

# **CONCLUSIONS OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE: “WOMEN IN CONFLICT RESOLUTION”**

Ljubljana, June 21-22, 2008

This international conference had two focuses – evaluation of the failures and successes of the women's peace movements in the former Yugoslavia from 1986 -2008, and exploration of their future possibilities while using UN Security Council Resolution 1325 as a tool. The last part of the conference was consecrated to the ceremonial of the transfer of the Relay Race of 1325 from Slovenia to France.

## **STATE OF ART OF THE PEACE PROCESS IN THE BALKAN REGION**

Main findings based on the presentations and discussions at the conference:

As former Slovenian Republic President, Milan Kučan said in his opening speech, peace is much more than absence of armed conflicts. Real peace is made of » respect of human dignity and human rights, of economic development, well being, protection of the environment, rule of law, and of social stability«. Bearing this definition of peace in mind, Balkan region is miles away from peace.

Balkan region is still a keg of powder, as aggressive nationalisms are not over in the mainstream politics, democratic culture is still at its beginnings, the process of forming of the new states based on ethnicity, not on citizen, is still in progress. There were not enough efforts for the »ideological decontamination« – neither national leaders nor the citizens have accepted their part of the responsibility for the blood shade. This has resulted in sweeping under the carpet also the guilt of many perpetrators of war crimes and extreme violence against women in the last Balkan wars.

Half made - war masked transitions were the bloodiest and the least transparent of them all. Now the second half of these transitions is in progress. They are led by the post war national political elites which are partly made of former war lords and war profiteers. These transitions are very hard for the impoverished, de-rooted, war traumatized ordinary people. Neo-liberal patterns of transition which are practiced also in the process of EU inclusion all over the region, are not friendly to the crucial economic and social needs of the people – governments mostly leave the economy to the global market forces, there are nearly no strategic development planning and active employment policies, there is no free access to education, health, socially protected employment arrangements, better care for the most needy ones, which is especially harmful to the women. All of these factors make reconciliation, recovery and democratic normalisation of these countries even more difficult.

## **PACIFIST WOMEN'S MOVEMENTS IN THE BALKAN REGION – FAILURES AND SUCCESSES**

Pacifist women's movements, started already in the end of the eighties of the former century or born out of the open threats and later on out of barbaric armed conflicts at the beginning of the nineties, first only in Slovenia, Croatia and Serbia, but than all over former Yugoslavia, were able to get and keep connected even across fire lines in the

region and globally, and to influence the UN Beijing consensus on the potential of the women in the prevention and ending of the armed conflicts as well as in post conflict recovery. These movements played an important role in international legal definition of rape in the war as a crime against humanity in Beijing in 1995.

Before the armed conflicts started, women were thrown out from politics in political parties as well as in the parliaments and governments. Their pacifist movements could not prevent, from the streets, armed conflict in Yugoslavia, could not avoid to be mostly sidelined into the humanitarian aid and care for the victims of wars in times of the wars and after the wars.

As organized agents of peace women pacifist movements were excluded from the peace negotiations in Dayton 1995, in Kosova 1999, in Ohrid 2001. Due to their domestic political insignificance and lack of serious international support after the ending of the armed conflicts, they also could not do much to ensure justice and re-compensation for the suffering of the women victims in the conflicts.

In the last serial of the Balkan wars 1991-1999, women pacifists and other democratic women activists could not profit from the UN Security Council Resolution 1325, as at these times it hasn't even existed, but in 1999 they were already strong enough to advocate and form their first FORMAL gender equality institution within the intergovernmental regional peace promoting initiative, called Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe – Gender Task Force. Women activists from the region made political empowerment of women the first and the most important focus of this Gender Task Force, in order to put an end to the treatment of women only as victims and objects of aggressive nationalistic politics and to make possible equal participation of women in all post war recovery process of the Balkan, as well as in the processes of its EU integration. In this case, women activists from the Balkans were a big step ahead of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325.

Political power of the women in the region is in the raise, national women movements were strong enough to use a sandwich pressure form the bottom up and from the international actors top down to enact differently strong quota rules in BiH, Kosova, Macedonia, Serbia and Slovenia. Women's share in the parliaments was pushed up from an average below 7% in 1999 to an average of 18% in 2008 (Kosovo 30%, Macedonia 30%, Serbia and Croatia over 20%), but the percentage of women MP-s is still very low in Montenegro -12%, BiH -14% and even in Slovenia 13%. These movements are also still not strong enough to influence mainstream politics to deal properly with the most difficult issues of security and reconciliation. Never the less they have succeeded to put in place weak state gender equality mechanisms and elementary gender equality and antidiscrimination legislation, and they have started to defend women reproductive rights, family leave rights, property rights, pension rights, and to »engender« penal codes, labour laws – sexual harassment at work, family laws with regard domestic violence against women and army and police legislation.

## **IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RESOLUTION OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL 1325 IN THE BALKAN REGION**

As everywhere else, and especially in post conflict societies, in the Balkans, UN Security Council Resolution 1325 is difficult to implement. All new states, with the exemption of

the Republic of Macedonia, have ratified it; it was translated into all national languages. Some efforts were made to make its substance known more widely - by coordinated activities of newly formed gender equality mechanisms and women's NGO-s (see the power point prepared by Mija Javornik), some countries even started concrete activities to make women rights and women needs in conflict situation known to the general public. There is also a considerable influx of women in police and professional armies and Slovenia for example, has a good track record of army women on high level positions in Slovenian delegations to international peace keeping EU and NATO missions. But there were not enough concrete activities to include in its implementation the main governmental and parliamentarian actors, army and police forces, as well as judicial branch of the power, public education systems and the media. There is not one national plan for the implementation of this Resolution in the Balkans.

### **How are UN and other international agencies, especially European ones, implementing the UN Resolution 1325 in the SEE?**

UN support to the pacifist women's movements was crucial before 1995 – they were included into the preparations of the Beijing conference (UNIFEM Beijing train), OSCE especially its Mission in BiH was crucial for the creation of the Stability Pact Gender Task Force in 1999, some EU member states (Austria, Italy, Germany, Denmark, Greece), Switzerland and Norway- donor countries of the Stability Pact, were generous donors for different women's rights projects but there were never a consistent EC or EU policy on this issue. The interest and the support of majority of the international agencies went still more towards the care for the women as victims - war victims (raped, refugees, internally displaced and latter on trafficked women), than towards women agents of peace and sustainable development - for the political empowerment of women, for systematic work on post war justice, moral and political catharsis and reconciliation. In the last years, the support for the women's pacifists' movements is seriously diminished, what is already felt in weakening of their communications and concrete peace and reconciliation actions on the national and local levels.

International agencies working as guardians of the peace process in the region, in many cases do not respect the Resolution 1325. They have very small percentage of women on leading positions in their missions, their leading staff is not really gender sensitive and trained for the implementation of this Resolution and international peace keeping forces are not enough aware of the gender aspects of their tasks, so that often they become a part of the problem (for example: (ab)users of trafficked women) instead of a part of the solution.

The best results in the implementation of the Resolution 1325 seem to be in Kosovo, where international agencies and national women's movement worked hand in hand in a sandwich like strategy and succeeded to enact strong quota regulations for national and local elections, to train and to make police and army more sensitive to women human rights and needs in the post conflict situation.

### **FOLLOW UP OF THE CONFERENCE**

## **REQUESTS OF THE BALKAN WOMEN PACIFISTS TO NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS, TO EUROPEAN COMMISSION, EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND UN SECURITY COUNCIL**

- We request that Republic of Macedonia, as the last in the region, ratifies ASAP the UN Security Council Resolution 1325
- We request from all governments from the region to make national plans of its implementation, following the model of Sweden and Norway, but including also the elements important for the post conflict societies: fostering reconciliation, helping to overcome the problems with decommissioning and post traumatic syndrome, special care for inclusion of women in political decision making. We expect that they will include women pacifist NGO-s and NGO-s dealing with women human rights in preparation and implementation of this plans.
- We request from all our governments to help all the citizens, using public media, and all young people, using public educational system, to become aware of their part of responsibility for the past war violence, as well as to support NGO-s activities dealing with search for the missing, help to refugees and displaced, and re-compensation for the rape and other forms of war violence against women in the past wars, as well as for the culture of peace and reconciliation.
- We call on all our governments to prosecute war criminals and to fully cooperate with International Court in The Hague.
- We ask from the EC and European Parliament to apply more gender sensitive process of enlargement and to strongly support gender equality efforts in regional cooperation (Gender Task Force as a formal gender mainstreaming mechanism of the RCC which has replaced former Stability Pact) and all national civil society groups and women's movements and activities aiming at further political empowerment of women.
- We expect from the European Commission to put more pressure on our governments to strengthen their weak gender equality state mechanisms, and to implement gender sensitive legislation which has already been put in place or will be harmonized in the processes of EU integration.
- We have realized that our sisters in the EU need much more information about our work for peace and political empowerment of the women from the Balkans. We expect from the EC and European parliament to enable more systematic exchange of our experiences with the women pace activists and women human rights activists from the EU.

## **AGREEMENTS ON FURTHER JOINT ACTIONS OF THE BALKAN WOMEN PACIFISTS**

- We will try to include women victims and peace activists in the writing of the modern history of our nations and make them more visible in our collective historical memory.
- We will ask our governments to start to prepare National Action Plans for the Implementation of the Resolution 1325. In case that our governments will not prepare their Action plans, we will prepare our shadow Action plans and advocate for their implementation.
- Kosova and Serbian women pacifists and peace activists from all ethnicities in Macedonia will continue and strengthen their cooperation for peace and reconciliation in their part of the region.

- Cultural activities – as we can see in the examples of Vivisect festival or in cultural guerrilla against Milosevic regime done by Nune Popovic in the mid nineties in Serbia, could be very strong vehicles in the promotion of democracy, peace and human rights. We will try to learn more on how to use culture in this very difficult fight with the nationalistic populists and extremists over minds and hearts of the majority of the people.
- The dispute over Slovenian and Croatian boarder is far from being innocent. It might not lead to an open war, but it raises bad feelings, hostility and aggressiveness between the citizens of the two nations. Slovenian and Croatian women peace activists will try to stop political exploitation of this boarder dispute by mocking these shallow political games.
- All present pacifist women NGO-s are in favor and support European Women's Lobby initiative on the implementation of the Resolution 1325, as well as all their activities for the parity democracy, especially in the forthcoming elections of the new European Parliament in 2009. We also firmly support the idea of the pan-European campaign for the parity in the law for all decision making bodies on all levels.
- Special dissemination project of the outcomes of this conference will be prepared and realized by Nune Popovic, when approved by PL Westminster Foundation.

#### **TRANSFER OF THE RALY RACE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 1325 TO THE FUTURE EU PRESIDING COUNTRY – FRANCE**

Marlene Tuininga, French activist of WILP accepted to try to organize a follow up of this Rally Race in France, till the end of 2008, in close cooperation with well known Balkan peace woman dr. Rada Inekovic, now based in Paris, with the organizers of this conference in Ljubljana and Germany, and with French peace activists from Women's Commission of the French branch of Amnesty International, French Women's Lobby, France Solidaire, French women from CARITAS. .

She proposed that the event in France should be focused on the women's role in strengthening of the solidarity and responsibility of the West for the solutions of the main problems of the world South. It should also openly address and criticize the last EU Migration Directive which is turning EU into a closed fortress.

She also proposed a working title of the conference: "Vie et survie des femmes en Europe et dans le monde – Life and survival of women in Europe and in the world"

**These Conclusions were accepted with consensus at the end of the conference in Ljubljana, on June 22, 2008**