

## **GCRT Statement to Working Session 10 Gender Aspects of Security I: Prevention of violence against women**

I am representing the Georgian Center for Psychosocial and Medical Rehabilitation of Torture Victims, a non-governmental organization, accredited with the International Rehabilitation Council for Victims of Torture. GCRT for the past seven years is providing assistance to victims of torture, inhuman treatment and violence. Since the time of its foundation GCRT has assisted more than a thousand females who had suffered extreme violence from the side of law enforcers, during the armed conflicts or within their own families. The experience of my NGO reflects only to a small extent the magnitude of the problem of violence towards women in Georgia. According to a recent research conducted by Caucasus Women Network 22% of women respondents admit that they have been victims of acts of violence in their family 5% percent declare that his happens on regular basis.

An important step taken by the state to combat domestic violence was the adoption of the law on domestic violence in 2006. The law introduced for the first time a definition of domestic violence and foresees punishment for perpetrators. During the debates in parliament some MPs revealed themselves to be very cynical and skeptical to the issues of family violence. This demonstrates the deep roots of discrimination towards women in Georgian society.

As violence against women is so rooted in the cultural tradition the government has an even greater duty to take all necessary measures to protect women. However the government shows rather some reticence.

The Government delayed the adoption of an action plan on domestic violence by 10 months and it was enacted only in July 2007. because of this delay the action plan does not contain an obligation to open shelters and rehabilitation centers in 2008 as indicated in the law on family violence (Chapter VIII). The major shortcoming of the action plan is that it does not foresee for any financial resources for the implementation of the law. In addition the action plan contains only a vague provision about preparatory activities for the creation of shelters and rehabilitation centers. Not a single specific activity or responsible institution for this matter is defined under the action plan. The abovementioned deficiencies will result in the postponement of the actual implementation of the law by several years. We express serious concern that the shelters will not be functioning even by 2009. This leaves thousands of women in danger. The necessary services for the victims of domestic violence are provided by few NGOs, which compared to the scale of the problem in Georgia is a drop in the desert. The problem is exacerbated by the fact that the non governmental sector in Georgia is entirely donor dependent and thus unsustainable.

I would like to stress here that the Georgian government fulfills in theory the obligations imposed by the international human rights instruments but not always in practice. This is for example the case with the implementation of the law on domestic violence.

Another point I would like to stress is directly related to the working experience of our organization. Recent armed conflicts in Georgia; wide spread torture towards detainees in the recent past creates a large community of torture victims in the country. Absence of medical, psychological, legal or social services and restrained access to justice for the victims contributes to formation of a society of uprooted, humiliated, disintegrated individuals. Furthermore, the inability to receive appropriate care and find justice, to treat psychological trauma many cases turns victims of torture into perpetrators in their own families; the chain of violence, the victim-aggressor interactions take a different form.

Thus full reparation for torture victims, including rehabilitation is of utter importance in order to break this chain of violence and to eliminate inter-personal and transgenerational transmission of victim-aggressor pattern of behavior and further dissemination of violence. Granting full redress for victims will contribute to the formation of a society where individuals can fully enjoy human rights and democratic values.

Proceeding from the foregoing

We propose to the OSCE the following recommendations

To urge the Georgian Government

- To take all the necessary measures to fully and effectively implement the law on domestic violence;
- to allocate financial resources for the opening of shelters and rehabilitation centers by 2008
- To support initiatives of the Non-Governmental Sector directed at providing services to victims of gender violence, preventive activities and awareness rising;
- To take all the necessary measures to fulfill its obligations (under international law) to provide access to justice and enable victims of torture to obtain full redress and rehabilitation.