

"General Recommendations on Women in Conflict and Post-conflict Situations"

We, women of Cultural-Humanitarian Fund "Sukhumi", would like to share with the participants our perspectives, based on our bitter experience of the two conflicts ...

There is such a concept - a "frozen conflict". It can only be frozen only for the rest of the world. Residents of the zone of conflict, especially women, could say how it is "frozen."

In 2007, at a meeting, a woman from Tskhinvali region said: "you talk about peacekeeping, the peaceful settlement of the conflict. All this is good, but I think that from your offices you do not quite clearly see the real picture. In our gardens there are still shrapnel of mines and smell of gunpowder in the air. And, we - Georgians and Ossetian women- admit this with each other in fear."

The conflict in the region was considered as the frozen already two decades. A year later, the region was exploded under the roar of military action, which affected so many women. They not only suffered from machine guns, cluster bombs, but also from abuse, including sexual violence. This was not surprising for anybody as during all ethnic conflicts the latter is considered as a major weapon against the enemy...

Another "frozen conflict", called the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict, also brings a lot of suffering to women living in the conflict zone and in the border region. Abkhazia, recognized by the Russian Federation as an independent state, cannot ensure respect for human rights within its territory. So called "peacekeeper troops" cannot be considered as guarantor of rights and freedom of citizens. They only observe only keep a visibility of peace, but in fact it is a most ill-controlled territory, where the citizens, especially women, are far from a sense of security. "Single shots at night do not break dream. Fear is reached when there is quiet night, with the feeling that something is about to happen!" - this is a statement of a woman, living in the zone of confrontation where the conflict has been "frozen" since 1993. According to women, they are gradually getting used to the fate being offered by life as they have no other choice. The sense of security has been disappeared from their lives forever, being limited by a constant fear for the lives and health of children and families.

Their situation is aggravated by the fact that violence, robbery and other human rights violations have become the norm in a region, and there are no the international missions, which could serve as relative guarantors of safety.

The practice shows that in times of conflict and post-conflict rehabilitation woman is mostly vulnerable and exposed, and subjected to ill effects of political, social and economic consequences of the conflict. There are held many discussions on the impact of conflict on women. In many countries, including Georgia, the national action plans are developed for the UNSCR 1325, in which the international and local NGOs are also included. We can say that they usually take into account many aspects of social, cultural, economic and political life, including social justice, participation in decision making and embody the principles of gender equality, as well as

recognize the transformation of gender roles during and after conflict. But the above-mentioned examples show that despite all the efforts and competence of such plans, peace and women's rights are very fragile, if not exhausted by reason of confrontation and there is mutual claims of the parties to each other.

We believe that priority is to prevent confrontation, which cause immense suffering to women. And for this it is necessary to enable women to participate in decision making at all levels. Gender equity is insufficiently declared, because the chances of equal participation do not always coincide with the rights granted by law, when women's presence is merely a decoration of democracy and social justice. Women reject the responsibilities for those decisions which are taken without considering to their voices. They are ready to take equal responsibility for the joint solutions of questions concerning not only social, cultural, but also the political life of their own state.

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