

A Retrospective of Kosovo from the women's perspective – a complete failure by the OSCE and UNMIK?

There are few retrospectives on modern conflicts from the women's point of view – matters move on, internationals dash from episode to episode. It's a fact of life that no-one wanting a career inside highly hierarchical and 'collegiate' organisations such as the OSCE and many UN Agencies would report on failure.

In November 2009 Tim Symonds at Eyecatcher/Shevolution sent a short number of questions to the Executive Director of the Kosova Women's Network, Igballe Rogova* in the hope her responses will prompt the wider community to conduct more research on the success or failure of the OSCE and UNMIK to live up to the two great Resolutions on Gender in Post-Conflict Reconstruction which should be binding on them.

It would be a real service to a world in the present Age of deadly conflicts if a full analysis could be undertaken of Kosovo's reconstruction from the perspective of women and two principal resolutions, UNSCR1325 and the similar European Parliament gender peacebuilding resolution (A5-0308/2000), both coming up to their 10th anniversary.

Kosovo bears more examination from two points of view: the Allies spent an estimated US\$25 billion removing Milosevic's control. Kosovo is exceptionally important because it seemed to overthrow international custom on foreign intervention (the 'Blair Doctrine'). Subsequent international invasions in Iraq and Afghanistan were in great part justified by Western Leaders such as U.S. President Bush and UK Prime Minister Blair on behalf of women in those countries.

NB: The principal OSCE personnel in Kosovo who bore the duty to implement UNSCR1325 and the similar European Parliament Resolution were Ambassador Daan Everts as the Head of OSCE during the first years of reconstruction who went on to a very high international office in Afghanistan and Arne Piel Christiansen, for several years Director of the OSCE Democratisation section, based in Pristina.

Questions to Igballe Rogova November 2009:

Q. Along with many thousands of Kosovan women, you spent 10 years in the Kosovan Albanian underground. When the OSCE and UNMIK arrived in Kosova in 1999, presumably you had very high hopes they would understand the importance of including Kosovar women in the post-conflict reconstruction processes, including the political development of Kosova?

A. YES, I HAVE SAID THIS IN A NUMBER OF SPEECHES. A QUOTATION FROM ME IS IN KOSOVAR WOMEN'S NETWORK REPORT ON UNSCR 1325, WHICH IS AVAILABLE ON OUR WEBSITE: WWW.WOMENSNETWORK.ORG UNDER THE INFORMATION/REPORTS LINK. YOU CAN CTRL-F FOR MY NAME.

Q. Did you have close contact with the OSCE and UNMIK at senior levels in the first few months or first year?

A. WE TRIED, BUT THEY WERE RARELY INTERESTED TO MEET. LESLEY ABDELA WAS REALLY THE FIRST PERSON WHO ACTIVELY SOUGHT TO INVOLVE KOSOVAR WOMEN IN THE PROCESS. DURING THAT PARTICULAR PERIOD, FEW OTHER EFFORTS WERE TAKEN BY OSCE OR UNMIK TO GATHER OUR INPUT - WE HAD TO PUSH TO MAKE OUR VOICES HEARD.

Q. Did you feel Kosova's women were being taken fully into account when the OSCE and UNMIK spoke about Kosova's future?

A. NO. SEE ABOVE.

Q. Were you and other women happy with your experience in relation to the OSCE and UNMIK? If not, why not?

A. **NO. AGAIN, THEY DID NOT INVOLVE US AT ALL AND OUR VOICES WERE NOT HEARD IN ANY OF THE DECISIONS BEING MADE, WHICH HAS HAD SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES FOR WOMEN'S LONG-TERM INVOLVEMENT IN POLITICAL DECISION-MAKING IN KOSOVA, AS WELL AS THE EXTENT TO WHICH WOMEN'S NEEDS HAVE BEEN MET IN KOSOVA SINCE THE WAR.**

Q. Do you think overall the senior men at OSCE and UNMIK have done a good job as far as Kosova's women's needs and wishes are concerned – or have they failed Kosova's women?

A. **NO. THEY HAVE FAILED TO IMPLEMENT UNSCR 1325. INSTEAD OF IMPLEMENTING THE RESOLUTION, YEAR AFTER YEAR THEY IGNORED THAT IT EVEN EXISTED. THE ONLY SRSG THAT MET WITH WOMEN REGULARLY WAS SOREN JESSEN-PETERSEN WHO CAME IN 2006. STILL, EVEN THOUGH HE MET WITH US REGULARLY, HE FAILED TO ENSURE THAT WOMEN HAD A SEAT AT THE TABLE DURING THE NEGOTIATIONS OVER KOSOVA'S FINAL POLITICAL STATUS, WHICH MEANS THAT HE STILL FAILED TO ENSURE THE UNSCR 1325 WAS IMPLEMENTED. AGAIN, THEY FAILED TO INVOLVE WOMEN IN THE PROCESS SO WOMEN'S CONCERNS HAVE NOT BEEN ADDRESSED ADEQUATELY.**

Q. What should the senior staff at the OSCE and UNMIK done differently, if we could turn the clock back to 1999/2000?

A. **IMPLEMENT UNSCR 1325. AND MY OPINION IS THAT THEY ARE NOT WILLING TO IMPLEMENT IT AND THAT IS WHY, 10 YEARS LATER WE ARE STILL TALKING ABOUT THIS. STILL TODAY THERE IS A LACK OF POLITICAL WILL AMONG THOSE WITH THE POWER TO ENSURE THAT IT IS IMPLEMENTED. I WOULD ALSO DRAW YOUR ATTENTION TO ARTICLES BY CHRIS CORRIN WHICH WERE ALREADY SPEAKING TO THIS ISSUE IN 2000, example:**

<http://www.bndlg.de/~wplarre/GENDER-AUDIT-OF-RECONSTRUCTION-PROGRAMMES--ccGAudit.htm>

Items from the *Executive Summary* on the above link

(Even in 2000) Few women have been appointed to key decision-making positions. No women were appointed to the Kosovo Transitional Council, the equivalent of the government cabinet. Of the 20 government departments, the equivalent of ministries, only 2 are headed by Kosovar women.

The roles of Kosovar women within the emergent politics have not been acknowledged and no account has been taken of their work within the parallel system since 1990, their participation in the war and their key involvement in reconstruction processes locally and regionally in Kosova since 1999.

Although many women have lost male family members and find themselves heads of households, their needs have been marginalized. For example, War widows are not yet accorded the same rights and opportunities as male heads of households.

*Igballe Rogova won the Women of the Year Award by the International Network of Women's Organizations, based in San Francisco, and Lydia Sklevicky Prize for innovative work with women's groups awarded by Mamacash, The Netherlands/Open Society Foundation, Croatia/Global Fund for Women, USA.

The Kosova Women's Network (KWN) established in 2000 was originally an informal network of women's groups and organizations from various regions in Kosova. Since its inception, KWN has developed into a network that advocates on behalf of Kosovar women at the local, regional, and international level. Representing the interests of 85 women's organizations of all ethnic groups from

throughout Kosova, KWN is a leader among civil society organizations in Kosova and throughout the region.

Key words: Deadly Conflict/Post-Conflict Reconstruction, UNSCR1325/ UNMIK/OSCE/Kosovo