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MAGAZINE

Georgia and the Geneva discussions:  
“Negotiations are the only way ahead”

The OSCE Border Management Staff College:  
A flagship project takes off

Special focus: Gender and comprehensive security





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The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe works for stability, prosperity and democracy in 56 States through political dialogue about shared values and through practical work that makes a lasting difference.

## OSCE Chairmanship 2009: Greece

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# Message from the Chairperson-in-Office

In December, during the Ministerial Council in Helsinki, we had a free-flowing and spirited discussion on "The Future of Security in Europe". It did not matter that we left with more questions than answers. The exchange was so candid and constructive that I knew we had to come together again outside our traditional, formalized structures and build on the experience.



OSCE/ANTONIOS DOYKAS

It was then that I announced to my colleagues that the upcoming 2009 Greek Chairmanship would be ready and willing to organize a gathering "with no strings attached regarding time frames and rules of procedure".

Midway into our Chairmanship, on 27 and 28 June, we are making it happen, with the island of Corfu pulling out all the stops to serve as a casual and laid-back setting for what many hope will be the launch of a "Corfu Process" — a reinvigorated, open-ended and inclusive dialogue on how best to tackle some of the most challenging security issues of our time.

The mid-year event represents a defining moment in our Chairmanship's vision of serving as a political, geographic and cultural bridge — linking the various efforts of our many participating States to promote shared values and implement common commitments in the realm of co-operative and comprehensive security.

This issue of the *OSCE Magazine* provides a snapshot of some of the complex areas in which the Greek Chairmanship has been engaged in a spirit of openness, compromise and good will over the past half a year. Whether the stories are about restoring dialogue in the Caucasus through diplomacy at the highest levels, or launching a training centre to strengthen the management of borders and foster cross-border co-operation in Central Asia, the OSCE is clearly at the heart of multilateral efforts to promote stability and security.

I am particularly pleased that the issue has a special focus on gender. Each of the personal stories is a reminder of what the Helsinki Process is all about: protecting and promoting the "inherent dignity of the individual" and blurring the line between "soft" and "hard" security.

By the time this issue of the *OSCE Magazine* reaches its readers, our stock-taking in Corfu will be over. I have no doubt that the OSCE will once again have shown itself to be an ideal forum for high-level debate on pan-European security.

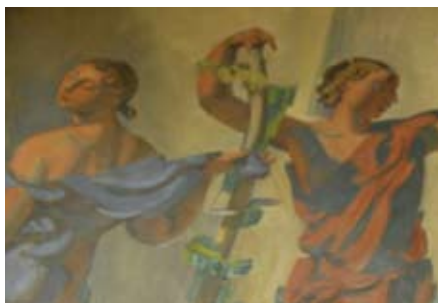
I look forward to the second and final phase of our Chairmanship and to steering the way from Corfu to the Athens Ministerial Council meeting in December. Despite the inevitable stumbling blocks, the road ahead is full of interesting and creative possibilities for restoring faith and confidence among all the members of our OSCE family.

*Dora Bakoyannis*  
 Foreign Minister of Greece  
 Athens, 22 June 2009

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**Sremska Kamenica, Serbia, 5 December 2008.** Maja Kovačev, 23, takes a picture of herself and Damijan Grebović, 25, at the graduation ceremony of the Basic Police Training Centre near Novi Sad in the northern Serbian province of Vojvodina. They were in the first class to complete a programme based on the new police reforms being introduced by the Ministry of the Interior with the support of the OSCE Mission to Serbia. Ms. Kovačev and Mr. Grebović have since served their probationary period with a district police force, and passed their final exams. They recently became fully fledged police officers. The Basic Police Training Centre is proud of its efforts to encourage women and members of minorities to train to be police officers. It has set itself the goal of recruiting 30 per cent women for each class. Maja Kovačev was one of 32 women among 128 students.



# Georgia and the Geneva discussions: “Negotiations are the only way ahead”



“Every single conflict reflects a failure of diplomacy. It is a tragedy for people on the ground. Every case is unique and demands our special attention. However, there is one constant in all conflicts: There is no military solution. Therefore, negotiations are the only way ahead.” Making good on her word at the launching of the Greek Chairmanship, Foreign Minister Dora Bakoyannis, Chairperson-in-Office, wasted no time appointing Ambassador Charalampos Christopoulos as her Special Representative for protracted conflicts. OSCE Press Officer Sonya Yee caught up with the senior Greek diplomat during his recent visit to Vienna and asked him about the latest developments stemming from his shuttle diplomacy between Tbilisi and Tskhinvali and the Geneva discussions on the peace process in the region.

**Sonya Yee: You've been on the road since January, travelling back and forth between your base in Athens and Geneva, Vienna and Moscow, not to mention key spots such as Tbilisi, Tskhinvali, Sukhumi, Chisinau and Tiraspol. As far as the Geneva discussions on Georgia are concerned, how do you see the achievements and the setbacks since the start of the year?**

**Ambassador Christopoulos:** I believe we are making progress, although this is not to deny the very real difficulties that we're still encountering — with the negotiations on a continued OSCE presence, for example. But at the same time, there have been steps forward in other areas.

On 19 May, we completed the fifth round of the Geneva discussions on stability and security in Georgia, which the OSCE co-chairs with

the United Nations and the European Union. Together, we have visited Tbilisi, Tskhinvali and Sukhumi several times especially to prepare for the talks. All sides agree that dialogue is necessary, but it's obvious that things have not been easy. Emotions are still raw and positions are far apart in some cases. Nevertheless, I believe we all share the view that things are moving in a positive direction.

In an earlier round, the participants welcomed the OSCE's role in the resumption of gas deliveries to Tskhinvali, saying that it reflected a positive approach that they would like to see more of on the ground. The environment is still fraught with risks, and the Geneva discussions provide the only forum in which all sides can engage with one another on security and stability as well as on humanitarian matters. So it's important that we give the process the time it needs.

**What came out of the latest round of discussions?**

At the fifth round, the participants were ready to launch discussions on concrete security arrangements. We also started moving forward on the humanitarian front. I was particularly pleased that the participants agreed to create a joint team to find out exactly what repairs would be needed to guarantee the supply of potable and irrigation water across the administrative boundary line. The team, led by an international

United Nations Office in Geneva, Palais des Nations, 19 May 2009: Johan Verbeke, Special UN Representative to Georgia (left), Pierre Morel, EU Representative for the crisis in Georgia (centre) and Charalampos Christopoulos, Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, address the press after the fifth round of Geneva discussions. Photo: AFP/Fabrice Coffrini



Village of Dvani, south of the administrative boundary line, 29 May: Deputy Director Pascal Heyman of the OSCE's Conflict Prevention Centre and Ambassador Hansjörg Haber (left, partly hidden by camera), Head of the EUMM in Georgia, brief journalists after the second meeting of the joint incident prevention and response mechanism. Behind them are (left to right) Gill Janvier, Deputy Head of the EUMM in Georgia; Gottfried Hanne, Deputy Head of the OSCE Mission to Georgia; Wing Commander Steve Young, Chief Military Officer; and Clive Trott, EUMM Deputy Chief of Operations.



OSCE/DAVID KHIZANISHVILI

expert under the auspices of the OSCE, visited the region during the week of 8 June and aimed to submit a report in early July.

During the discussions, the co-chairpersons also presented five concept papers focusing on socio-economic rehabilitation, property and housing rights, facilitation of returns, the legal status of refugees and displaced persons, and the rehabilitation of water supplies. We had an initial exchange of views on this wide range of subjects, including the human rights aspects, and the participants agreed to provide comments prior to the next round of discussions on 1 July.

**The OSCE is committed to playing its part in the joint incident prevention and response mechanisms, which seek to tackle security-related incidents. How are the mechanisms operating in practice?**

These mechanisms have been designed to enable security experts from all sides to exchange information regularly at the working level. On 23 April, the first meeting of the mechanism dealing with Georgian-Ossetian issues took place in a tent that had been pitched in the village of Ergneti, at a spot between the checkpoints of the two sides. It was the first time Georgians met with officials from South Ossetia on the ground since the conflict in August. The EU Monitoring Mission (EUMM) and the OSCE were co-facilitators. The focus was largely on procedural matters, but at least the sides had a dialogue lasting three hours and expressed their commitment to strengthening security in the region.

The second meeting took place on 29 May in the village of Dvani, in the Kareli district, again in a tent between the checkpoints of the two sides. This time, the outcome was more substantive; the participants exchanged views for four hours about real concerns affecting the daily

### Incident prevention and response mechanisms: Towards a safer life for residents

In February 2009, during the fourth round of the Geneva discussions, the participants agreed to create mechanisms at the working level to tackle security-related incidents in the region, especially for the benefit of civilian populations living close to the administrative boundary line. The proposal, agreed on by consensus, envisaged regular meetings between representatives of "structures with responsibility for security and public order in the relevant areas" and international organizations. Also proposed was the creation of a round-the-clock hotline.

The mechanisms have been designed to ensure that all sides respond swiftly and adequately to issues relating to incidents and their investigation, the security of vital installations and infrastructure, criminal activities, the delivery of humanitarian aid, and any other issues that could affect stability and security. The prevention of incidents and the response to them will come into special focus. Also foreseen is the possibility of agreed joint visits to incident-related places.

As of early June, two meetings of the mechanism dealing with Georgian-Ossetian issues had taken place — on 23 April and 29 May. The mechanism dealing with Georgian-Abkhaz issues had not yet met.

lives of villagers, such as the free and safe movement of people on both sides to their farm lands close to and across the administrative boundary line, as well as to cemeteries and places of worship. The sides exchanged information on missing persons and detainees. The provision of gas to Akhagori, and electricity cuts in Akhagori and Tskhinvali were brought up as well.

At the next meeting of the mechanism, the participants will continue discussing all these substantive matters.

The mechanism dealing with Georgian-Abkhaz issues has yet to convene. We hope it will do so soon.

Obviously, there is much to be done to overcome the mistrust and to ensure that these mechanisms become truly effective in reducing

## Geneva discussions: Towards security and stability in the region

In the aftermath of the conflict in Georgia, and in line with the agreements of 12 August and 8 September 2008, the Geneva discussions were launched on 15 October as a platform to address practical and concrete matters and help lay the foundations for lasting security and stability in the region. The discussions are co-chaired by the United Nations, the OSCE and the European Union. The participants are Georgia, the Russian Federation and the United States of America, as well as Abkhaz and South Ossetian representatives.

The discussions take place in two parallel groups working on interdependent issues: one focuses on security and stability in the region, and the other on internally displaced persons and refugees. In 2008, three meetings took place: on 15 October, 18-19 November, and 17-18 December. This year, two meetings have been held so far: on 17 and 18 February and 18-19 May. The sixth round of discussions was scheduled for 1 July.

tensions. Repeated incidents on the ground, including the detention of unarmed OSCE monitors on 21 April, show that the parties cannot afford *not* to take advantage of this channel of communication. I think everyone agrees that practical and realistic measures *can* improve the situation, especially for people who live in the vicinity of the administrative boundary line, where the situation is still fragile.

However, for the mechanisms to become fully operational and efficient, the Greek Chairmanship remains convinced that OSCE military monitoring officers would benefit from being deployed on both sides of the administrative boundary line so that they could observe and report on incidents on both sides. This is, of course, linked to the wider question of the OSCE's presence in the region.

**At the end of 2008, the participating States did not reach a consensus on renewing the mandate for the OSCE Mission to Georgia, and in May, the Greek Chairmanship suspended negotiations on a continued OSCE presence. How do you see developments unfolding?**

Let me retrace the OSCE's efforts so far. As of 1 January, when Greece embarked on its Chairmanship, the OSCE Mission to Georgia was in a phase of technical closure. The OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Foreign Minister Dora Bakoyannis, and I travelled

to Moscow on 21 January and to Tbilisi on 23 March to demonstrate our resolve to address this unfortunate turn of events. I also held extensive consultations with the leadership of the Russian Federation and Georgia, as well as South Ossetia.

We were greatly encouraged when, in February, the participating States agreed to extend the mandate of the OSCE's unarmed military monitoring officers in Georgia until the end of June. We were hoping to build on this consensus by somehow finding a principled compromise for maintaining a meaningful presence in the region.

Despite the Chairmanship's considerable efforts, however, which involved intense, delicate and difficult consultations with the main parties, the negotiations had to be suspended on 14 May. The Chairmanship's proposal of 8 May — based on a "status-neutral" formula that would allow the OSCE to continue its vital work — was acceptable to an overwhelming majority of the participating States and remains on the table.

It is worth recalling why the Greek Chairmanship's position right from the outset has always been that we need *more*, not less, of the OSCE's presence in the region, and why we have not wavered in this conviction: Thousands of people have been directly affected by the conflict of August 2008, and there is so much that an Organization such as the OSCE — with its unparalleled experience on the ground — can do to provide support and restore trust and confidence. And, as Minister Bakoyannis has reiterated time and again, it is also crucial that the OSCE be allowed to continue the efforts it launched in 1992 to build democratic institutions, protect human rights, integrate minorities and support economic rehabilitation in the region.

It is a challenge to find common ground and to bridge the considerable differences that exist, but we remain hopeful that we will still be able to bring about a consensus.

**Charalampos Christopoulos, Special Representative of the Greek Chairmanship of the OSCE for protracted conflicts, has had almost four decades of distinguished service with the Greek Foreign Ministry. Prior to his Chairmanship appointment, he was his country's ambassador to Malaysia, Brunei Darussalam and Timor-Leste (2007), and to Indonesia (2006). He was also his country's top diplomat in Nigeria (1995) and Slovenia (1998). In 2005, he headed the directorate in the Greek Foreign Ministry responsible for the OSCE and the Council of Europe. In the early 1990s, he served as the Deputy Permanent Representative of Greece to NATO. Ambassador Christopoulos is a graduate of the Law School of the University of Athens with a degree in political and economic sciences.**



# A flagship project takes off

**Vision:** The OSCE Border Management Staff College (BMSC), hosted by Tajikistan, seeks to serve as a single point of knowledge delivery for international standards and best practices concerning all aspects of border management — from techniques to technology. Based in Dushanbe, it will also serve as a platform for sharing information and experience within Central Asia and beyond.

**Context:** Cross-border activities such as terrorism, transnational organized crime, illegal migration and the illicit trafficking of weapons, drugs and human beings pose serious threats to all of the OSCE's 56 participating States and 11 Partners for Co-operation, hinder legitimate travel and trade, and affect every dimension of the Organization's work.

The goal of the Border Management Staff College is to rise to this complex range of challenges by strengthening co-operation between the participating States and Partners for Co-operation in accordance with the OSCE's Border Security and Management Concept.

**Funding as of 15 June 2009:** Belgium, Finland, Germany, Greece and Norway (Several other participating States have expressed keen interest in providing funding and support.)

## THREE COMPONENTS

### The Staff Course

Up to four staff courses a year will be offered to current and potential senior managers from border agencies (border guard, border police and customs) from OSCE participating States and Partners for Co-operation, including Afghanistan as a Central Asian

neighbour with a key role to play in the region's security and stability. Each course will be limited to 25 participants.

An academic advisory board comprising the College Principal, the Senior Border Issues Adviser in the OSCE Secretariat, and representatives of College affiliates will ensure that the highest possible standards are put in place. The Board will advise the Course Director on the core curriculum, assist in identifying expert lecturers and contribute training material. International organizations and professional training establishments will be invited to affiliate themselves to the College to enhance its professionalism and visibility.

### Research and Development Centre

As an integral part of the College, the centre will create a network and links with other border management training and research institutes in the OSCE area. Research (as well as training) will emphasize the free and secure movement of persons, border-crossing procedures, trade facilitation, co-operation during natural disasters and serious incidents, and transport security — along with such border management-related threats as terrorism and organized crime. Border management personnel will have a reference and training library put at their disposal.

### Outreach Programme

Workshops and seminars within Central Asia will promote and support cross-border dialogue and inter-agency co-operation through the exchange of information and lessons learned and through the identification and development of best practices.

## Related OSCE programmes in the region

### Tajikistan

Support for the development of a national border strategy  
Customs assistance in Murgab, Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast  
Training Afghan police officers as trainers in counter-narcotics work  
Training the Ministry of Interior's trainers in counter-narcotics work  
Training the Tajik border guard in patrol and surveillance

### Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan

Development of a customs training facility

### Turkmenistan

Border guard and customs assistance through the provision of operational training and equipment



OSCE/FRIJZA GULOMASENOVA

Launching ceremony, Dushanbe, 27 May 2009

"The establishment of the Border Management Staff College reflects our positive relationship with the OSCE. We will make every effort to continue strengthening this co-operation."

— Foreign Minister Hamrokhon Zarifi of Tajikistan

"The College is a unique entity that will play a strategic role in promoting international standards in all aspects of border management. We are convinced that it will evolve into a well-established and vibrant institution."

— Ambassador Mara Marinaki, Chairperson of the Permanent Council, on behalf of the Greek Chairmanship of the OSCE



**Dushanbe, 29 May:** Ambassadors and Heads of Delegation to the OSCE from Austria, Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Greece, the Netherlands, Norway, the Russian Federation, Spain, Sweden and the United States were among the guests at the launching of the Border Management Staff College. The event was hosted by Ambassador Vladimir Pryakhin, Head of the OSCE Office in Tajikistan.



OSCE/GENNADI FATUSHENKO

## A highly promising centre of excellence

*“The Border Management Staff College aims to be a centre of excellence epitomizing the best of the OSCE and responding to regional needs in innovative ways,” OSCE Secretary General Marc Perrin de Brichambaut told participating States on 28 May. “Our sincere thanks go to the initial donors, without whose support the start-up of the College would not have been possible. I am pleased that additional contributions have been pledged, and I hope this positive momentum is maintained in order to ensure the smooth operations of the College. We would also like to thank the host of the College, the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan, whose wish to see the institution created has now come to fruition.”*

*Earlier, several participating States had hailed the realization of the concept behind the College. The occasion was the visit of Major General Kasym Gafarov, First Deputy Head of the State Committee for National Security of Tajikistan, who briefed the Permanent Council on the country’s OSCE-supported National Border Security and Management Strategy and its implementation plan, which he is co-ordinating. The following are excerpts from the remarks of some of the participating States on 14 May:*

*“We are impressed by the comprehensive approach taken in the strategy to strengthen the security of Tajikistan’s borders, primarily its border with Afghanistan. We are counting on the OSCE to make a useful contribution to improving security in Central Asia. The opening of the OSCE Border Management Staff College is an important step. The study programme will include training courses and lectures involving experts from many specialized international organizations and major national institutes concerned with security. We have already informed the Secretariat that the Russian agencies concerned are also willing to participate in this process.”* *Delegation of the Russian Federation*

*“Norway remains a strong supporter of efforts to assist Tajikistan in strengthening border security and management. Supporting Central Asian participating States in their efforts to strengthen border management security and implementing the Ministerial Council Decision concerning the OSCE’s engagement with Afghanistan represent areas of assistance in which the OSCE can add real value to the efforts of other international actors.”* *Delegation of Norway*

*“Border security is becoming an increasingly important component in the OSCE’s comprehensive approach to security, and Tajikistan is paving the way for the OSCE’s involvement in the region. We hope that the recently completed National Border Security and Management Strategy can serve as a ‘best practice’ model for other participating States. The United States sees Tajikistan as a contributor to regional stability and an important partner in tackling the challenges along Afghanistan’s border. We are therefore encouraged by Tajikistan’s efforts to include Afghan officials in its various training projects, including at the Border Management Staff College.”* *Delegation of the United States*

*“Kazakhstan welcomes the establishment of the Border Management Staff College and is ready to make some contributions to that end. Unfortunately, Central Asia is in an uneasy neighbourhood, with States suffering from the flow of illegal drug-trafficking and their territories being used as transit routes for drugs. The fight against drug-smuggling and the threat posed by terrorist groups are draining our nations’ resources. The OSCE’s support in these matters is, therefore, highly valued. We are already seeing how this sort of assistance can be very constructive and results-oriented.”* *Delegation of Kazakhstan*





INTERVIEW WITH JAMILA SEFTAOU I

# “Gender mainstreaming”

## Gaining a foothold in OSCE policy and practice

*Gender equality is essential to the OSCE’s security mandate, since stability and sustainable development are not possible without the presence, participation and advancement of women, says Jamila Seftaoui, Senior Adviser on Gender Issues in the Office of the OSCE Secretary General. A German national with Mediterranean roots, she has had extensive experience leading projects in several countries in Africa, Asia and Europe as a gender and public health specialist with the German Technical Co-operation agency GTZ and the UN Population Fund. Patricia Sutter, Editor of the OSCE Magazine, recently spoke with Ms. Seftaoui to find out how the Gender Section has been meeting the challenges of mainstreaming gender aspects across all dimensions of the Organization’s work.*

**Patricia Sutter: Every year, the Secretary General issues an evaluation report on the implementation of the OSCE’s 2004 Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality. What role does this comprehensive review play in your work?**

**Jamila Seftaoui:** The Secretary General’s evaluation report is an important monitoring and reporting instrument. Every part of the OSCE contributes to it, so the participating States are provided with an accurate picture of how the Organization and its different structures have been progressing in implementing the priorities of the Action Plan.

The report’s analysis is debated at the Permanent Council, and the outcome of this debate guides the Gender Section and the rest of the OSCE for the coming year. In a way, the report also serves as the basis for dialogue, monitoring and sharing of tasks among the Gender Section and field operations, units in the Secretariat and OSCE institutions, such as the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights.

And of course, the Action Plan lays the framework for all our action. To put it in a nutshell, the Gender Section’s mandate is to assist the Organization and the participating States to translate this plan into reality. We respond best to this commitment when we involve all sectors. **So, how does a small team with limited resources tackle the daunting task of promoting a genuinely gender-inclusive culture in the world’s largest regional security organization?**

One could say that our mantra has been: “Achieve more with less”. The first thing my staff and I did when I joined the OSCE in November 2007 was to think strategically and cost effectively and to set ourselves clear goals. Our priority

was to expand the scope of our thinking about gender beyond a mere counting of numbers of men and women in the different units.

We decided to reshape our programme around a few specific themes, looking, for example, at the role of gender in migration, policing, environment and violence. We knew that, among the three OSCE dimensions, the third — or human — dimension was where gender activities were largely concentrated, mostly in the sphere of women's rights. So we chose to adopt the thematic approach in areas where gender had been least addressed. This meant devoting special attention to the politico-military and economic and environmental fields — the first and second dimensions of security.

We also assigned priority to activities that we felt could easily be replicated or adapted elsewhere and which were likely to have a catalytic effect. We wanted to move away from fragmented initiatives with low impact. And, finally, when we saw that there was scope for identifying good practices that had been tried and tested in various parts of the world, we took advantage of the opportunity to facilitate the documentation and exchange of these practices, and we targeted audiences that would benefit most from them.

**What are some of the results that you have seen since adopting this approach?**

It has been heartening to see that many of the field operations, Secretariat units and OSCE institutions are now better equipped to look at their core activities from a gender perspective. Border management, the combating of terrorism and policing are just some of the areas that are opening themselves up to gender needs assessment; this is the first task in gender mainstreaming. We've been providing our colleagues with advice and tools, and several units now have their own action plans and indicators to enable them to track progress independently.

Vienna, 8 June. Focal points for gender issues play a crucial role in promoting the gender agenda in the field, in OSCE institutions and in the Secretariat.

We have also identified community policing as an area in which we can achieve tangible results. Policing can be made more gender-responsive by increasing the number of female recruits in police forces. Now, we all know that many countries cannot achieve this goal overnight, but it does not mean that they cannot carry out other parallel measures with almost immediate positive results. As the OSCE Office in Baku found out (see story on page 14), a simple gender needs assessment, which looks at specific security threats to women and men and facilitates interaction with women, greatly improves the way police forces see their work.

An example of a relatively small project with a potentially high impact is the one that resulted in our new publication showcasing good practices designed to prevent and combat violence against women. Already, we have been seeing keen interest in this resource among practitioners. This proves that it makes good sense to harness the global reservoir of lessons learned and share them with parts of the OSCE region that are only just now coming to grips with the phenomenon of violence against women.

**Why is a security organization such as the OSCE concerned with violence against women?**

Let me pose a question in response: How can an organization whose membership has unanimously subscribed to a solemn pledge to achieve gender equality and combat violence against women waver in its commitments at a time when the incidence of this devastating human rights abuse has hardly changed, if at all, over the past five years?

And, let's be clear: We should never subscribe to the belief that domestic violence is a matter that victims should deal with privately, nor should we think it's the business of humanitarian organizations. Violence against women has nothing in common with a natural disaster. It is



OSCE/VELIMIR ALIC



a clear demonstration of historically established inequality between men and women. When participating States committed themselves to combating violence against women — whether perpetuated by the State or by individuals, whether in times of war or in times of peace — they sent a strong signal that they were ready to come together, roll up their sleeves and tackle this problem which is a stumbling block to stability and prosperity in many societies in the OSCE area.

**In early April, the French chairmanship of the Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC) invited you to speak on the topic of gender and security. What was the significance of this invitation?**

I had been invited specifically to report on a round table meeting that the Gender Section organized in March 2009 on the value of engaging women in peace processes and in military and security matters. It was the first time the Senior Adviser for Gender Issues had ever addressed this body, so I considered it rather encouraging. A concrete result was that the current and next FSC Chairmanships are quite open to holding other sessions to discuss linkages between gender and security matters.

Some delegations later asked how they could help advance the gender agenda. I suggested that opportunities for engagement could take a number of forms: Firstly, they could acknowledge that there is no such thing as “hard” and “soft” issues if the security of civilians and communities is at stake; secondly, they could keep sight of gender aspects during FSC debates and decision-making, whether these concern arms control, military reform, demining or the disposal of noxious substances; and thirdly, they could tap into our expertise whenever they needed guidance in their efforts to fulfil gender-related commitments.

**What other breakthroughs do you find yourself wishing you could achieve?**

That would be quite a list! But if I had to name one, it would be that I would like to see a number of the OSCE values, which attracted me to join the Organization in the first place, reflected in its gender profile. I have in mind especially the stark imbalance between the proportions of men and women who are managing the OSCE’s programmes and steering its vision. Currently, just 19 per cent of senior management positions are filled by women. This does not do justice to the lofty values we stand for such as inclusiveness and democratic governance.

Those of us in the OSCE and from participating States who are involved in recruiting or nominating staff should do more to increase the proportion of women at higher levels. Participating States play a crucial role in this respect. They should task the Secretary General and hiring

units with ensuring that the proportion of senior managers of either sex recruited does not exceed 70 per cent. The participating States should also commit themselves to this goal whenever they nominate national candidates for senior posts under “secondment” arrangements.

This is not about having to accept a female candidate over a better-qualified male candidate or compromising on quality. Rather, it means expanding the pool of qualified female applicants so that we can have a more balanced representation between the sexes.

**Speaking of gender balance, the Secretary General’s most recent evaluation report on the Action Plan recommended engaging more men in gender work. As the co-ordinator of the network of about 40 gender focal points in the OSCE and its institutions, have you noticed any progress on that front?**

It’s important that gender issues not be considered synonymous with “women’s issues”, to be tackled only by women. I can report that this particular recommendation is starting to bear fruit: More men are now serving as gender focal points.

The gender team has also been trying to ensure that the focal points acquire a better appreciation of the potential role of men as advocates for gender equality. This year, we scheduled our meeting of focal points in June, to coincide with a symposium on violence against women. One of our speakers was Todd Minerson, who heads the highly successful White Ribbon Campaign — men working to combat men’s violence against women — and the focal points were able to exchange views directly with him.

[www.osce.org/gender](http://www.osce.org/gender)  
[equality@osce.org](mailto:equality@osce.org)

#### **Gender matters in the OSCE**

is a comprehensive CD tool kit with concise and user-friendly material that presents basic gender concepts and illustrates gender mainstreaming methods and practical examples.

The CD is aimed at helping OSCE staff and senior managers to be more effective in addressing the needs of men and women throughout the whole process of implementing activities in all dimensions of comprehensive security. It is divided into five sections:

- Introduction to gender issues and definitions
- Gender mainstreaming
- Gender matters in the OSCE
- Gender at work
- Resources

Through video spots, representatives of participating States and OSCE officials share their views concerning various aspects of promoting gender equality. *Prepared by the OSCE Gender Section*





Belgrade, October 2006. Col. Vashurina Zarina Petrovna from the Russian Defence Ministry took part in a seminar examining the role of women in the army. Organized by the OSCE Mission to Serbia in co-operation with the Serbian Defence Ministry, the event highlighted the experiences of France, Hungary, Romania, the Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovenia, Romania and the United Kingdom. Col. Petrovna serves at the NATO Military Liaison Mission in Moscow.

OSCE/MIAN/OSBRADONIC

# Peace missions and gender

## Full engagement of women holds the key

**BY DONALD STEINBERG**

*The argument goes that women and women's issues should be at the forefront of conflict resolution and post-conflict stability operations because women are the main victims of conflict, because they make up more than half the population, and because they are inherently more peaceful and collaborative and less corrupt than men. But for me, the real question is effectiveness: Put simply, peace processes and peace-building are more likely to work, to enjoy support from civil society, and to address the "make or break" issues if there is full participation of women as planners, implementers and beneficiaries.*

In 1994, while serving as President Bill Clinton's adviser for Africa, I supported negotiations to end two decades of a civil war in Angola that had killed half a million people. When the Lusaka Protocol was signed, I boasted that not a single provision in the agreement discriminated against women. "The agreement is gender-neutral," I said in a speech.

President Clinton then named me as US ambassador to Angola and a member of the Joint

Commission implementing the peace accords. It took me only a few weeks after my arrival in Luanda to realize that a peace agreement that is "gender-neutral" is, by definition, discriminatory against women and thus less likely to be successful.

Consider the evidence:

The agreement did not require the participation of women in the Joint Commission itself. As a result, at each meeting of this body, 40 men and no women sat around the table. This imbalance silenced women's voices on the hard issues of war and peace, and meant that such topics as internal displacement, sexual violence, human trafficking, abuses by government and rebel security forces, and the rebuilding of maternal health care and girls' education were generally ignored.

The peace accord was based on 13 separate amnesties that forgave the parties for atrocities committed during the conflict. One amnesty even excused actions that might take place six months in the future. Given the prominence of sexual abuse during the conflict, including rape as a weapon of war, amnesties meant that men with guns were forgiving other men with guns for crimes committed against women. The amnesties also introduced a cynicism at the heart of our efforts to rebuild the justice and security sectors.

When we launched demobilization programmes for ex-combatants, we defined an ex-combatant as anyone who turned in a gun. The thousands of women who had been kidnapped or coerced into the (mostly rebel) armed forces were largely excluded, since most of them had been made to work as cooks, messengers, bearers and even as sex slaves.



Male ex-combatants received money and demobilization assistance, but were shipped back to communities that had learned to live without them during decades of conflict. The frustration of these men exploded into an epidemic of alcoholism, drug abuse, rape and domestic violence. In effect, the end of civil war unleashed a new era of violence against women.

Even such well-intentioned efforts as clearing major roads of landmines to allow four million displaced persons to return to their homes backfired against women. Road clearance generally preceded the demining of fields, wells and forests. As newly resettled women went out to plant the fields, fetch water and collect firewood, they faced a new rash of landmine accidents.

We recognized these problems, and we responded: We brought out gender advisers and human rights officers; we launched programmes related to maternal health care, girls' education, micro-enterprises and support for women's NGOs; and we insisted that women be planners, implementers and beneficiaries in our reconstruction programmes.

But it was too little, too late. The people — particularly women — came to view the peace process as serving the interests of the warring parties rather than those of civil society. When the process faltered in 1998, there was little public pressure on the leaders to prevent a return to conflict. The killing only ended four years later with the death of UNITA leader Jonas Savimbi.

Angola is by no means unique. Across the world, courageous and talented female peace-builders suffer discrimination through legal, cultural and traditional practices, and face hostility from men in power, often translated into threats of violence.

There are a number of important lessons to be learned from the OSCE's work in the field in such places as Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and Kyrgyzstan. In these societies, women have stepped forward in their local communities — often with OSCE support — to play prominent roles in dispute settlement and the protection and promotion of human rights, and in combating domestic violence.

Firstly, in situations where women's participation in peace negotiations and peace operations has gone beyond tokenism and has reached a "critical mass" of 20 to 30 per cent, women have had the confidence and peer support to address gender and other matters.

Secondly, while ministries of women's affairs have been among the OSCE's principal partners, the most effective programmes have been in locations where gender is mainstreamed within government and civil society.

Thirdly, OSCE programmes that promote the education of women and girls have proven to be among the most productive investments in improving social indicators, promoting productivity in agriculture and small-scale industry, empowering women to defend their rights, and stabilizing local communities.

And finally, the most successful OSCE security sector reform programmes have been those that have brought women into the formal security forces, thereby enhancing gender-sensitive law enforcement, improving police

relations with the population they seek to protect, and facilitating investigation of crimes of sexual violence.

Regrettably, one further lesson is that various international instruments have proven ineffective in providing a framework for our efforts because they are generally unknown or unused by governments and local populations (and even to some extent by women activists and international officials). I am referring especially to UN Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security; the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and OSCE Ministerial Council Decision 14/05 on women in conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation.

These instruments promised a systematic, energetic and concentrated approach to addressing women in armed conflict and peace-building. But so far, their promise has mostly been a dream deferred, largely because of the absence of monitoring, accountability and enforcement mechanisms.

Nevertheless, symbols are important. I salute the important efforts of many OSCE missions in promoting women's rights, combating trafficking in persons and strengthening women's organizations. But why is it that in the most recent survey of OSCE field operations the words "gender" and "women" never appear in any of the descriptions of the principal tasks undertaken by the 19 OSCE field missions?

Even today, people within our institutions refer to gender issues as the "soft side" of security and military matters.

There is nothing "soft" about going after traffickers who turn women and girls into commodities. There is nothing "soft" about preventing armed thugs from abusing women in internally displaced persons' camps or about holding warlords and other human rights violators accountable for their actions against women. There is nothing "soft" about forcing demobilized soldiers to refrain from domestic violence or about insisting that women have a seat at the table in political and peace negotiations and a prominent position in peace operations.

These are among the hardest responsibilities on our agenda, and I am pleased that we are devoting time and attention to the challenges they present.

**Donald Steinberg is the Deputy President for Policy at the International Crisis Group. This article is based on excerpts from his address at a round table meeting on gender and security, held in Vienna on 11 March 2008. The event was the first of a series launched by the OSCE's Gender Section. Throughout his three decades of service at the White House and US State Department, Mr. Steinberg has devoted much of his attention to the impact of armed conflicts on women. He has testified frequently before the UN Security Council and the US Congress. He has also served as an adviser to the Executive Director of the UN Development Fund for Women, as a board member of the Women's Refugee Commission, and as a member of the advisory council of Women Waging Peace.**



Shirvan, 30 June 2008. Children dress up as neighbourhood law enforcers at the police open day, an event supported by the OSCE Office in Baku. Photo: OSCE/Elgun Taghiyev

# Mainstreaming gender in community policing in Azerbaijan

## Defying entrenched stereotypes

BY JOHN MACGREGOR

“The Ministry of the Interior of Azerbaijan has announced that women will be the focus of recruitment efforts in the police service.”

This breaking-news headline took me and my colleagues in the OSCE Office in Baku by surprise when it was read out during a morning briefing one day in November 2008. We recalled a series of events that might have played a crucial role in bringing about this interesting development.

It all started in April 2008, when Jamila Seftaoui, the OSCE Senior Adviser on Gender

Issues, visited our field operations. Her key message — the importance of integrating matters of concern to both men and women into our projects — “gender mainstreaming” — made me think: What could the OSCE Office and our Azeri partners possibly do, in the light of our limited resources, to push this ambitious process forward in the Police Assistance Programme?

It’s not as if I was insensitive to such matters. I was an officer responsible for human rights in the Canadian Armed Forces for five years, and several of the complaints that came to my attention stemmed from difficulties encountered by women in uniform in breaking down barriers in the traditionally male-dominated military.

After the visit, the project team and I re-examined our first-hand impressions of society and culture in Azerbaijan. There was a clear division between women’s roles and their jobs, and men’s roles and their jobs. Women, I was told by those who knew the country better than I did, “knew their place”; only a handful of women can be found in uniform, usually employed as doctors or in administrative roles.



**Baku, April 2008.** Police Major Alida Aliyeva, one of the few women in the country's police force, discusses OSCE-supported training with Dr. Ylena Glod, who teaches first aid to police officers, and Andras Hugiik, a retired Hungarian police colonel who is the Senior Police Adviser in the OSCE Office in Baku.



Female police personnel make up less than 10 per cent of the total police force.

I decided that the strategy should be to introduce some elements of gender mainstreaming into our community policing activities, which were already under way as part of the larger Police Assistance Programme. But I was of two minds: one part of me felt it would be a hard sell, and that the most we could strive for initially was fostering a modicum of gender sensitivity among police officers.

However, our Azeri partners and we knew we had to act fast if we were to incorporate gender considerations into our training programme in any meaningful way. This was because we were already in the midst of expanding community policing to eight cities and districts that had been identified by the Government: Gazakh, Ganja, Tartar and Yevlakh in western Azerbaijan, the Narimanov district of Baku, along with Guba, Davichi, and Khachmaz in the north.

#### **ADVICE FROM COMMUNITIES**

The challenge was to build on our experience at the original pilot site of Mingachevir, a city in

central-western Azerbaijan, and in the southern city of Shirvan, formerly known as Ali Bayramli.

I looked to the successful community advisory groups in Mingachevir for inspiration. These comprise a cross-section of citizens who meet regularly to learn all about the latest policing activities from local senior law enforcers and to share ideas with them on how to improve the community's safety and security.

However, I considered it highly unlikely that the men in the advisory groups would want to have free-wheeling discussions with women, and vice versa. The next best thing, at least in the short term, I thought, would be to develop police advisory groups just for women. As for increasing the number of women in the police force, Alexis Chahtahtinsky, our Deputy Head, indicated that, since he understood this to be difficult to achieve, it could instead be set as a longer-term goal.

We then asked Sonja Busch, an expert recommended by the OSCE Gender Section, to take a close look at the state of affairs and advise us on how to work wisely towards our twin objectives.

### ***Policing in Azerbaijan: On the path towards modern standards***

Since 2003, the OSCE Office in Baku and the Interior Ministry of Azerbaijan have been working together to create a modern and community-oriented police force. The following are key achievements of the Police Assistance Programme so far:

- The Police School of Azerbaijan has developed a twinning partnership with educators from the Czech Police, and has significantly upgraded its curriculum, modernized its teaching methods, and extended the training period from three to six months. New course content includes juvenile justice, community policing, communication, domestic violence, and English-language training.
- Starting with a pilot site in the city of Mingachevir, community policing has been developed and implemented and is being expanded nationwide. A new website has also been created: [www.mingachevirpolice.az](http://www.mingachevirpolice.az).
- Police personnel at all levels are being trained in public order management, focusing on the training of trainers.

When Ms. Busch proposed holding a workshop on gender-related matters in policing, I had my doubts that the public in Mingechevir would give us the needed co-operation and assistance. Nevertheless, we went ahead and organized the workshop.

What happened at the two-day event in Mingechevir in October 2008 was nothing short of a revelation: The police and the public were perfectly happy to discuss the issues on the agenda, and men and women wanted to work together in community advisory groups. The interaction was lively. Participants identified the specific security needs of men and women, and of boys and girls, and suggested ways of tackling them. One of their key concerns was how the police react when gender-related crimes such as domestic violence, the sexual abuse of children, rape or trafficking are reported.

Perhaps most surprising of all, participants made it known that they considered the workshop and other similar gatherings as being important to the community as a whole — and not merely as serving the sole purpose of promoting relations between the police and the public.

Following the workshop, Ms. Busch, Senior Police Adviser Andras Hugyik, and I met senior officials of the police and the Interior Ministry to discuss gender mainstreaming. We also raised the matter of increasing the number of women serving as police officers, even though I felt it was rather premature to broach a long-term goal that could detract from other more urgent tasks.

It was about three weeks after that meeting when the local media announced the news that amazed us all — that the police force would seek to recruit more women. But other breakthroughs were yet to come, thanks to the full support of the uppermost echelons of the police and the Interior Ministry.

## GIANT STEP

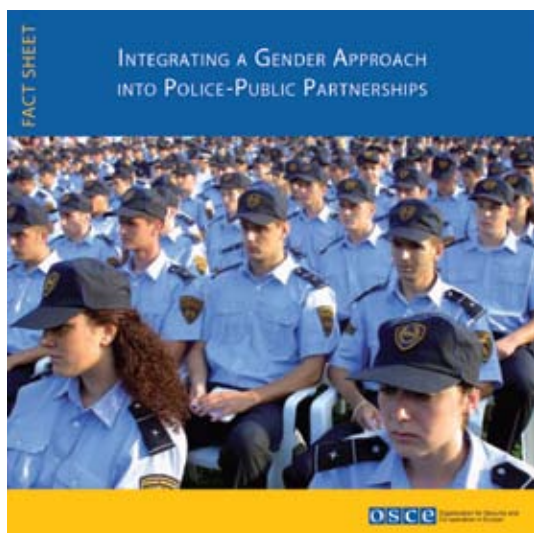
In December, the OSCE Office organized the first meeting of police chiefs of the ten cities and regions that are operating community policing programmes. This represented a giant step forward towards ensuring that gender mainstreaming would be fully embedded into the community policing programme. The fact that the meeting was held in Mingechevir was significant in itself: It was the first time that the police chiefs had met outside the capital.

The police chiefs reviewed the main features of community policing, noted the progress made in Mingechevir and discussed plans for other projects in 2009. In their presentation, the police authorities included the groundbreaking gender-mainstreaming workshop that had taken place in October. We now have good reason to believe that many gender-related measures will be included in the community policing programmes throughout the country.

As far as gender mainstreaming is concerned, the OSCE, the international community and the Azerbaijani authorities are continuing to learn valuable lessons. For one thing, we now realize that we should not underestimate the good sense of “traditional societies” when it comes to supporting initiatives that they care deeply about and that are in their own self-interest. For another, we now recognize the value of being more open to exploring untried and untested approaches, such as the consultative process that we used, to defy stereotypes and minimal expectations.

**John MacGregor, a retired military officer who is seconded by Canada, has been serving as the Head of the Politico-Military Unit in the OSCE Office in Baku since 2007.**

<http://www.osce.org/baku>



*Integrating a Gender Approach into Police-Public Partnerships* is a fact sheet introducing the basic elements of mainstreaming gender into community policing. It assists OSCE police advisers and implementing partners in ensuring that men and women have equal access to police services and that they have an opportunity to help identify their own specific security needs. An example of how such a partnership can be fostered is through a regular forum where crime and safety problems of particular concern to men and women, and boys and girls can be discussed openly. The fact sheet features a five-step guide to planning and implementing gender-sensitive and gender-responsive community policing projects — starting with a gender analysis through to implementation and evaluation. *Prepared by the OSCE Gender Section*



# A woman in uniform in Georgia

Building confidence through professionalism and empathy



*On 22 August 2008, barely two weeks after an agreement had been forged between the French and Russian Presidents, ending the short but fierce war in South Ossetia, my colleague, Major Eric Hernault, and I were on a direct flight from Paris to Tbilisi. The OSCE had been a vigorous advocate for the cessation of hostilities, and we were among the 20 to respond to the urgent call of participating States for additional unarmed Military Monitoring Officers on the ground.*

**BY MARTINE ROSENTHAL**

I had been on several brief missions to ex-Soviet States during my 23 years with the French Air Force, but this assignment was different: It was not without security risks; it was my first time to work with an international organization; and it was going to take me away from my two teen-aged children for at least six months, the longest I had ever been away from them.

To help prevent further violence and ensure the unimpeded progress of humanitarian activities and the return of people to their homes, we were expected to carry out daily patrols south of, and up to, the Georgian-Ossetian administrative boundary line; to brief other patrols; and to report our observations regularly to Vienna on the still-volatile security situation.

When I saw the list of 20 new MMOs, in addition to the eight who had already been hard at

work long before hostilities broke out in early August, I noted with interest that I was going to be the only woman in the group. In the French Army, the sight of female military personnel no longer raises eyebrows. Women now make up 20 per cent of the Air Force, for example. I was aware, however, that at least a few of the MMOs were from countries where working alongside a woman was still unusual.

I would soon find out that the main concern of Steve Young, Chief Military Officer at the OSCE Mission to Georgia, lay elsewhere: I was going to be the sole “NCO”, non-commissioned officer, among a group of “officers”. Officers hold commanding authority, while NCOs, also known as “warrant officers”, have a technical specialization. Mine was the Russian language, in addition to my training in military techniques and my background in international relations. Steve wanted to make sure I would be treated on an equal footing with the officers.

Fortunately, the fear of my being in “double jeopardy” was to prove unfounded. We were a small group with a large job. Skills, competence, maturity, experience, openness and the ability to work in a team — and *not* rank, nationality and gender — were what counted.

Just like other MMOs, I alternated during the week between serving as the driver of a heavy

*Karaleti, near Gori, October 2008. Martine Rosenthal monitors the withdrawal of the Russian Federation armed forces from a security zone they had established south of the Georgian-Ossetian administrative boundary line in the aftermath of the August conflict. Photo: OSCE/David Khizanishvili*

# Camp MARTINE



Karaleti, March 2009. Martine Rosenthal's former colleagues (not complete in this picture), representing 17 countries, honoured her contribution by naming the small camp in Karaleti after her. Set up in December 2008, the camp, which is about 25 kilometres south of the administrative boundary line, serves as the forward monitoring base of the Military Monitoring Officers.

OSCE/LIKA KAKASHVILI

armoured vehicle and as a patrol leader who had to make difficult decisions on the spot. I can honestly say that not once did I encounter any problems with my colleagues. We carried out our tasks under a chain of command with full respect for one another.

Outside our small camp in Karaleti, two kilometres north of Gori and south of the Georgian-Ossetian administrative boundary line, I had my share of unique experiences and observations as a foreign, professional female soldier.

Patrolling is all about feeling the pulse of the area, and talking to local people is an essential part of this. Our first points of contact were usually small gatherings of men on the street. If any women were present at all, they were usually in the background, silently looking on or busily going about some tasks. It would be immediately obvious that the men preferred to address the male MMOs directly, even when it was I posing the questions.

At other times, because I spoke Russian and often translated conversations between other MMOs and villagers, people would mistake me for an interpreter despite my uniform. I also noticed that Georgian police officers would be somewhat taken aback when they had to answer security-related questions from a woman.

In fairness, I have to emphasize that people's reaction

towards me — one of surprise, curiosity, and mild wariness and discomfort — was merely at the outset. After all, a female professional soldier is still a rarity in the tradition-steeped villages in this part of the Caucasus.

Over time, through regular interaction, I managed to win the confidence of people and the police. The fact that I was a Russian speaker and my previous experience in some of the newly independent States went a long way. Sometimes a smile was all it took to break the ice. Still, I knew there was a time to be friendly and a time to be firm, especially with those who had a special responsibility to keep villagers safe and secure, such as the police.

A large part of my efforts to gain trust entailed explaining my role and my background as a professional woman in the military. Isn't this what professional women often have to do in the civilian world, too? In contrast, during those rare opportunities when the village women could speak with me directly, there were no barriers between us. There was an immediate, natural and easy rapport; no step-by-step "confidence-building" was necessary.

This brings me to an interesting question: What was my contribution, as a woman, towards the achievement of the OSCE's goals in Georgia?

Monitoring is highly dependent not just on technique but





also on “feeling”, and I hope I was able to tap into this combination. I would like to think that my daily reading of the situation from the point of view of a woman and a mother found its way into my observations and report-writing and helped raise the sensitivity of participating States to the challenges on the ground, including the non-military aspects.

People we talked to desperately needed firewood for the winter, for example. They had to have access to potable and irrigation water. Although we MMOs were not involved in providing humanitarian assistance, I believe we made an important contribution towards better co-ordinated and better-targeted local and international assistance by listening carefully to what people had to say about their needs and sharing this information with humanitarian agencies and local leaders.

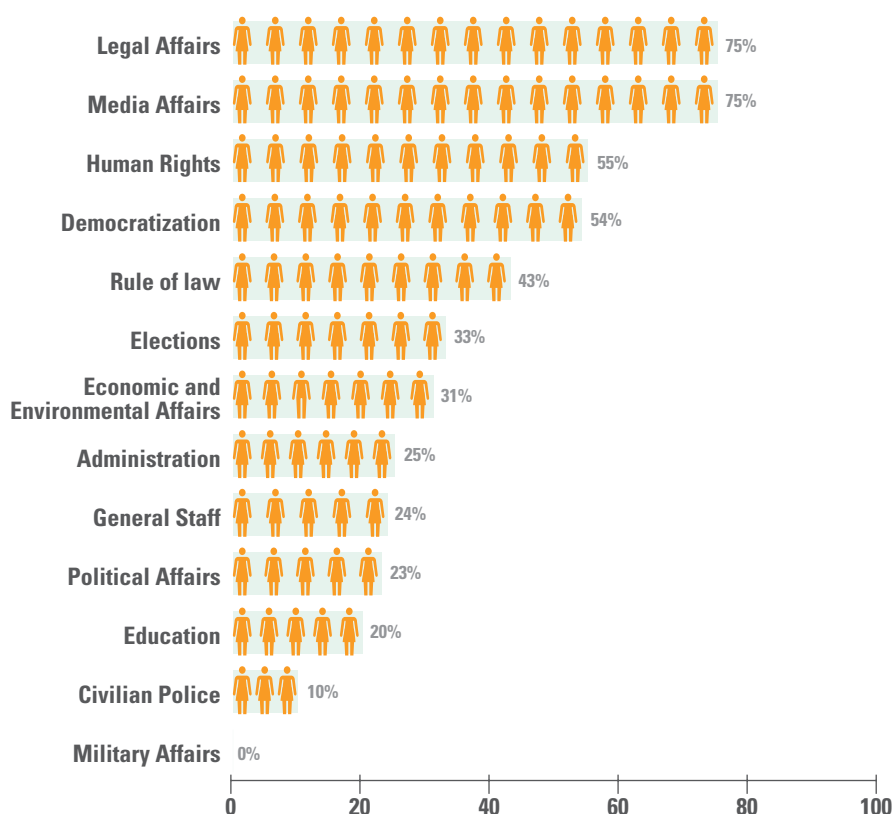
It has been three months since I returned to my work at Creil Air Base, 50 kilometres north of Paris. I have since gone to Kyrgyzstan on a short arms control inspection mission and am expecting a similar assignment in Kazakhstan.

My fellow MMOs and I are in touch —they surprised me recently with a photo of themselves with a “Camp Martine” banner in the background to let me know that they had just named our base in Karaleti after me. We share our feelings of frustration as we speculate about a Georgia without an OSCE presence. We believe the MMOs have been doing a fine job. And we ask ourselves: What is in store for the village people we met along the way?

**Martine Rosenthal started her career as a non-commissioned officer in the French Air Force in 1985. As she is a specialist Russian speaker, her work has focused on the former Soviet countries. Since 2006, she has been working as an arms control inspector with the French Arms Control Verification Agency, which is directly under the General Staff of the French Ministry of Defence. The agency is responsible for implementing the commitments that France signed up to under the CFE Treaty, the 1999 Vienna Document and other arms control-related agreements.**



## Percentage of international female staff members and managers in OSCE field operations (by field of expertise, as of May 2008)



# Developing “emotional muscles”

## Men working with men to stem domestic violence



*Neil Blacklock is a pioneer in men's advocacy against domestic violence in the United Kingdom. He initiated an intervention project in 1989, focusing on behavioural change among men who use violence towards intimate partners. He has also led “Dad's Space”, a website for fathers separated from their children. Mr. Blacklock is now the Development Director of “Respect”, a non-profit organization which sets standards for the delivery of domestic violence services for men. To find out more about Mr. Blacklock's groundbreaking work, Michael Unland, Media Officer at the OSCE Office in Tajikistan, sat down with him after the experts' seminar organized by the OSCE's Gender Section in Dushanbe in October 2008.*

### **Michael Unland: Why are men largely absent from discussions on gender equality?**

**Neil Blacklock:** Public debates about gender equality are often seen as focusing only on improving the situation of women. This is not surprising, since domestic violence, rape and commercial sexual exploitation are gender-based crimes whose victims are overwhelmingly women and girls. And since men largely hold the upper hand in society, they don't feel they have anything to gain from a change in the status quo.

But men, too, stand to benefit from any gains. Take a look at men's health and other indicators of happiness. We men allow ourselves to be confined in versions of masculinity that limit our range of expression, damage our personal relationships and stand in the way of our personal

happiness. Men are the main perpetrators of violence towards women and children, and they are also the main perpetrators of violence towards other men. So addressing the connection between masculinity and violence offers benefits for men as well.

### **What was the reaction among women's organizations when you started to work with men to counter domestic violence?**

There was a mixture of support and very understandable scepticism. But the fact that the vast majority of victims are women doesn't mean that domestic violence should be seen as a “women's issue”, since it is men's behaviour that is *the* problem. Without holding men accountable for their violence, without working to change unhealthy male attitudes, and without increasing men's participation in tackling the problem, we will never get anywhere.

### **And what was the reaction among men?**

It is definitely positive for men to hear another man addressing violence against women constructively and energetically. There is a need to create a community where men are prepared to speak up and be heard, and to act in support of women and children who are being abused. That happens when men reach out to other men and take a stand against unacceptable behaviour and make them realize that there are better ways to live one's life.

### **Respect runs a counselling programme for perpetrators and a national “Men's Advice Line” that receives about 7,000 calls annually from men seeking support and information regarding violence in relationships.**

### **What is the general profile of these men?**

They come from all sectors of society. They often feel powerless and trapped, which is ironic, considering that they are controlling, damaging and trapping those closest to them. Our goal is to help them understand and acknowledge the extent, frequency and seriousness of the violence they are inflicting and its negative impact on their partners and children and on themselves. We also try and instil in them a sense of responsibility for their actions: using violence is a choice. We help them to reassess their expectations of what they are entitled to from their partner and to think about how to handle the natural ebb and flow of a relationship with respect.

Men need to learn how to be strong in a different way by developing “emotional muscles”. By this I mean developing skills and internal resources that they can tap into so that they



are able to step up to their responsibilities as partners and fathers instead of running away from problems and resorting to abuse in order to silence others. It also means developing an ability to communicate and to acquire a sense of empathy and fair play. These are basic human qualities, not exclusively male or female.

**How long are the counselling programmes and what is your success rate?**

Respect's national service standard sets a minimum of 60 hours. However, many organizations offer longer programmes because lifelong patterns of behaviour cannot be changed overnight. There are no quick fixes. Several evaluations and actual evidence point to the fact that the majority of men attending programmes go on to end their use of violence. Success is also about helping women and children establish lives free from abuse. We pay close attention to the safety of victims by providing them with services and by keeping them informed about the risk the partner or father might pose. Without these features, it would not be safe to run programmes for abusers.

**You use words such as identity, happiness, emotions — words that aren't used too often in campaigns against domestic violence.**

We should use them more! We should also foster a dialogue about the responsibilities of being a partner or father and create the spaces where this dialogue can take place. An outstanding showcase is the White Ribbon Campaign, which was launched in Canada in 1991. Because it captured a universal sentiment through a symbol, the movement caught on quickly, with



55 countries adapting and developing the campaign in different ways. It mobilized thousands and thousands of men to break their silence — after all, most men are appalled by domestic violence — and to show their solidarity with women. In many parts of the world, you'll see men wearing white ribbons on 25 November, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.

**What lessons did you draw from the experts' meeting here in Dushanbe? Can a programme like Respect be replicated in Central Asian countries, which have only just begun to address the growing phenomenon of domestic violence in their societies?**

We were 90 participants representing 20 countries brought together by the OSCE to discuss a universal problem. We learned a great deal from each other's experiences and approaches. Many of the changes that took place in the UK were, in fact, based on lessons we learned from other countries. Our work in Respect, for example, was influenced by the experience in New Zealand and the United States.

But we also acknowledged that we shouldn't assume that methods and campaigns in the West could be transported in exactly the same way to, say, Central Asia. We need to understand the interplay of class and culture with gender and identity in order to enable countries to recreate successful approaches from elsewhere in ways that they think will work best for them.

The experts' meeting demonstrated how the OSCE provides support and encouragement by connecting grass-roots organizations with participating States. This role is vital to sowing the seeds of change.

Vienna, 8 June.  
Todd Minerson, Executive Director of the White Ribbon Campaign, addressed a symposium on combating violence against women in the OSCE region, which was organized by the Senior Adviser on Gender Issues, Jamila Seftaoui, and her team. The campaign, founded by a group of men in Canada 1991, has grown into the world's largest movement dedicated to helping men fight gender-based violence.

[www.respect.uk.net](http://www.respect.uk.net)  
[www.whiteribbon.ca](http://www.whiteribbon.ca)

# Young voices against violence

## Children as agents of change

BY SCOTT CAMERON

I was 14 years old when arguments between my parents, who had been divorced for three years after my father left home, became increasingly frequent because of financial tensions. One day in September 2001, I witnessed my mother being abused by my father. From then on, my mother and I lived in dread that it would happen again. In October, we were forced out of our home and had to pack our bags and put our belongings into storage.

Unlike most people in Scotland in this situation, my mother and I did not take refuge in a shelter. Instead, we stayed with relatives close to our old house, so that we could continue looking after my pet dog and so that I could remain in the same school.

This semblance of normalcy had a price. For nine months, I slept on the floor in a cramped room with three other people, while my mother somehow found some sleeping space that she could call her own in the living room. It was a difficult and anxious time for both of us. I recall being confronted daily with the social stigma and humiliation associated with homelessness.

In the meantime, my mother had come into contact with Scottish Women's Aid. With a country-wide network of 39 local aid groups, the organization is the leading campaigner and lobbyist for effective responses to domestic abuse focusing on tackling its root cause: gender inequality.

The staff offered to provide me with a new, experimental counselling service. I was amazed at the help I received. A case worker was

assigned especially to me, and I could speak to her for as long as I needed to about anything that was troubling me. We didn't have to dwell on the horrors of domestic abuse or the trauma of being uprooted from our familiar surroundings, yet the sessions enabled me to come to terms with both of these issues.

Months after my mother and I moved into a new house, in July 2002, I continued to receive help from Scottish Women's Aid. Later in the year, I found that I could even bring myself to re-establish contact with my father. I attributed this to the counselling that I received.

Having experienced the impact of this support on my young life, I decided to become engaged in advocacy activities concerning domestic violence. Starting in my local community of Ayrshire, I spoke at a number of different events, telling my story to government ministers and service providers. Many young people and children were encouraged to join me on these occasions and described how they coped with abuse. We also shared our insights into practical matters such as shelters and financial aid.

Soon, we realized that we could make an even more significant contribution at the national level. I took part in "Listen Louder!", a major nationwide campaign aimed at improving support services by getting people to listen to the real experts on domestic abuse: children and young people who had witnessed and gone through it first-hand. I spoke at the launching of the campaign in Edinburgh, supported by members of Scottish Women's Aid and local councils.

"Listen Louder" ran from 2002 to 2004 and was an enormous success. It culminated in the

Computer art work by Scott Cameron, created when he was 15 years old.





Government setting up a high-level national group to draw up a delivery plan for Scotland's children and young people. Covering the justice, health, education, housing and police sectors, the plan was launched in June 2008. We were also able to secure major funding for the same type of specialized support that I had received, designed especially for children and young people.

I continued to speak at both local and national events, including at a celebration in Edinburgh in 2006, honouring the accomplishments of Scottish Women's Aid in the past three decades. In October 2008, these engagements led to a global stage — the OSCE-sponsored Experts' Seminar on Innovative Approaches to Combating Violence Against Women, in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, where Heather Coady of Scottish Women's Aid and I spoke about the importance of enlisting children and young people as partners in the battle

against domestic violence. Our presentation — highlighting Scotland's unique approach to children's rights and support for them — was well received, and many participants came up to us after the event to pose follow-up questions.

I've been asked on more than one occasion why, despite my other work and study commitments, I am still actively engaged in the cause. My answer is always the same: "I don't want others to experience what I went through. And if my experience has taught me anything, it's that children and young people who have lived through domestic abuse are the best agents of change. We need to make things better for them. We need to have their voices heard."

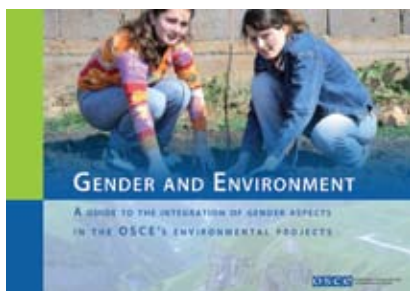
**Scott Cameron, 22 years old, is in his fourth year of a master's degree programme in computer science at the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow, Scotland.**



## Recommended gender mainstreaming tools

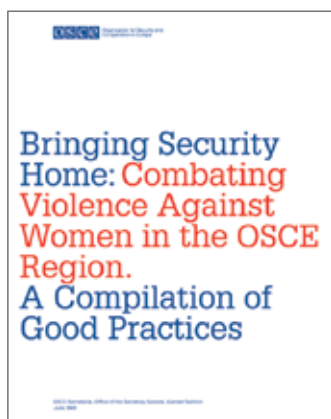
(in addition to those described on pages 11, 16 and 30)

[www.osce.org/gender](http://www.osce.org/gender)  
[equality@osce.org](mailto:equality@osce.org)



**Gender and the Environment: A Guide to the Integration of Gender Aspects in the OSCE's Environmental Projects** seeks to make OSCE managers of environmental projects more aware of the often-invisible linkages between gender and the environment. Women play a vital decision-making role in the management of natural resources, especially during and after conflict. At the same time, they are among those most vulnerable to the consequences of environmental degradation and disasters. The Guide illustrates how gender is mainstreamed into the development, implementation and evaluation of environmental programmes dealing with the management of water, energy, land, chemicals and waste, as well as with climate change and local environmental governance. *Prepared by the OSCE Gender Section*

**Bringing Security Home: Combating Violence Against Women in the OSCE Region. A Compilation of Good Practices** is a technical reference tool describing more than 95 examples of good and innovative practices in preventing violence against women, protecting victims and prosecuting offenders. Strategies to engage men and young people in a variety of activities are also included. A chapter examines noteworthy research and evaluation initiatives aimed at shedding light on what the international community considers as one of the most pervasive human rights violations taking place on a global scale. Each of the featured practices is considered as having succeeded in applying creative solutions to a universal problem and to be making a real impact. *Prepared by the OSCE Gender Section*



**Mapping female experts for politico-military projects** is an online database that will disseminate consultancy opportunities for women in such areas as arms control, border management, combating terrorism, conflict prevention, military reform and policing. A roster of qualified female experts will be maintained. The tool seeks to promote the full and equal participation of women in conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation. Currently, women make up just ten per cent of civilian police working for the OSCE and are not represented at all in military affairs. *Expected launch by the OSCE Gender Section: September 2009*



**The Gender and Security Sector Reform Toolkit** introduces gender aspects to people working on security sector reform, a broad area aimed at transforming security policies, institutions and programmes. The package includes a user guide, 12 tools and 12 practice notes covering the following: policing, defence, justice and penal systems, border management, parliamentary oversight, national security policymaking, civil society oversight, private military and security companies, monitoring and evaluation, and gender training. A guide to international laws and standards is also included. The Toolkit is available in print, as a CD-ROM and online. *Toolkit partners: OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces and UN International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women.*



OSCE/SHKIROV KAMOL

# Tajikistan's lone domestic shelter has its hands full

## Pinning hopes on legislation

BY GRAZIELLA PIGA

"I just happened to be passing by."

"I read about it in a brochure."

"I finally came to my senses and decided to seek you out."

"My neighbours told me about it."

These are the most frequent explanations given by women who turn up at the door of the Gulrukhsor Women's Shelter, often in a state of distress, bewildered children in tow. Located in Khujand, north of the Sughd region, it is Tajikistan's only shelter for female victims of domestic violence and trafficking. It also operates a hotline, which receives up to 1,700 cries for help every year.

"The creation of the shelter as an extension of an existing women's crisis centre was initially opposed by local authorities who didn't see the need for it," recalls Orzu Ganieva, who heads the shelter. "But it was obvious that we were in the right place at the right time, and we now receive backing from several State agencies."

Khujand, Tajikistan, May 2009. Each story of domestic and sexual violence is unique, says Orzu Ganieva, who heads Tajikistan's lone domestic shelter.

Since the shelter started operations in 2005, with the support of the OSCE Centre in Dushanbe, as it was then known, it has taken in 83 women and more than 100 children. The average stay is 11 days, but some have left its comfort and safety only after two months. Nearly 60 per cent of the women were victims of domestic violence; 10 per cent had suffered sexual violence.

"We care deeply about helping these desperate women develop self-confidence and find peace of mind," says Ms. Ganieva. "Our professional staff, including five social workers, offer free medical consultations, psychological and social rehabilitation and counselling. Our one-to-one assistance has enabled many of the women to get jobs, housing and access to education and financial assistance."

Each story of domestic and sexual violence is unique, but a common thread runs through all of them: the humiliation and helplessness felt by the victims, pushing many to the brink of suicide, often by self-immolation. In 2008 alone, out of nearly 1,740 women who called the hotline, 54 had attempted suicide.

Officials estimate that about 500 people in Tajikistan take their own lives every year. "That's about six out of every 100,000 people; if this were true, it actually wouldn't be so bad," says Dr. Davron Mukhamadiev, Chief Consultant in the Military Forensic Medicine Centre in Dushanbe. "However, I find it difficult to believe this figure, considering the fact that an average of 15 victims of attempted self-immolation are taken to the Burns Clinic in Dushanbe every month."

### FAMILY CONFLICTS

In his study of female survivors of self-immolation, Dr. Mukhamadiev found that 55 per cent had attempted suicide because of family conflicts, often involving mothers-in-law. "In the old days, people with suicidal tendencies were always thought to be mentally ill, needing psychiatric care. Today; professionals still have difficulty acknowledging that suicide can be brought on by unstable social and economic circumstances," he says.

"In many households, women are treated as chattels and servants," says Orzu Ganieva. "During the height of the job exodus of thousands of men to other countries, women often found themselves raising children on their own and heavily dependent on relatives and in-laws. The global financial crisis has changed the picture slightly, but not to the advantage of women. Many of the male migrants are returning home to a worsened economic climate, with women once again bearing the brunt of domestic violence."

Tajikistan's bumpy path to stability after independence and after five years of civil war has taken a heavy toll on women and obstructed



their quest to take their place in social and economic life. Especially in the rural areas, the return to certain local customs and traditions has been eroding women's gains by placing a low premium on education for girls; putting pressure on young women to marry early, sometimes through arranged marriages; discouraging them from taking up gainful employment; and turning a blind eye to the practice of polygamy among men.

An OSCE survey carried out in 2008 on girls' education covering 24 *jamoats* (villages) showed that nearly one out of four girls and young women had not completed primary school. Some 30 per cent of female respondents aged between 18 and 25 said they had been unable to complete their basic education or continue their studies because their parents had prevented them from going to school.

The same survey also found that some 30 per cent of school-aged children were not in school. The proportion of school-aged boys in school was 65 per cent, while that for school-aged girls was 59 per cent. Yet, in discussion groups in the same *jamoats*, it was not uncommon for male and female participants to remark that an uneducated woman was more likely to become a victim of domestic violence and to accept it as a fact of life, or to resort to extreme alternatives such as suicide.

#### A PRIVATE MATTER

Aggravating the situation, notes Gulbahor Safarova, a human rights lawyer in Dushanbe, is the attitude, also prevalent in many other societies, that domestic violence is a private matter. "Law enforcement officers tend to take on the role of mediators and focus their energies on persuading women to 'go home and be a good wife'," she says. "Even judges sometimes pronounce that 'a good woman does not get battered.'"

When given the chance, however, women are often hesitant to file complaints against their husbands. "During a recent six-month period, out of 48 cases of domestic violence that were brought to my attention, only ten wound up in court," says Ms. Safarova. "As soon as a victim realizes that her husband might be thrown into prison, she decides it is better to put up with the abuse than to risk incurring the wrath of the perpetrator and his family, and losing her sole source of modest financial support. And since women don't enjoy the same property rights as their husbands, they risk becoming homeless as well."

The OSCE Office in Tajikistan, which runs a dynamic gender programme, takes a holistic approach to combating violence against women, focusing on the protection of victims, research and analysis, advocacy and lobbying work with

government bodies and parliament, and prevention through awareness-raising and education.

At the OSCE-sponsored experts' meeting on domestic violence that took place in Dushanbe in October 2008, government officials and NGO representatives pointed to the crucial role being played by the country-wide network of 11 OSCE-supported women's crisis centres. Since 2005, these have helped thousands of victims of domestic violence and vulnerable women through the provision of free psychological support and legal advice.

NGOs are pinning their hopes on a newly created unified database of information from these crisis centres, which is being shared with government bodies. "We hope this will help NGOs and the Government's Committee on Women and Family Affairs in their continuing efforts to lobby for an adequate legal framework that considers domestic violence as a criminal offence," says Ms. Ganieva.

A law setting out a comprehensive and coordinated approach to combating violence against women, including measures to protect victims from perpetrators, was drafted in late 2007 and was the subject of discussions at meetings between government ministers and heads of international agencies. Since then, however, the draft legislation has not been taken up again, nor has it been submitted to parliament. Its passage has been encountering a number of bottlenecks, including funding.

Nevertheless, both national and international advocates of the law have not lost hope that it will be adopted this year. If so, it will pave the way for more shelters to be opened in other parts of the country and ensure the sustainability of the network of OSCE-supported women's crisis centres. Until then, women in dire straits have only one shelter in the country to run to.

**Graziella Piga is the Gender Programme Manager at the OSCE Office in Tajikistan.**

[www.osce.org/tajikistan](http://www.osce.org/tajikistan)



OSCE/SHOKIROV KAMOL

The Gulruksor Women's Shelter. Women show up at the door, often in a state of distress, bewildered children in tow.

# Raising the alarm on bride abduction in Kyrgyzstan

Wanted: More studies to shed light on emerging trends



Naryn, Kyrgyzstan. A young woman weeps while being forced to wear a marriage head kerchief after being abducted.

**BY TURGANBUBU ORUNBAEVA**

*Aigul is visiting her village in Naryn province for the holidays, enjoying the short break from her studies at a prestigious college in Bishkek. Walking home from shopping one day, she is accosted by Erkin, a good-for-nothing young man from the same village. He forces her into a taxi and takes her to his family home. She is held there for more than a week, during which Erkin's female relatives relentlessly try to talk her into marrying Erkin. Aigul fends off the women's attempts to have her wear the jooluk, a white head kerchief that signifies marriage, and is determined to remain defiant to the end. Finally, Erkin's parents give up and ask Erkin and his friends to take Aigul back to Bishkek. Inside the taxi, Erkin, deeply angered that his plans have been foiled, has a violent argument with Aigul. Erkin and his friends decide to exact vengeance and all four rape Aigul, threatening to kill her if she breathes a word to anyone about the incident.*

This is just one of many heartbreaking stories that my mostly female staff share with me daily at the regional hospital in Naryn province, where I have been working as a gynaecologist for the past 20 years. Bridal abduction — *ala kachuu* in the Kyrgyz language — does not always end as tragically as the story of Aigul and Erkin (whose names I have changed to protect their identities). Some women do manage to move on after breaking free and shape a life of their own choosing. Others profess to being happy and content in their new domestic setting after initially resisting their entrapment.

Just a point of clarification: There is such a

thing as “consensual” bride abduction, which is less controversial and takes place less frequently. The couple usually stages their own “kidnaping”, sometimes with the approval of both sets of parents — for example, when they cannot afford to pay for the costs of a formal marriage ceremony — and sometimes as a way of bypassing parental consent to marry.

It is the “non-consensual” bride abduction that appears to be gaining in popularity among Kyrgyz people as an instant path to marriage, setting off alarm bells among authorities, legislators, gender specialists and a wide cross section of civil society. Rising divorce rates, growing alcoholism and aimlessness among young men, and cases of suicide and prostitution among young women who find their lives suddenly shattered are just some of the devastating repercussions that the practice leaves in its wake.

Proponents of *ala kachuu* — and there are many, especially in the rural areas — justify it as a Kyrgyz tradition. However, there has never been any consensus among the population as to its legitimacy and authenticity. Some scholars believe that the coming of independence gave rise to the resurgence of a practice deemed illegal during the Soviet era. Others think that a harmless courting ritual from nomadic days has taken a brutal twist.

Whatever its ancient cultural and sociological roots, the fact is that non-consensual bridal abduction is a crime that is punishable by the imposition of a hefty financial penalty or imprisonment of up to three years, as set out in Article 155 of Kyrgyzstan's Criminal Code (1997). It also violates the spirit and the letter of every major



convention and commitment that the country has signed up to, aimed at safeguarding human rights and the dignity of women in Kyrgyzstan.

Why, then, is the practice alive and well?

### SHEDDING NEW LIGHT

Bakubat (meaning “wellness”), which I founded in 2000, was probably the first NGO in Central Asia to call attention to this little-examined topic. We consulted historians, ethnologists and researchers and rummaged through published literature in libraries to shed new light on the practice, but we came up empty-handed.

This is when we decided to rely on our own resources and develop a programme to make young men aware that resorting to violence and abuse in their search for a life partner was hardly the way to go about laying the foundations for a stable and harmonious family. My interest in film-making also led to my producing several short documentaries on bride abduction which we screened at every opportunity.

In 2006, we received a much-needed boost when the OSCE Centre in Bishkek took notice of our efforts and helped us embark on a small survey in an attempt to understand why the practice was thriving. We decided to focus on Naryn province, where our NGO is based. With an estimated population of 52,000, Naryn is one of the most mountainous and most remote provinces in Kyrgyzstan.

A total of 950 married Kyrgyz women, ranging in age from 16 to 70, took part in the survey. We had chosen them randomly, dividing them almost equally between residents of urban and rural areas. Their answers to our questions confirmed our worst fears: More than 60 per cent of the women in the rural areas and more than 40 per cent of those in the urban areas had entered into marriage against their will, through *ala kachuu*. Force had been used in more than half of the abductions. Close to 60 per cent of women had been abducted against their will, most of them when they were between the ages of 16 and 22.

Ninety per cent of abduction victims said that their fear of being ostracized by their community and sometimes by their own families, and their concern that they would have diminished chances of having a happy future if they stepped outside the “threshold” again played a crucial role in their decision to accept their situation. And even when victims refused to meekly accept their fate, they generally did not file a court case, or turn to law enforcement authorities.

Although there are no official statistics, the survey revealed that large sectors of the population are comfortable with the *ala kachuu* “tradition”, tacitly approve of it and are unable to recognize its harmful impact. In addition, a complex web of factors feed into each other,



COURTESY OF T. ORUNBAEVA

nurturing the practice. These include: the reckless attitude of young people towards marriage, even among the relatively well-educated; the low level of awareness among young women of their legal rights (and, similarly, the ignorance of the law among young men); and the prevailing attitude among law enforcers that domestic violence and bride abduction are best tackled within the family.

### SOCIO-ECONOMIC DAMAGE

Our co-operation with the OSCE Centre in Bishkek led to a pilot project in 2008 aimed at countering domestic violence and bride abduction by promoting gender awareness. We are now reaching more young people than ever in Naryn and are strengthening the relations between public institutions and civil society.

At our seminars, we try to open the eyes of young men and women to the fact that the practice of *ala kachuu* — which literally means “to take and run away” — encapsulates every form of violence imaginable: physical violence, because almost every abduction case involves force; psychological violence, because regardless of whether or not the woman knows her abductor, the fact is that marriage is forced on women through deception or through coercion lasting from a few hours to several days; and sexual violence, because women are often raped as a way of “sealing” the union.

Equally reprehensible is the socio-economic damage being inflicted on women, their families and society as a whole. By entering into this form of marriage against their will, women are deprived of their right to play a positive and productive role in their country’s development.

In our survey, 32 per cent of abducted women had to drop out of school completely, while 27 per cent had to shift to part-time studies. The fear of being abducted also discourages

Naryn town, 26 November 2008. University students hold up signs protesting against domestic violence and bride abduction and promoting well-being through education and happy and healthy families. The author, Turgan Orunbaeva, is seated, centre.



Naryn town, 5 December 2008. On the occasion of an international campaign against domestic violence supported by the OSCE Centre in Bishkek, the NGO Bakubat conducted a series of seminars for 150 military personnel of Kyrgyzstan's Border Service, soldiers in the Naryn battalion of the Defence Ministry, medical students, and students from the Teachers' Training College and the Naryn State University.

thousands of young women from returning to their villages, where their skills are badly needed, especially in schools and hospitals. They often choose to stay in towns and cities, where they end up doing unskilled labour and become vulnerable to the sex trade and to trafficking.

#### **SHARP CONTRAST**

A milestone achievement made possible by the OSCE project was our opening of a counselling and rehabilitation centre in Naryn last year. So far, we have been able to provide about 500 victims of domestic violence and bride abduction with psychological and medical assistance and legal advice.

It has been gratifying to see that all these activities have started making a difference. To take just one example, there has not been a single case of non-consensual bride kidnapping in the village of Baetov, in Ak-Talaa *rayon* in Naryn province in the past three years. We are witnessing a similar downward trend in other villages. Moreover, State and law enforcement authorities are now more ready and willing to work with us and other NGOs to combat the practice.

In October 2008, I was invited to describe the work of Bakubat at an OSCE-sponsored experts' seminar in Dushanbe focusing on innovative approaches to combating violence against women. And in March this year, with the encouragement of the OSCE Centre in Bishkek, I presented the findings of our survey on bride abduction at parliamentary hearings on "Gender Aspects of Legislation Norms on the Marriage Age".

Since the hearings, senior officials have been expressing support for our work with the OSCE,

and journalists have taken greater interest in writing about our activities. What a sharp contrast to the time when I first brought up the controversial subject in the late 1990s, only to be met with scepticism, suspicion and even hostility. State authorities, local activists, citizens, academicians and members of the international community should now seize the momentum by combining resources to wipe out one of the most abhorrent practices being committed against the women of Central Asia.

**Turkan Orunbaeva is the founder and Director of the NGO Bakubat in Naryn, Kyrgyzstan. She herself was a victim of bride abduction.**

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*Contributing to this article were Jumagiul Esenalieva, Gender Focal Point, and Burul Usmanalieva, Media Officer, at the OSCE Centre in Bishkek.*

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<http://www.osce.org/bishkek>





## Representation of women in national parliaments in OSCE participating States (as of 31 May 2009)

Rank	Country	Lower or single House			
		Elections	Seats	Women	% Women
1	Sweden	9/2006	349	164	47
2	Iceland	4/2009	63	27	42.9
3	Finland	3/2007	200	83	41.5
4	Netherlands	11/2006	150	62	41.3
5	Denmark	11/2007	179	68	38
6	Spain	3/2008	350	127	36.3
7	Norway	9/2005	169	61	36.1
8	Belgium	6/2007	150	53	35.3
9	Germany	9/2005	612	197	32.2
10	Belarus	9/2008	110	35	31.8
11	Andorra	4/2009	28	9	32.1
12	Switzerland	10/2007	200	57	28.5
13	Portugal	2/2005	230	65	28.3
14	former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	6/2008	120	34	28.3
15	Austria	9/2008	183	51	27.9
16	Kyrgyzstan	12/2007	90	23	25.6
17	Monaco	2/2008	24	6	25
18	Liechtenstein	2/2009	25	6	24
19	Moldova	4/2009	101	24	23.8
20	Luxembourg	6/2004	60	14	23.3
21	Canada	10/2008	308	68	22.1
22	Bulgaria	6/2005	240	52	21.7
23	Serbia	5/2008	250	54	21.6
24	Italy	4/2008	630	134	21.3
25	Croatia	11/2007	153	32	20.9
26	Estonia	3/2007	101	21	20.8
27	Poland	10/2007	460	93	20.2
28	Latvia	10/2006	100	20	20
29	United Kingdom	5/2005	646	126	19.5
30	Slovakia	6/2006	150	29	19.3
31	France	6/2007	577	105	18.2
32	Lithuania	10/2008	141	25	17.7
33	Tajikistan	2/2005	63	11	17.5
34	Uzbekistan	12/2004	120	21	17.5
35	Turkmenistan	12/2008	125	21	16.8
36	United States of America	11/2008	435	73	16.8
37	Kazakhstan	8/2007	107	17	15.9
38	Czech Republic	6/2006	200	31	15.5
39	San Marino	11/2008	60	9	15
40	Greece	9/2007	300	44	14.7
41	Cyprus	5/2006	56	8	14.3
42	Russian Federation	12/2007	450	63	14
43	Ireland	5/2007	166	22	13.3
44	Slovenia	9/2008	90	12	13.3
45	Bosnia and Herzegovina	10/2006	42	5	11.9
46	Azerbaijan	11/2005	123	14	11.4
47	Romania	11/2008	334	38	11.4
48	Hungary	4/2006	386	43	11.1
49	Turkey	7/2007	549	50	9.1
50	Malta	3/2008	69	6	8.7
51	Armenia	5/2007	131	11	8.4
52	Ukraine	9/2007	450	37	8.2
53	Albania	7/2005	140	10	7.1
54	Montenegro	3/2009	81	5	6.2
55	Georgia	5/2008	150	9	6

As of May 2009, 11 OSCE participating States had reached the minimum target of 30 per cent female members of parliament set by the UN Economic and Social Council in 1990.

A number of different factors influence the representation of women in parliament:

**Social attitudes and political tradition:** Certain participating States have a long-standing tradition of women participating in political life.

**Quota systems:** The constitutions or electoral laws of several OSCE participating States prescribe quotas for the number of women in national parliaments or for the number of women nominated by parties as electoral candidates.

**Electoral arrangements:** Nine out of the 11 participating States that have met the 30 per cent target have a proportional electoral system.

Source: Inter-Parliamentary Union  
<http://www.ipu.org/english/home.htm>



Female members of the *Riksdag* with Speaker Per Westerberg in 2007. Sweden has the world's second highest proportion of women in a national parliament (after Rwanda). Photo: Swedish *Riksdag*/Melker Dahlstrand

*Within the framework of the Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality, the OSCE assists the participating States in their efforts to develop effective measures to bring about the equal participation of women in democratic processes and promote women's political participation. The Organization carries out and supports projects in this area, often in connection with election-related democratization projects.*

# Guide on Gender-Sensitive Labour Migration Policies



Athens, 18 May. Eva Biaudet, the OSCE's Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, and Goran Svilanovic, Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities, present the new publication at a panel discussion.

## Long-overdue resource points the way to gender-sensitive labour migration policies

The OSCE's *Guide on Gender-Sensitive Labour Migration Policies* has just been published and is being widely disseminated to policymakers, parliamentarians and planners in the OSCE area — and not a moment too soon: Despite the “feminization of migration”, a global trend that shows no sign of abating, decision-makers have not been giving the specific needs of female migrant workers the attention they deserve.

“Women make up about half of the 200 million migrants worldwide and are increasingly taking on an important role in the economic life of their home and host countries,” says Goran Svilanovic, Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities. “However, potential gains and professional and economic opportunities are

slipping away as female migrants find themselves on the losing end in all phases of the migration process and on the gender-stratified labour market.”

A number of factors are fuelling this situation, notably labour migration policies that are not gender-sensitive, women's limited access to opportunities to legally work abroad, and stereotyped male and female roles at the workplace.

“Most women who migrate, including those who are qualified for better-paying jobs, end up working in traditionally female-dominated informal sectors where they are often unprotected by labour laws and are left out of the social safety net. This makes them vulnerable to discrimination, abuse, exploitation and trafficking,” says Eva Biaudet, OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings.

The Guide cites several studies showing that the most “feminized” occupations, for which there is great demand in host countries, are in nursing, education, domestic and care assistance, hospitality services, garment manufacturing and seasonal agricultural work.

Among the Guide's practical recommendations to governments are:

- Assess the needs for foreign labour by examining data on gender and specific labour market sectors, including domestic work and private care-related services so that admission policies can better reflect needs in these particular fields.
- Develop permanent and temporary channels of migration that offer equal access to women. For example, point-based systems could accord due recognition to the role of women as givers of primary care.
- Allow female migrant workers to change place of employment to reduce dependency on a particular employer.
- Provide prospective female labour migrants with pre-employment and pre-departure services in their countries of origin.
- Develop codes of ethics for recruitment.
- Foster equal access to financial services for both men and women, and establish low-cost remittance services.

### *Gender-sensitive labour migration policies:*

- Recognize that both men and women migrate for economic reasons and to seek better employment opportunities, but that women's experience of migration differs significantly from men's;
- Take account of factors rooted in the gender division of labour and the power relations between men and women;
- Are based on a gender analysis, use sex-disaggregated data, and take into account who benefits from policies and who does not; and
- Include measures specifically calculated to benefit women by promoting equity of opportunity, rights and obligations.



- Develop a variety of reintegration programmes to serve diverse groups of female migrants and ensure smooth return processes.

“By identifying gaps in migration policies, by exploring possible solutions, and by describing examples of good practices and innovative models, the Guide seeks to support and reinforce the contributions of female migrant workers, bring about more equal employment opportunities between men and women, and enable women to emerge from the shadow of the informal sector,” says Jamila Seftaoui, the OSCE Senior Adviser on Gender Issues.

“We hope that the cross-dimensional approach of the Guide will go a long way towards helping participating States and Partners for Co-operation carry out their commitments concerning economic migration, gender equality and anti-trafficking in human beings.”

*The Guide on Gender-Sensitive Labour Migration Policies is a joint effort of the Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities, the Office of the Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, and the OSCE’s Gender Section. The publication was made possible with the financial support of Greece, Finland and Slovenia. A Russian version of the Guide is being prepared.*

“The history of migration in Armenia is multifaceted, with constantly shifting trends. We have seen its negative impact in the form of brain drain, but we have also seen its positive aspect in the form of remittances flowing back into the country, easing the difficult economic situation of many families.

Although we have yet to fully assess the impact of this phenomenon, certain concerns need to be addressed urgently: Firstly, more and more women are now heading households because their husbands are working abroad for long periods or on a seasonal basis. Secondly, women, especially young ones searching for jobs outside the country either for better career opportunities or to support their families back home sometimes find themselves trapped

in exploitative sexual and working conditions.

Against this background, we in Armenia will definitely pay close attention to the *Guide on Gender-Sensitive Labour Migration Policies* published by the OSCE. I am sure the Government will find it a useful tool in its efforts to draw up gender-sensitive migration policies, design a gender strategy and develop measures and activities in the next phase of Armenia’s national action plan to combat trafficking in human beings.

I hope that the OSCE will seriously consider dedicating a project aimed at assessing the gender aspect of migration and its development impact in the South Caucasus.”



Athens, 18 May 2009. Dzinuk Aghajanian, Head of the International Organizations Department, Foreign Ministry of Armenia, at a panel discussion on the occasion of the launching of the Guide.



Athens, Seventeenth OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum, 18-20 May 2009. “The global financial and economic crisis calls for a more focused and co-ordinated approach to migration management by the international community,” the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Greek Foreign Minister Dora Bakoyannis, said at the Forum.



Promoting equal opportunities among male and female law enforcers and encouraging women to take active part in citizens' advisory groups are key goals of the OSCE-supported police assistance programme in Armenia.  
Photo: OSCE/Karen Minasyan

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