
AdvocacyNet
News Bulletin 102

WOMEN FROM THE BALKANS DEMAND A UN MEETING AND A SAY IN KOSOVO'S FUTURE

April 25, 2007, Vienna and Washington, DC: In a powerful show of coordinated advocacy, 17 leading members of women's civil society from six Balkan countries and Kosovo have asked for an urgent meeting with the UN Security Council, and repeated their demand that women must participate directly in talks on the future of Kosovo.

The 17 advocates are members of the Regional Women's Lobby for Peace, Security and Justice in Southeast Europe, a group that formed last year to present a unified women's position on the security challenges facing the region. They come from Macedonia, Albania, Bosnia, Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia and Kosovo.

A new communiqué from the Lobby, issued after a meeting in Vienna last week, requests a meeting with a fact-finding mission from the UN Security Council that is visiting Belgrade and Prishtina this month.

The communiqué also registers concern that women are still excluded from the negotiations over Kosovo's future: "The absence of women in the future status talks represents failures by the United Nations to fulfill UN (Resolution) 1325, which should be corrected in the future. Looking ahead, we urge the Security Council to show resolve in ensuring women's participation and women's contribution in the implementation of the proposal on the future status of Kosovo."

While the Lobby expresses support for the UN's proposals for Kosovo, formulated by UN Special Envoy Marti Ahtisaari, it also calls for a new UN resolution on Kosovo that recognizes "human security for all women and men" as the cornerstone of sustainable peace in Kosovo and in the region.

In a separate communiqué, the Lobby also calls on the governments of Serbia and the Bosnian Serb Republic (Republika Srpska) to fully disclose all documents relating to their involvement in the 1995 massacre at Srebrenica, and comply with the February ruling of the International Court of Justice, which found that genocide had occurred in Bosnia during the war.

The communiqué states: "We call upon the government of the Republic of Serbia and Republika Srpska to act responsibly (and) to open public debates in their respective parliaments and in society on accountability, reparations for the victims, and on the importance of official acceptance of the truth."

Failing to make the documents public would show that the Serbian government is "protecting the criminal institutions of the Milosevic regime," says the communiqué.

The Advocacy Project is sending a peace fellow, Devon Cone (Tufts University) to work with the Kosova Women's Network, a founding member of the Regional Women's Lobby, this summer.

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