Invitation to a panel discussion on

“Bringing security home to empower women: how can we combat violence and strengthen gender equality”

Date: 16 March, 2016
08.30-10.00
German House,
871 United Nations Plaza
(1st Avenue @ 49th Street
New York, NY 10017

Background

The OSCE is the world’s largest security organization and has as such developed a comprehensive and co-operative approach to security, which addresses the human, economic and environmental, political and military dimensions of security. The OSCE recognizes that the inherent dignity of the individual is at the core of comprehensive security in which human rights and fundamental freedoms are indisputable. As part of that work the OSCE recognizes that equal rights of women and men are essential to foster peace, sustainable democracies and economic development and therefore also at the heart of individual security. Thus, securing individual rights and thereby achieving sustainable peace and security gender equality is one of the cornerstones of the OSCE comprehensive security concept.

There is still, however, a gender gap in the security debate as we are still far from reaching comprehensive security for women and men, girls and boys. The linkage between national security and individual security is still lagging behind, as is the comprehension of the need to apply a gender analysis on all levels of security. The eight resolutions on the women, peace and security agenda has certainly raised the bar of the discussion, but more needs to be done to localize this concept to our everyday lives.

In an international context national security is often viewed as the defence of states’ borders from external threats and countries naturally respond to these security issues through defence policies, military spending, arms development and spending. However, national security also entails domestic security providing protection to citizens and uphold rule of law. Thus, national security must also be viewed form an individual human security perspective which requires an emphasis on protection which in turn necessitates a discussion on public safety - rather than military operations. Individual security is highly gendered and closely linked to unequal relations between women and men. There are many ways that women suffer particular forms of insecurity that they experience from just the
The fact that they are women. Forms of insecurity stemming from gender inequality is widespread and cross-dimensional and affect the area of individual security as unequal access to decision-making will also affect women’s participation in conflict prevention and resolution. Women and men’s roles and positions society must be understood and acknowledged in order to comprehend the different security threats that they face. This can only be achieved through a proper gender analysis being applied to all forms of security – be it national security or individual security.

The main objectives of the discussion
The aim of this side event is to discuss the linkages between individual security as part of national security as a tool and pre-condition to empower women in peace times and in conflict situations.

- How can we increase the individual security of women and empower them in countries in peacetimes? What does individual security mean?
- How can we increase the individual security of women in times of conflict and empower them?

For more information on the panel please contact OSCE Gender Adviser Hanna Sands at hanna.sands@osce.org. The registration deadline is 9 March and the registration form should be sent to Dusica Djukic at dusica.djukic@osce.org