again, white roses and the Lim

river. The picture of a mother and father whose two sons had been killed is carved in my memory. In Višegrad, under "The Bridge on the Drina," the river turned red with the 3,000 roses that were thrown in its green waves, for the three thousand people who were thrown into the river. Once again, we are met with welcome and cordiality by the people with whom we sit on the Muslim cemetery. I have visited Tuzla twice. The first time was for the commemoration of the anniversary of the massacre in the city center, when a mortar shell launched by the Serbian army killed 72 civilians in May 1995. The picture of those 72 graves still hovers before my eyes. The second time, I visited Tuzla at the invitation of the women of Srebrenica, where we, Women in Black, joined them in a procession through streets of the city. It was on the occasion of the protest that the women of Srebrenica organize every 11th of the month, a reminder of the genocide. Each of us was holding a piece of cloth with the name of their killed family member embroidered on it. With the women of Srebrenica, we monitored the trial of the "Scorpions," and I spent a lot of time with them between December 2005 and April 2007. Every year, another woman finds herself at a new site of a crime and goes through a catharsis.

My feminism enables me to choose who I am going to care for and to judge who are "my" people, as my personal choice and not a choice that has been imposed on me by birth or bloodline.

I deeply believe in a policy of asking forgiveness for the crimes that were committed in my name. I see my visits to the sites of crime as an act of solidarity with the victims of those crimes, as an expression of respect for the victims, and as a way for seeking forgiveness for the crimes committed in my name.

It is my duty to address the community I live in and to seek responsibility for those crimes, to demand that all the war crimes suspects be handed over to the Hague Tribunal and that all the other perpetrators be tried before domestic courts, before the Council for War Crimes of the Special Court that was established in Belgrade in 2003. I demand that the authorities who are still denying the occurrence of state organized crimes sanction crimes against humanity and genocide as criminal acts.

I feel that it is very important that, after such visits to the sites of crime, I should address my surroundings, my relatives, and my friends and tell them clearly why I went there and what I experienced, with the wish that this evil would never ever happen again.

Art of Resistance: Motifs, Symbolism, and Symbols in the Aesthetics of Women in Black

By Nevenka Marinkovic and Sneana Tabacki

During the 16 years of its vigils in public open spaces, marches, protests, performances, publishing, and education, Women in Black has symbolically represented all the horrors of war, crime, nationalism, militarism, and delusions as well as the values of truth. The elementary forms of their authentic aesthetic, adapted appropriately, are still alive today. In this text, we will note some of the motifs, symbols, colors, drawings, and compositions, which are repeated and show the presence and nature of symbols in the art of Women in Black.

Black and Mourning Clothes

Black is magical, unknown, melancholy, irrational, agonizing, but also spiritual and substantial. By choosing black, a color that represents the absent, fixed, and silent women's body clothed in black, as their permanent symbol, women activists negate and discard the customary meaning of black and the cult of death, simultaneously sending a clear and visible message against death, misery, the brutality of war, collective craziness, and the denial and forgetting of crimes. This black calls for complete, concrete, and organized resistance to the politics of war, nationalism, militarism, and patriarchy.

Peace Signs and the Olive Branch

In antiquity, olive branches were considered symbols of wisdom, peace, wealth, and celebration. The Škart Artistic Group combined the olive branch with a stylized women's symbol in a black field. This symbol was adopted by other Women in Black groups throughout the world.



Fatima's Hand

Fatima's Hand is a frequently used symbol. It began in Israel. It is simple and has a peace dimension in its contents and expression. For Women in Black, it symbolizes peace, global women's solidarity, and perseverance. Sometimes this motif is combined with antiwar messages.

The Circle (Standing in a Circle, Circular Performances)

In the aesthetics of Women in Black, the circle is a symbol of human connection and togetherness, feeling empathy for and solidarity with all victims of war and violence.

Rainbow Colors and Peace Flags

Women in Black uses rainbow colors, which produce light. Many civilizations identify colors with light. Women in Black's rainbow flags are used in this way, but do not only make a chromatic impression. Rainbow colors symbolize peace and light, harmony and agreement, but also ideas about difference and diversity, the addition of colors, the need to live and respect individual life, to change things, and to begin to improve.



The Pistol, Military Greatcoat, and Helmet



The pistol, military greatcoat, and helmet, as militarist symbols, are part of the aesthetics of war. In appropriating and deforming these objects, Women in Black makes an ironic statement about the militarism that surrounds us to ruinous affect. The idea is that these subjects are made useless. They are used to promote and support antimilitarist statements, principles, and practice.

Stylized Drawings - Picasso and Matisse

Often in Women in Black's publications and posters, stylized drawings of famous or unknown artists are used. For example, it is known that Picasso, after 1945, popularized many variants of the motif of the white dove of peace. Most often it was the simple figure of the woman-dove. This became a recognizable image on Women in Black t-shirts.

A recognizable and frequent motif of Matisse is the female nude. It is reduced to an important, symbolic form, which seems suggestive, but is really just refined and simplified. In their statement, "Always Disobedient," Women in Black uses the motifs from one of Matisse's



compositions, originally made on a Japanese screen, of female nudes holding hands, forming a Kolo (circle) that symbolizes women's support and solidarity.

Kuvarice (A Traditional Form of Embroidery Whose Name Literally Means 'Female Cook')

Kuvarice were embroidered cloths, which were hung in the kitchens of our grandmothers. Every morning, the kuvarice reminded them of their role as cooks, mothers, and guardians of patriarchal morals. Women in Black recognized kuvarice, appropriated and reproduced them, imitating the style, but subverting the contents. Besides emotional aesthetics, they directly transmit anti-patriarchal messages.

Protest Slogans

Lastly, when we speak about the unique art and recognizable aesthetics of resistance that Women in Black promotes, we cannot overlook the banners and slogans which are carried during protest vigils. By rule, they do not show joy, but rebellion, human drama, and tragedy, the basis for artistic interpretation. Additionally, numerous messages were created and written on paper, fabric, clothing, asphalt, walls, and wood, with colored fabric, tempera pain, chalk, markers, and embroidery thread, in Latin and Cyrillic scripts, in different languages (including Albanian, Hungarian, Arabic, English, and Serbian), in different types of letters (block, capital, enunciated, cursive, and printed), in black and white or color, and in different formats (from the size of stickers to banners to be carried by one, two, or even ten people), sometimes artistically imperfect, but sometimes flawless.

We must also note our collaboration with artistic groups, including Dah Theater, The Institute for Engaged Theater, Škart, The Center for Cultural Decontamination, and Stani Pani Collective. Combining different experiences with poetry, graphic design, architecture, performances, street spectacles, theater, pantomime, and sounds which disturb and admonish, these groups have brought us new ideas. With Women in Black, they created an active, contemporary aesthetic of antiwar resistance.



List of Participants

No.	Name	Organisation	From
1	Rabë Rrustemi	Antigona	Skënderaj
2	Marija Perkovic	Women in Black	Vrbas
3	Milena Stefanovic	Brighter Future	Priluzje
4	Ljiljana Radovanovic	Women in Black	Belgrade
5	Resmije Tahiri	Safe House	Peja
6	Merita Halitaj	One to One - Kosova	Prizren - Peja
7	Beti Muharremi	Open Door (Dera e Hapur)	Prishtina
8	Igballe (Igo) Rogova	Kosova Women's Network	Prishtina
9	Meli Osmani	Legjenda	Viti
10	Sevdije Bunjaku	Kalabria	Prishtina
11	Svetlana Trajkovic	Women in Black	Presevo
12	Mihane Ahmeti	Women in Black	Presheva
13	Svetlana Saric	Women in Black	Vlasotince
14	Nada Dabic	Esperanca	Novi Sad
15	Marte Prenkpalaj	Motrat Qiriazhi	Has - Prizren
16	Alba Loxha	Kosova Women's Network	Prishtina
17	Nexhmije Cuca Fetahu	Kosova Women's Network	Prishtina
18	Besa Shehu	Kosova Women's Network	Prishtina
19	Remzije Asllani	Kosova Women's Network	Prishtina

No.	Name	Organisation	From
20	Nicole Farnsworth	Kosova Women's Network	Prishtina
21	Radosava Mirkovic	Brighter Future (Lepsa Buducnost)	Priluzje
22	Memnuna Zvizdic	Zene Zenama BiH	Sarajevo
23	Selvete Gashi	Lulebora	Prishtina
24	Drita Vukshinaj	Handikos	Prizren
25	Rachel Long	Women in Black	Belgrade - Seattle
26	Veprora Shehu	Medica Kosova	Gjakova
27	Ida Udovic	Kvinna till Kvinna	Kosovo
28	Biljana Sipcic	Women in Black	Vrbas
29	Christina Wassholm	Kvinna till Kvinna	Belgrade
30	Staša Zajovic	Women in Black	Belgrade
31	Biljana Kovacevic - Vuco	YUCOM	Belgrade
32	Haya Shalom	Women in Black - Israel	Israel
33	Nevzeta Josifovic	Women in Black	Belgrade
34	Milos Urosevic	Women in Black	Belgrade
35	Marina Nikolic	Women in Black	Krusevac
36	Jovanka Brkic	Women in Black	Velika Plana
37	Snezana Djordjevic	Women in Black	Krusevac
38	Mirjana Rasic	Women in Black	Zajecar
39	Gordana Stoilkovic	Women for Peace	Leskovac

Women's Peace Coalition

No.	Name	Organisation	From
40	Jasmina Stevanovic	Women in Black	Zajecar
41	Besa Selimi	Gender Training and Research Centre	Prishtina
42	Teuta Hyseni	Translator	Prishtina
43	Emina Demirovic	Translator	Prishtina
44	Arben Fetahu	Translator	Prishtina
45	Hyjnor Jasiqi	Translator	Prishtina
46	Slavica Stojanovic	Women in Black	Belgrade
47	Ajshe Nuhju	Vita - Jeta	Prishtina
48	Jasmina Mitrovic	SoS Vlasotince	Vlasotince
49	Nizama Bruncevic	Urbanin & Women in Black	Novi Pazar
50	Ranka Ivanovska	Women in Black	Vrbas
51	Milka Rosic	Women for Peace	Leskovac
52	Nevena Kostic	Women in Black - Zene za Mir	Leskovac
53	Ariella Futral	Urgent Action Fund	USA
54	Violeta Selimi	ODA	Prishtina
55	Tahire Gashi	Zana	Klina
56	Lidija Pajovic	Women in Black	Nis
57	Shemsije Seferi	Alma	Peja
58	Ljiljana Nestic	Women for Peace	Leskovac
59	Rachel Wareham	Motrat Qiriazzi	Austria
60	Snezana Obrenovic	Women in Black	Kraljevo

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No.	Name	Organisation	From
61	Snezana Tabacki	Women in Black	Belgrade
62	Nafije Latifi	Jeta - Vita	Prishtina
63	Advije Gashi	Norma	Prishtina
64	Melihate Misliu	Aureola - Struga	Struga
65	Gyli Beqiraj	RTV 21	Prishtina
66	Osnat Lubrani	UNIFEM	
67	Flora Macula	UNIFEM	Prishtina
68	Nurije Zhaku	Aureola - Struga	Struga
69	Lepa Mladjenovic	Autonomous Women's Center	Belgrade
70		RTV 21	Prishtina



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