



The OSCE Mission in Kosovo has been entrusted with the lead role in matters relating to institution- and democracy-building, rule of law, and human rights in the region. The Mission forms a distinct component of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and is responsible for, among other things, training police, judicial and civil administrators; furthering the development of a civil society; supporting media development; organizing and supervising elections; and, monitoring, protecting and promoting human rights.

ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE

Mission in Kosovo

Criminal Defence Resource Centre (CDRC)

Introduction

The Criminal Defence Resource Centre (CDRC) provides legal assistance to defence attorneys in Kosovo. CDRC was created through a collaboration of the OSCE and the Kosovo Chamber of Attorneys and began to operate as an independent NGO in May of 2001. The CDRC is supervised by a Board of Directors, comprised of 5 Kosovar defence attorneys, including members from smaller ethnic communities, and representatives from 4 international organizations.



Activities

The mandate of CDRC is to serve as a resource center providing case assistance to the defence attorneys of Kosovo. CDRC assists defence lawyers to insure the protection of the rights of the accused at each stage of the legal process. Case assistance is primarily provided in serious criminal cases, particularly cases involving humanitarian law offenses, ethnically/politically motivated crimes, and violations of human rights standards. CDRC legal staff strategize with defence counsel to apply international human rights standards and to challenge any breaches of such standards. The Center also makes available to defense counsel its extensive library of materials concerning international law. We also provide technical and logistical assistance where necessary, especially for minority attorneys. Due to its mandate, the CDRC has as its primary partner the Kosovo Chamber of Attorneys. Through case assistance and training, the CDRC strives to strengthen the capacity of the defence bar.

Trainings and Projects:

The CDRC provides occasional trainings for defence counsel on international human rights standards and practical skills. In addition to these formal trainings, our lawyers travel throughout the regions to meet with attorneys for informal discussion groups regarding current issues they encounter in their cases. In these discussion groups, CDRC staff present relevant international law to address the issues.



CONTACT INFORMATION

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CDRC also cooperates with the Chamber of Attorneys on issues that are in the interest of defense attorneys. These include drafting regulations, producing a criminal procedure flowchart and various meetings with international organizations.

Achievements

Some of CDRC's achievements include:

- Assisted defence counsel of all ethnicities with developing case strategy and preparing for trial, drafting petitions, legal research, translation, etc.;
- Secured appropriate defence counsel for underrepresented detainees entitled to counsel under the law;
- Served as a liaison between the Chamber of Attorneys and UNMIK on issues such as adequate and timely payment of court appointed counsel, defence counsel access to detainees and counsel's right to obtain court

files and decisions in Albanian or Serbian in a timely manner;

- Arranged safe transport for minority defence counsel to visit clients and appear in court.

Partnership

The OSCE provided the initial infrastructure, equipment and personnel of CDRC. The current funding for CDRC is provided by a generous grant from the U.S. Government.

Staff

The office of the CDRC is managed by a Program Manager together with the Finance Manager and Office Assistant/Driver. The legal team consists of two international lawyers and three Kosovar lawyers, assisted by the Minority Outreach Assistant and two translators.

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Contact information

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