

BOSNIA AND HERCEGOVINA RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations for leveraging women's skills and expertise in seeking to moderate extremism were developed by women experts from Bosnia and Hercegovina convened by The Institute for Inclusive Security in January 2010.

TO INCREASE WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP IN ALL EFFORTS TO MODERATE EXTREMISM THE US GOVERNMENT SHOULD:

1. Ensure women are included in the negotiations process around the constitutional reform, as mandated by UN Security Council Resolution 1325. Specifically:
 - a. Include women on the US delegation;
 - b. Put pressure on domestic negotiating teams to include women; and
 - c. Ensure the US delegation meets regularly with leading representatives of women's organizations during negotiations.
2. Ensure the transparency of the negotiations process by sharing with civil society representatives the issues being discussed. The US Embassy should partner with leading women's NGOs to conduct consultations across the country to gather feedback from civil society on critical aspects of the negotiations.
3. Ensure continued US government attention and support to BiH. In addition to political support around the Constitution, ensure economic development of local communities by expanding programs including those that would increase attention to and financial support for women's leadership in local communities. Request that 30% of financial support go directly to local women's organizations that can implement programs on the ground.

THE OFFICE OF THE HIGH REPRESENTATIVE, EUROPEAN COMMISSION, MULTILATERAL AND BILATERAL DONORS SHOULD:

1. Invest in and support the establishment of a training institute for women to ensure influential and meaningful women's political participation. The institute would focus on educating women about importance of leadership in public sphere, offer concrete skills and knowledge to sustain their leadership, and provide mentoring programs so that women can continuously advance in politics. Local women's organizations from the Federation and the Republika Srpska (including delegation members) are ready to create such an Institute.

2. Support a media campaign to promote the participation of women in political and public life. Given the October 2010 elections, the media should provide increased coverage of and visibility for women leaders. Similar campaigns on the local level, including radio and print media, have proven successful in ensuring that women are viewed as experts. A national media campaign would increase the number of women on the electoral lists of political parties and strengthen their experience and skills.
3. Enable the inclusion and active participation of women in decision making processes by investing in participatory approaches to development and governance of local communities. Specifically, have local women's organizations organize public hearings throughout the country in rural communities, which are especially vulnerable to influence by extremists. The public hearings would convene women in local communities, especially before the elections, to present political options opposing extremist attitudes.
4. The Office of the High Representative in Bosnia and Hercegovina should establish permanent consultations with women civil society leaders in order to gather feedback on the security measures that should be considered in combating extremism. In addition, the upcoming public campaign designed to bring together politicians and NGO leaders should feature women's perspectives.
5. Condition EU Commission support for the association negotiations of BiH on implementation of EU External Policy, which calls for full participation of women in political and public life. Specifically, the negotiations should require BiH to adopt the provisions of the current European Road Map for Gender Equality, including women's leadership in peace and security agenda.
6. Currently in Bosnia and Hercegovina, there are forces that seek to negate cultural diversity, favoring extremist nationalist views. Given that culture offers multiple means to bridge divides and connect various groups, creating values of reconciliation, understanding, and tolerance; the donor community should support projects that directly advance such values. Specifically, they should offer support to efforts that directly challenge extremist views and inspire a national dialogue on those issues, such as Radmila Karlas' anti-war novel, "Four Leaf Clover."

DOMESTIC ACTORS, INCLUDING THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, MINISTRIES AND GENDER AGENCY:

1. Amend the Electoral Law to be consistent with the Gender Equality Law. (Currently, they require different quotas for women's political participation.) The National Gender Agency and Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees should insist that the Parliamentary Assembly of BiH ensure prompt adoption of the amendments so that they can be implemented for the upcoming elections.

2. Implement laws that prohibit violence against women, as a basic form of extremism. Judicial, legislative, and executive authorities should have zero tolerance for this form of violence. Specifically, insist on continued training and education for lawyers, judges, police, and all other professionals to ensure an understanding of underlying concepts related to gender-based violence.
3. Given that the number of armed incidents increased 403% last year and that women are predominantly affected by the use of small arms and light weapons, civil society organizations, especially women's groups, should get involved in the development of national policies and action plans to address these issues. As there is the risk that extremists will manipulate fear during the election year, women leaders should:
 - a. Inform citizens of the danger of small arms;
 - b. Introduce a legal framework related to small arms;
 - c. Collect gender segregated data on victims of small arms; and
 - d. Support women's leadership of programs to promote surrendering of small arms and light weapons.
4. Ensure implementation of the National Gender Action Plan related to peace and security, including the adoption of a National Action Plan to implement UN Security Council Resolution 1325. In addition, Ministries of Finance should be required to allocate, distribute, and evaluate funding to implement the Gender Action Plan, specifically the provisions calling for increased participation of women in peace and security-related efforts.
5. As a key tool to moderate extremism, ensure that the citizens of BiH are able to travel, especially civil society leaders, in order to ensure cross-cultural education and exchange of ideas. Due to the difficult visa application process, women and young people in particular, are adversely affected. Specifically, the Bosnian government should prioritize this issue and immediately meet all required conditions for a visa-free travel regime. [These already have been approved for all of the other countries of former Yugoslavia.]
6. In rural areas tradition and high poverty rates adversely affects girls' education, isolating them from public life. Institutions and authorities creating and implementing education policy should develop special programs to subsidize girls' education. For example, in order to ensure uninterrupted education, authorities should dedicate resources to cover the costs of transportation, room and board, and books for primary and secondary girls' education in rural communities.