

KOSOVO

Measures to counter human trafficking

Human trafficking and prostitution exploded in Kosovo after the 1999 war. Women primarily from the former Soviet bloc countries of Moldova, Romania, Ukraine, Bulgaria and Russia were tricked and/or forced into becoming sex slaves in brothels run by various organised crime families.¹ The presence of international peacekeeping forces, as well as other international personnel, contributed to the demand for trafficked women. Some international personnel were directly implicated in trafficking rings.²

The Kosovo Police Service (KPS), which was formed with the support of the UN and the OSCE, has been characterised by a high degree of gender-sensitivity. The KPS targeted women and ethnic minority applicants for recruitment. As of January 2010 women comprised 14.77 percent of the KPS. In 2009, 75 sergeants, 27 lieutenants, five captains, four majors, two lieutenant colonels, two colonels and one departmental general director were women.³

NATO and UN police were initially responsible for anti-trafficking, but the KPS gradually took over this responsibility. KPS officers, who received specialised training from UN counterparts, started to participate in intelligence gathering, investigations, raids and counter-trafficking operations. An Anti-Trafficking Unit was established in the KPS in 2004. The Unit focuses on prevention, protection and prosecution, and has officers in all six regional headquarters and at headquarters. The Anti-Trafficking Unit, in collaboration with the Domestic Violence Unit, has created proactive mechanisms to combat trafficking and has ensured that anti-trafficking is a priority item on police and political agendas.⁴

Specialised training in interviewing, investigations, victim and witness protection, and preparation for prosecution is given to members of the Anti-Trafficking Unit at the Kosovo Centre for Public Safety Education and Development. These courses use scenarios and role-plays to teach officers how to recognize trafficking, to adapt their responses to the evolving environment and to support the victim. The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) has provided “training of trainers” courses for the KPS and the Border Police, and has helped to draft standard operating procedures to help police identify the victims of trafficking.⁵ Furthermore, the KPS Gender Unit has organised training for all KPS departments on gender issues, including human trafficking.

The procedure for dealing with victims of trafficking is as follows: after a suspected case is brought to its attention, the KPS immediately informs the prosecutor, and as soon as is feasible interviews the suspected victim and witnesses. The Victim’s Assistance Unit in the Ministry of Justice and the Centre for Social Welfare in the Ministry of Labour are also informed of the case. These two entities, together with IOM’s Counter-Trafficking Unit and various local NGOs, form the “Direct Assistance to Victims of Trafficking Working Group”. Once victims are identified, the KPS transports them to a designated shelter where they are fed, housed and given free medical care and counselling if needed. The Anti-Trafficking Unit provides secure escorts for court proceedings and medical appointments.

The KPS has elaborated a prevention strategy, with the growing involvement and support of local women’s organisations, which focuses on warning at-risk women of the lies, tricks and other methods employed by traffickers.

In 2007, 33 victims of trafficking were assisted. In the first quarter of 2008, the KPS managed

1 UNIFEM, *No Safe Place: An Assessment of Violence Against Women in Kosovo* (Prishtina: 2000), http://www.unifem.org/materials/item_detail.php?ProductID=74 (accessed October 1, 2009).

2 Ibid.

3 Personal correspondence from OSCE Mission, 20 January 2010; Kosova Women’s Network, *Monitoring Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 in Kosova, Second Edition* (Prishtina, Kosova: 2009), http://www.peace-women.org/resources/Kosovo/KWNKosova1325_2009.pdf (accessed October 15, 2009).

4 Sarah Maquire, “Implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325 in Kosovo – Lessons learned to inform EULEX Kosovo” (paper presented for UNIFEM Brussels, September 2008), http://www.isis-europe.org/pdf/2008_artrel_213_esr41-gender-esdp-kosovo.pdf.

5 OSCE Mission in Kosovo, “Background Report. Combating Trafficking in Kosovo,” June 5, 2001, section 3.b. <http://www.osce.org/item/15736.html>.

KOSOVO

Measures to counter human trafficking

to close 27 brothels that were suspected of trafficking.⁶

Despite these positive efforts, problems still remain in the fight against human trafficking:

- The long chain of command is impeding quick action.
- Vehicles and covert tools needed for investigations are lacking.
- The lack of funds to support anti-trafficking is reducing the efficiency of police operations. For example, in bars under surveillance for trafficking, undercover officers who cannot afford to buy alcoholic drinks will buy a coffee instead, tipping the owners off immediately that the “customer” is a police officer.⁷

► The importance of integrating gender into police reform is discussed in section 3 of the *Police Reform and Gender Tool*.

► Procedures and initiatives to address gender-based violence are discussed in section 4.3 of the *Police Reform and Gender Tool*.

► The creation of specialised units in police forces is discussed in section 4.4 of the *Police Reform and Gender Tool*.

► The challenges of integrating gender into police reform in post-conflict countries, including in peacekeeping operations, are discussed in section 5.1 of the *Police Reform and Gender Tool*.

6 US State Department, “Trafficking in Persons Report,” June 2008.

7 William G. O’Neill, “Kosovo. Field Notes” (prepared for UNIFEM, UNDP, DPKO, November 21, 2006), 8.