



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 MISSION TO SERBIA

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.
- 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

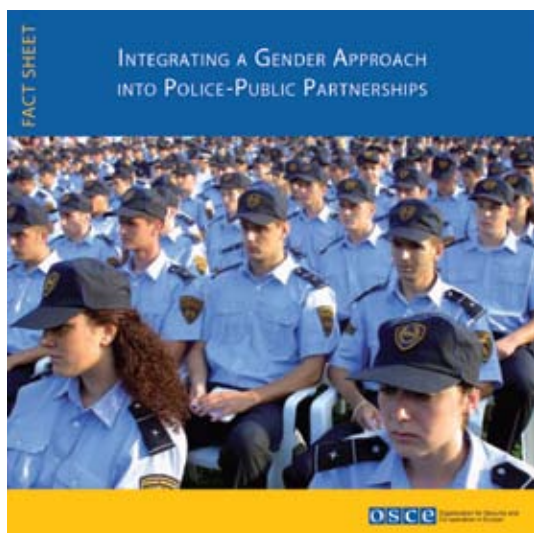
In December, the OSCE Office organized the first meeting of police chiefs of the ten cities and regions that are operating community policing programmes. This represented a giant step forward towards ensuring that gender mainstreaming would be fully embedded into the community policing programme. The 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.

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<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.



Gender facts

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

