



## Post-Conflict Women's Needs Assessment in the Southern Kyrgyzstan



2010

The assessment was conducted in close collaboration and partnership with the following local women's non-governmental organizations: "Ensan-Diamond," "The Association of Women Leaders of Jalal-Abad," and the "Community Development Alliance." Special thanks for assistance in carrying out field work goes to Jamilya Kaparova, Maluda Tynaeva, Zhanna Saralaeva, Nurgul Joloeva, Aida Jamangulova, Busaira Abdrahmanova, and all twelve interviewers who worked diligently in conducting the survey using structured questionnaires.

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This report does not pretend to be comprehensive, since the nature of the violent conflict is complex and the situation on the ground is volatile and rapidly changing. The names of interviewed persons, villages, and city districts are not indicated, since many stakeholders requested confidentiality.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since the “Tulip Revolution” in March 2005, Kyrgyzstan has experienced turbulent political and socio-economic instability. On April 7, 2010, Kyrgyzstan experienced a bloody “second revolution” as a consequence of widespread rallies and demonstrations protesting the government’s economic policy. During the uprising, the President of Kyrgyzstan was ousted from power and 86 people lost their lives.

The political crisis escalated further in June 2010 with an outbreak of violent interethnic conflict in southern Kyrgyzstan between ethnic Kyrgyz and Uzbeks, which lasted for four days. The conflict caused a widespread humanitarian crisis affecting more than 1 million people, particularly women, children, and other vulnerable groups. According to Kyrgyz government estimates, 426 people died and more than 1,930 were injured. UN agencies reported that about 400,000 ethnic Kyrgyz and Uzbeks have been forced to leave their homes, and about 100,000 people have sought refuge in neighboring Uzbekistan.

### Objective of the assessment

UNIFEM, as a part of UN Flash Appeal, in response to UN Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820 on Women, Peace, and Security, and guided by the CEDAW, has launched a rapid needs assessment of women and men in conflict-affected areas in Kyrgyzstan. The objective of this assessment is to provide information on the current situation of women and men in the process of early recovery, and identify key peace-building and security issues, and priorities which, in the opinion of the people (respondents), have to be addressed.

The assessment incorporates quantitative and qualitative data analysis, including a quantitative survey, focus-group discussions, semi-structured individual interviews, and observation notes. The assessment was conducted in the cities of Osh, Jalal-Abad and surrounding regions in August 2010. The stakeholder group included representatives of government institutions, civil society organizations, international agencies, law-enforcement officers, female and male leaders of communities/villages, ethnic minorities, youth groups, religious communities, small business representatives, and educators.

### Key Findings

#### 1. Security as Vital Need for People

- Both women and men identified the restoration of peace and physical security as a key necessity for early recovery. The lack of peace and security has had a direct affect on the ability of the local people to generate income and conduct livelihood activities. A high

level of fear is observed among the respondents, in particular among youth and women. The survey results demonstrate that public places such as streets, markets, public transportation, police stations, and border areas are considered the most insecure places. More women than men feel unsafe at home, apparently because women more than men experienced and witnessed violence inside the home.

- The issues of special concern for local women and men are sending their children to school, fear of resumption of interethnic conflict, the presence of armed men, the possibility of threats and intimidation, and human rights violations. The issue of human rights violations and illegal actions by law-enforcement agencies, including arbitrary arrests, was mentioned a number of times by respondents, particularly by male ethnic Uzbeks.
- Increased levels of nationalism and corruption are adversely affecting the human rights situation. The results of the assessment indicate that safety and security have deteriorated, with frequent reports of illegal arrests, threats, intimidation, extortion, and ethnic-based discrimination. This situation is forcing many men of productive age, particularly from Uzbek communities, to leave the country. There are also a number of reports about young Kyrgyz families migrating to Russia.
- More women than men mentioned *violence against women and girls* as a fear at the present time. It is recognized that sexual violence, especially against women, might significantly aggravate the situation. Therefore, steps to prevent and respond to gender-based violence would contribute to the maintenance of peace and stability in the region. Physical, psychological, and sexual violence against women increased considerably during the conflict, when compared with pre-conflict levels. The increased number of reported incidents of sexual violence might indicate that *sexual violence* was used as a deliberate tactic during the conflict.

## 2. Social and Economic Security

- Rebuilding houses has been identified by women and men as one of the key basic needs. The respondents expressed deep concern about the government's ability to rebuild houses before the onset of winter. There is a high risk that many households, especially in Uzbek communities, will lack the labor force necessary to rebuild houses because of the intensified migration of males abroad.
- Customary practices for property registration restrict women from restoring their properties. Traditionally, all property such as land, cars, and houses are registered in the name of the man. With intensified migration of young and middle-aged men abroad, many women cannot obtain official state certificates in order to rebuild burned down or severely destroyed houses as a result of the conflict.

- Conflict has greatly impacted women's ability to generate income. The assessment exposed the fact that women from rural communities are now afraid of traveling around neighborhoods and city markets to sell their agricultural products as they did before the conflict. Local farmers are having a hard time accessing products necessary for land cultivation due to closed borders with Uzbekistan since the violence began. In addition, rural women and men cannot sell their harvest and generate income since harvest delivery centers were destroyed. In general, many youth, women, and men have been left without access to jobs as a result of destroyed businesses and infrastructure.
- Reissuing of personal identity and property documents is still a problem for returnees and conflict victims; however, in comparison with the situation observed in the beginning of July, a slow progress is noted.

### 3. Issues of Trust

- Efforts for dialogue aimed at rebuilding trust and building peace are welcomed by the respondents. Almost as many as a half of the respondents believe that the main *stabilization factor* is launching *projects aimed at building peace and security*. More than one third of women and men indicated that *fair and open parliamentary elections* and *independent judicial proceedings, including punishment of guilty parties*, are important factors for the stabilization of interethnic relations. *Solving socio-economic problems* and *creating equal opportunities* for people is considered one of the main approaches for bringing a durable peace.
- Most respondents expressed views in favor of a reconciliation process, despite the still existing ethnic divide, sense of victimhood, demand for an apology by the "guilty group," pain, and distrust. Both women and men are calling for peace, forgiveness, and tolerant relations among all ethnicities, which is a very good indicator for launching peace-building and reconciliation projects.
- Improvement of interethnic relation first of all depends on *every person*, then on the *central government and the President*, and finally on the *elderly, heads of local government, and religious leaders*, according to the respondents.
- There are numerous concerns among respondents about a lack of justice and impartiality and increasing ethnic discrimination. Women and men pointed to the lack of justice and impartiality as one of the most pressing challenges for recovery.
- Citizens are deeply disappointed, and expressed little or no trust, in local and central government, specifically in its approach to preventing violence, addressing post-crisis needs, and solving immediate problems. This distrust is directly linked to issues of corruption, injustice, and unequal treatment of people by state authorities and law-enforcement agencies.

- Analysis of the data shows that ethnic Uzbeks are more likely to *distrust local government*, while ethnic Kyrgyz are more likely to *distrust the central government*. However, both women and men, despite their ethnic origin, are *dissatisfied with the response of the central government and political parties* on their approaches to addressing the needs and interests of the public.
- Community and family proved to be a reliable social network to provide help in times of *'threats or violence.'* Women respondents named *'relatives'* and *'parents'* as a main protection mechanism in instances of violence, while men referred to *'friends.'* The majority of women respondents indicated that they *lack adequate access to health care facilities*, particularly in rural areas. The vast majority of respondents pointed out that the nearest woman's health/gynecological facility is located a distance of 21 or more kilometers away.
- Islam could potentially be a uniting factor for the Kyrgyz and Uzbek populations. In fact, right after the violence few, attempts were made by imams to heal people's souls and bring together conflicting parties. However, as a result of interethnic conflict, mosques are divided between ethnic Uzbeks and Kyrgyz. If, before the conflict, Uzbeks and Kyrgyz used to attend the same mosque for Friday prayers, today they attend separate ones. In spite of the divide, many respondents from Uzbek and Kyrgyz communities stressed that the holy month of Ramadan is a good opportunity to start the reconciliation process. During Friday prayers, some imams have been calling on the conflicting parties to show forgiveness and friendship. On the other hand, the research revealed a growing number of women, especially ethnic Kyrgyz, who are confused by Islamic teachings and have a disbelieving attitude toward the religion.

#### 4. Women and Women's Groups in Conflict and Peace Building

- The major role in leading peace-building within communities is mainly given to representatives of local administrations and informal leaders. However, respondents recognized local *women leaders* as potential leaders who could bring peace and stability to the region.
- The assessment revealed a new, women-organized protection mechanism from violence and threats. Due to the absence of state-sponsored protection mechanisms against human rights violations and threats of violence, women from Uzbek communities have organized so-called "life gates." These are a kind of checkpoint, serving to protect their sons and husbands from arbitrary arrests, intimidation, and threats. This proactive protection mechanism came in response to "sweep" operations by police and frequent "night arrests" either by law-enforcement agents or unidentified military forces right after the violence.

- Local women's non-governmental and community-based organizations have been proved to be excellent instruments for leading people-to-people diplomacy, dialogue, and mediation. Unlike government institutions and international development agencies, local civil society groups enjoy trust among residents, serve as a bridge between the community and other stakeholders, voice the needs of vulnerable groups, and are able to transform positive ideas into action.
- Survey results show that the participation of women in conflict resolution and peace-building is supported by respondents. Women activists served as an effective response mechanism to the needs of the people in a time of humanitarian crisis. Civil society organizations were able to mobilize, creating networks of volunteers and becoming excellent instruments for leading people to diplomacy, dialogue, and mediation. A group of women's non-governmental organizations developed and submitted an appeal to the United Nations Secretary-General and the United Nations Security Council calling on the government of Kyrgyzstan and member states to improve implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace, and security.

## 5. Need for Information

- The research revealed the top three most necessary pieces of information by the population in the region. First, more than half of women and men expressed a desire to know more about possible *mechanisms and tools for conflict prevention and peace-building*. Second, respondents would like to know more about *human rights and how they can be better protected*. Third, respondents expressed a desire for information about *women's human rights*, this interest naturally more often expressed by female than male respondents.
- Lack of reliable information about the government's recovery strategies creates confusion and misunderstanding both between the government and residents, as well as among different ethnic groups. There is a weak connection between the government and citizens due to a lack of outreach, weak public participation in decision-making, and the unwillingness or inability of state officials to listen to and consider the needs of ordinary people.
- The provision by mass media of reliable, timely, unbiased, and transparent information is a basic requirement for early recovery, reconciliation, and peace-building processes. The lack of information stimulates the spread of various rumors, creates tension between groups, generates panic and anxiety, and finally strengthens distrust. In this sense, mass media could play a great role in the stabilization and building of trust among people; regretfully however, the assessment data shows that the media plays an opposite role by disseminating biased and insensitive information, according to respondents. More

timely and reliable information from organizations and stakeholders in charge would ease the situation and aid in the recovery and reconciliation process.

- Mass media could play crucial role in reconciliation, bringing people together, strengthening understanding, and promoting peaceful coexistence of all peoples of Kyrgyzstan. However, mass media coverage was constantly and heavily criticized by all respondents. Information on national and local TV and in newspapers was characterized by the ethnic minority as unreliable, as having a nationalist bent, and as depicting Kyrgyz as the only victims of the conflict. In turn, Kyrgyz respondents are unhappy with both local as well as international mass media coverage. They consider local media broadcasts disturbing, divisive, and as deliberately remindful of the recent violence. The international media is perceived as unfair, portraying Kyrgyz as villains despite the fact that Kyrgyz are suffering as well.

## INTRODUCTION



Kyrgyzstan, located in Central Asia, is a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural country with a population of over 5 million.<sup>1</sup> Following the “Tulip Revolution” in March 2005, Kyrgyzstan has experienced turbulent political and socio-economic instability. On April 7, 2010, widespread rallies and demonstrations protesting the government’s economic policy resulted in the dissolution of the government and Parliament, and the removal of President Kurmanbek Bakiev from power. Popular protests resulted in the death of 86 people.

The country’s political crisis further escalated with a four-day outbreak of brutal interethnic conflict in the southern cities of Osh and Jalal-Abad and surrounding areas, from June 10 to 14, 2010. This conflict generated a widespread humanitarian disaster, affecting more than 1 million people, as women, children, and other vulnerable groups fell victim to those perpetrating the violence.. The conflict resulted in a mass exodus from conflict zones into neighboring Uzbekistan and other regions of Kyrgyzstan. According to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) about 400,000 Kyrgyz and ethnic Uzbeks were forced to flee their homes.<sup>2</sup> The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) estimates that about 100,000 people sought refuge in Uzbekistan.<sup>3</sup> As of the end of June, almost all refugees had returned to their home

1 Map of Kyrgyzstan, accessed October 5, 2010  
[http://1.bp.blogspot.com/\\_jN3AzHDrQSw/TBleXik9znl/AAAAAAAAABNs/a-72VI8VNeA/s1600/Kyrgyzstan\\_map\\_001%5B1%5D.jpg](http://1.bp.blogspot.com/_jN3AzHDrQSw/TBleXik9znl/AAAAAAAAABNs/a-72VI8VNeA/s1600/Kyrgyzstan_map_001%5B1%5D.jpg)

2 “Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan: Refugees in numbers,” IRIN News, accessed August 7, 2010  
<http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=89527>

3 “UN Issues Warning on Shelter as Refugees Return in Large Numbers to Kyrgyzstan,” UN News Service, accessed August 28, 2010  
<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=35179&Cr=kyrgyz&Cr1=>

communities. According to the findings of the National Commission Investigation into the tragic events of June 2010, 426 people died and 1,930 were injured during the violence.<sup>4</sup> As reported by the State Directorate on Reconstruction and Development of Osh and Jalal-Abad, a total of 1,880 houses were destroyed or damaged during the unrest in the Osh and Jalal-Abad areas.<sup>5</sup>

United Nations agencies and other humanitarian organizations began aid response soon after the initial violence. One of the approaches has been establishing a “clusters” system for providing need-based assistance to victims of the inter-communal conflict.<sup>6</sup> Thus, ten clusters have been organized, addressing issues related to protection, housing, land and property, child protection, gender-based violence responses, shelter, health, water and sanitation, education, food security and agriculture, and community restoration. According to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), humanitarian agencies continue to provide assistance to 810,000 people directly or indirectly affected by the violence and displacement.<sup>7</sup>

A High Level Donors meeting was organized and held by the Kyrgyz government with the support of the World Bank in Bishkek on July 27, 2010. The government of Kyrgyzstan, civil society groups, the private sector, international development agencies, and bilateral donors participated in the meeting. As a result of the meeting, representatives of 14 countries and 15 international organizations have pledged \$1.1 billion toward emergency response services for the country's needs after these tragic events.<sup>8</sup>

#### Objective of the assessment

As a part of UN Flash Appeal, in response to UN Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820 on Women, Peace, and Security, and guided by the CEDAW, UNIFEM launched a rapid needs assessment of women and men in conflict- affected areas in Kyrgyzstan. The objective of this

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4 “Заключение Национальной Комиссии по расследованию событий в июне 2010 года на юге Кыргызстана,” Informational Agency Akipress, January 20, 2011, accessed January 22, 2011 <http://kg.akipress.org/news:317951>

5 “Кто-то агитирует пострадавших во время июньских событий отказаться от государственных ссуд по 200 тыс. сомов. Мы их заставлять не будем. Жанторо Сатыбалдиев,” Фергана издание Аки-Пресс, accessed September 10, 2010 <http://fergana.akipress.org/news:94421/>

6 For detailed information on the collaborative humanitarian aid response by international humanitarian agencies, please refer to “The Kyrgyzstan humanitarian response portal” <http://kg.humanitarianresponse.info/>

7 UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. Kyrgyzstan: Extended Humanitarian Flash Appeal seeks \$42 million, accessed January 18, 2011 [http://kg.humanitarianresponse.info/Portals/0/flash/24%20Nov%202010\\_KYRGYZSTAN%20-%20EXTENDED%20HUMANITARIAN%20APPEAL.pdf](http://kg.humanitarianresponse.info/Portals/0/flash/24%20Nov%202010_KYRGYZSTAN%20-%20EXTENDED%20HUMANITARIAN%20APPEAL.pdf)

8 The World Bank. High Level Donors Meeting for the Kyrgyz Republic Pledges US\$1.1 billion in Emergency response, accessed January 31, 2011 <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/ECAEXT/KYRGYZEXTN/0,,contentMDK:22670373-menuPK:305766-pagePK:64027988-piPK:64027986-theSitePK:305761,00.html>

assessment is to provide information on the current situation of women and men in the process of early recovery, and to identify key peace-building and security issues, as well as priorities which, in the opinion of the people (respondents), must be addressed.

The assessment was conducted in Osh, Jalal-Abad, and surrounding areas in August 2010. Along with Osh and Jalal-Abad towns, the assessment covered villages in Kara-Suu, Aravan and Kara-Kulja districts of Osh region, and Suzak, Nooken, Bazar-Korgon, Ala-Buka districts in Jalal-Abad region.<sup>9</sup> In total, 12 areas in Osh and Jalal-Abad oblasts were covered by the assessment.<sup>10</sup>

The findings of the assessment suggest entry points for establishing dialogue and reconciliation between conflicting parties that could be used in the commission of practical gender-sensitive national peace-building strategy, policy, and programming.

### Kyrgyzstan and the Ferghana Valley—Situation Analysis

Osh and Jalal-Abad regions of Kyrgyzstan are parts of the Ferghana Valley. The Ferghana Valley occupies more than 100,000 square kilometers of Central Asia. The territory of the Ferghana Valley is shared among three sovereign states: eastern Uzbekistan, northern Tajikistan and southern Kyrgyzstan.

One of the most significant features of the Ferghana Valley is its ethnic composition. Not only the host nationalities – Kyrgyz, Tajiks, and Uzbeks – but also other groups, such as Russians, Ukrainians, Tatars, Dungans, Uighurs, and Germans, live in the region. Kyrgyzstan has more than 2 million people in its share of the Ferghana Valley (the Osh, Jalal-Abad and Batken regions); among these, 60% are ethnic Kyrgyz, while 30% are Uzbek. Uzbekistan's share (the Andijan, Namangan and Ferghana regions) has more than 6 million citizens, of which 84.5% are ethnic Uzbek, 5% are Tajiks, and about 3% are ethnic Kyrgyz. About 2 million people live in Tajikistan's share (the Sugdh region), of which 57% are ethnic Tajiks, 31% are Uzbek, and 1% is Kyrgyz.<sup>11</sup>

The Ferghana Valley is considered an area with a high potential for violence due to a history of conflicts in the region, existing structural conditions, and political and institutional factors. Besides a shortage of land and water resources, the region has a number of other challenges such as high population density, including a high percentage of youth, high levels of unemployment, unresolved border delimitation and demarcation issues, the existence of enclaves and disputed areas, environmental security challenges, human trafficking, organized crime, corruption, and the influence of radical religious and extremist groups. The war and instability in neighboring Afghanistan have contributed to the growth of drug trafficking in and

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9 See annex 1 for detailed description of the assessment methodology

10 See annex 2 for areas covered by the assessment.

11 "The Ferghana Valley: Current Challenges," UNIFEM, 2005, p. 16  
[http://www.unifem.org/attachments/products/ferghana\\_valley\\_current\\_challenges\\_2005\\_en.pdf](http://www.unifem.org/attachments/products/ferghana_valley_current_challenges_2005_en.pdf)

militarization of the region. The region faces seasonal small-scale conflicts caused by a lack of water on border areas. These small-scale, seasonal conflicts are often considered interethnic conflicts.

The Ferghana Valley can be characterized as an area of protracted social conflict and deteriorated regional instabilities caused by inefficient trans-boundary water management and unresolved border and territorial issues. Also contributing to the area's potential for social conflict are violations of human rights by law-enforcement bodies, and the population's decreasing level of trust in state institutions and their ability to provide secure access to essential human needs such as food, education, and healthcare in the region.<sup>12</sup>

Prior to the June 2010 conflict in southern Kyrgyzstan, ethnic Kyrgyz and Uzbeks in southern Kyrgyzstan generally lived in relative peace, most living in ethnically mixed communities and inter-marrying.<sup>13</sup> In fact, during the recent violence there were a number of reports of members of the two ethnicities saving each other's lives, as well as those of other ethnic groups.

The June 2010 violence in southern Kyrgyzstan has had a great impact on the socio-economic situation of the population, including social interaction, infrastructure, and economic activities in the region. Today, the society is strongly divided along ethnic lines. Both Kyrgyz and Uzbeks have deep grievances, and they feel fear and distrust toward each other. Essentially, the conflict was not caused by the multi-ethnicity of population, but rather it was deliberately ignited by a group of provocateurs and then fueled by decades of unresolved social, economic, and political problems. These problems include poverty, inequality and injustice, unequal distribution of natural and other resources, border issues, environmental security challenges, restricted

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12 For detailed background information about the Ferghana Valley please refer to the following sources:

- "Central Asia Human Development Report. Bringing Down Barriers: Regional Cooperation for Human Development and Human Security," UNDP Europe & CIS, 2005  
[http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/regionalreports/europethecis/central\\_asia\\_2005\\_en.pdf](http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/regionalreports/europethecis/central_asia_2005_en.pdf)
- "The Ferghana Valley: Current Challenges," UNIFEM, 2005  
[http://www.unifem.org/attachments/products/ferghana\\_valley\\_current\\_challenges\\_2005\\_en.pdf](http://www.unifem.org/attachments/products/ferghana_valley_current_challenges_2005_en.pdf)
- Zumrat Salmorbekova and Galina Yemelianova, "Islam and Islamism in the Ferghana Valley," in *Radical Islam in the Former Soviet Union*, edited by Galina Yemelianova, 211-243. London and New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2010
- Lubin, Nancy, and Barnett R. Rubin. "Calming the Ferghana Valley: Development and Dialogue in the Heart of Central Asia: Report of the Ferghana Valley Working Group of the Center for Preventive Action." New York: Century Foundation Press, 1999.
- Madeelene Reeves. "Locating danger: Conflictology and the Search for Fixity in the Ferghana Valley Borderlands." *Central Asian Survey*, March 24 (1), 2005: 67-81

13 There is a history of violence in Southern Kyrgyzstan. In 1990, interethnic violence was triggered between Kyrgyz and Uzbeks by a dispute over land in the Uzgen district of Osh region, resulting in hundreds of dead and thousands of injured. At that time, the conflict was stopped by the deployment of Soviet troops.

movement of people and goods, drug trafficking, organized crime, corruption, and the influence of radical religious and extremist groups.

Analysis of the June 2010 conflict suggests that it was not triggered by interethnic enmity, but rather by such factors as a struggle for power and a sphere of influence by revanchists, political opportunists, and criminal groups. These groups manipulated unemployed youth, existing differences and tensions between ethnic groups, and the unstable political situation for mercenary ends. The weakness of the central government, the de-facto insubordination of the mayor of Osh, with regard to the central government, the unstable security situation in neighboring Tajikistan, and tensions on Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan border areas are all factors in the further destabilization and loss of control over the south.

In addition, the ongoing political crisis in Kyrgyzstan and the upcoming parliamentary elections on October 10, 2010 continue to have a deep impact on the overall situation and, in particular, on the recovery process and the psychological, economic, and social well-being of local women, men, youth, and elderly persons.

Increasing extremist nationalism is greatly affecting the human rights situation. Soon after the conflict, the number of reports of arbitrary arrests, extortion, intimidation, mistreatment in detention, and discrimination along ethnic lines increased.<sup>14</sup> The level of distrust toward state authorities, law-enforcement agencies, and the justice system has widened and deepened mainly due to unequal treatment on the basis of ethnicity. The social dynamic is divided, suspicious, and fearful. According to the results of the survey, the majority of Kyrgyz and Uzbek ethnicities feel threatened and discriminated against by other ethnic groups. Such a situation on the ground creates impediments to the launching of peace-building and reconciliation projects.

The unstable and deteriorated situation, with respect to human rights and justice, is causing high levels of migration abroad, mainly to Russia, among young families and men of productive age. Those who remain include socially- and economically- vulnerable groups, including the elderly, especially in ethnic Uzbek neighborhoods.

Respondents considered the government's response in conflict-affected areas and the re-integration of returnees, begun in July, to be ineffective. There are three main reasons for this. The first is the absence of any mechanism or system designed to prevent violent conflict and resolve conflict effectively. Second, there is a lack of effective coordination between established state agencies, as well as a lack of subordination to the central government on the part of regional authorities. One of the Osh mayor's key points of contention with the central government is the latter's decision to deploy a Police Advisory Group (PAG) from the

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14 Human Rights Watch. "Where is the Justice?" Interethnic Violence in Southern Kyrgyzstan and its Aftermath," August 2010 <http://www.hrw.org/en/reports/2010/08/16/where-justice>

Organization of the Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) to southern Kyrgyzstan. The third reason for the ineffective response is a lack of reliable and timely public information about strategies and measures to stabilize the situation. The lack of official information causes the relentless dissemination of rumors, which could lead to the outbreak of a new wave of violence at the end of the holy month of Ramadan.

## 1. PEACE AND SECURITY AS VITAL NEED FOR PEOPLE

1.1 By the opinion of the respondents, the conflict clearly demonstrates the incapability of the government to prevent violence and provide security to its citizens. The central government attempted to establish seven aid bodies with the aim of reconstructing the southern cities of Osh and Jalal-Abad and their surrounding regions. However, the current situation clearly demonstrates the lack of linkages and communication between the government and the people. Local women and men regardless of ethnicity continue to live in fear and informational isolation with unresolved basic needs. Direct victims of the conflict still face the problems of rebuilding their homes, re-establishing their businesses and possessions, and restoring their property and reissuance of documents (passports, property certificates).

According to the survey results, 45.5% of respondents do not feel physically safe and secure. A high level of fear is observed among the respondents, in particular among youth and women. The results demonstrate that public places are considered insecure by the respondents. The most dangerous places are considered to be *streets, markets, and stores* (diagram 1). Both interviewed women (45%) and men (50%) indicated that they feel unsafe on the streets. Apparently, the reason for this is directly linked with the conflict, which began on the streets. Respondents related numerous accounts of violence on the streets. More women (43.1%) than men (40.1%) feel unsafe in marketplaces and stores. The difference might be explained by the fact that after the conflict, more women have been taking responsibility for conducting economic activities in an attempt to protect men.

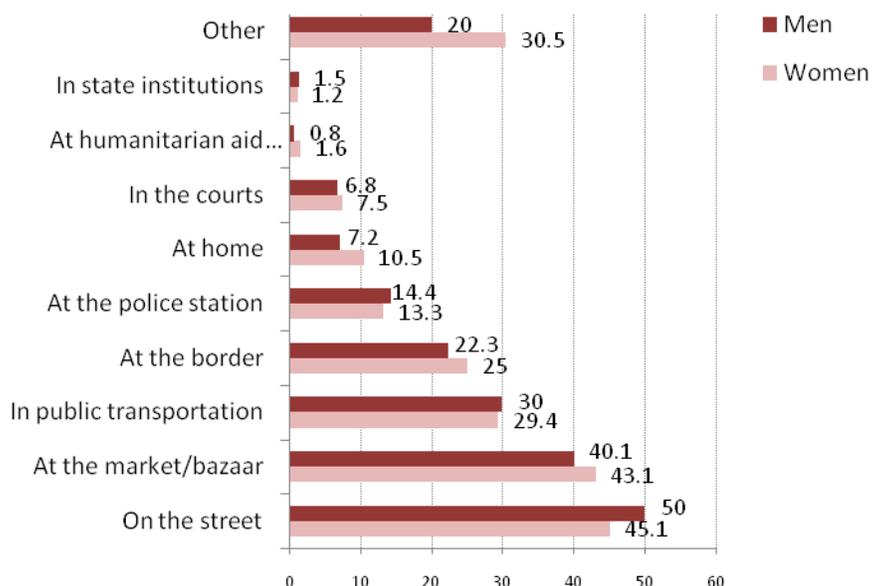
*Public transportation* is reported equally by women (29.4%) and men (29.9%) as an unsafe place. Indeed, respondents in focus-group discussions and individual interviews stressed that public transportation is becoming the most discriminative place. For instance, as soon as a person of any ethnicity becomes a minority on the bus, the majority humiliates and threatens him or her. Representatives of both Kyrgyz and Uzbek ethnicities complained about increasing verbal aggression on *marshrutkas* [small city buses].

More women indicate that they feel unsafe at *home*, while men feel insecure at *police stations*. The difference might be explained by the fact that during the conflict, women witnessed violence at home and escaped to more safe places such as border areas or to relatives living in mountainous areas. Men consider police stations unsafe places due to reported cases of illegal

arrests and brutal treatment by law-enforcement agents during “sweep” operation conducted by police after the conflict. As for ethnic breakdown, about 18% of Uzbek women and 15% of Uzbek men feel unsafe at home, in comparison with Kyrgyz women (6%) and men (3%). Apparently, respondents feel unsafe at home due to the number of nighttime illegal arrest cases by identified and unidentified armed forces, in particular among the Uzbek population.

Interestingly enough, 25.1% of surveyed women and 22.3% of men indicate that they feel unsafe at the *border area*. Ethnic breakdown reveals that the majority of those who feel unsafe at the border area are Kyrgyz. Apparently, this is due to cases of ethnic Kyrgyz being beaten up and taken hostage by Uzbekistani border guards and security forces. In addition, there were reports recently about undeclared confrontations on the Kyrgyz-Uzbek border between the security forces of these two countries.<sup>15</sup>

Diagram 1. Unsafe places for respondents (%)



1.2 The lack of security also creates big problem for farmers to *cultivate land, gather the harvest, and pasture livestock*. It is well known that in the region mainly women and children work in the fields. After the conflict many women fear being harmed or kidnapped by a member of the other ethnic group. Men are also afraid of getting beaten up, killed, or arbitrarily arrested. In one of the focus-groups in the Osh area, ethnic Uzbek women expressed a deep fear of visiting

<sup>15</sup> Данияр Каримов “Ферганский Излом: Кыргызстан и Узбекистан обмениваются заложниками?” Информационное Агентство “24.kg,” accessed September 12, 2001 <http://www.24.kg/cis/81782-ferganskijizlom-kyrgyzstan-i-uzbekistan.html>

their field to gather the harvest, because there have been cases of threats on the way at checkpoints by men in military uniform. Another problem is that throughout the region a number of armed men dressed in unrecognized military uniforms can be seen standing at checkpoints or walking on the streets around checkpoints. There is an urgent need for the government to prohibit the wearing of unrecognized military uniforms on the part of all security and law-enforcement forces in order to the men in charge of law and order disciplined and accountable.

1.3 Respondents indicated their main post-conflict fears at the present time (table 1). First, parents are most concerned about their *children's safety* on the way to and from school. This concern was expressed by about half of respondents (53.4% of women and 46.6% of men). Furthermore, about 77% of respondents (78.4% of women and 75.7% of men) indicated that they fear a *resumption of interethnic conflict*. They fear the likelihood that the unstable political situation and existing opportunistic forces could easily be used to divide ethnic groups, manipulating the masses for selfish interests. In this context, therefore, it is extremely important that prevention and reconciliation activities in communities be launched by civil society organizations and state officials with the support of the international community.

The third fear relates to the *presence of armed people*—33.7% of women and 25.7% of men mentioned this during the survey. In the course of the study, respondents complained about the new trend among politicians and other leaders to appear in public surrounded by armed men. Women participants in focus group discussions reported that “*men still continue to play war*” (woman, 42 years old, focus-group, Kara-Suu district, Osh).

*Table 1 Main fears indicated by respondents at present time (%)*

Main fears	Women	Men
Sending children to school	52.9	46.5
Resumption of interethnic conflict	34.9	42.4
Presence of armed men	33.7	25.7
Threats and intimidation	25.8	19.3
Violation of human rights	25.5	25.0
Violence against women and girls	16.0	21.6
Discrimination	16.4	9.8
Illegal actions by local government agencies	14.1	14.4
Violence against men and boys	13.3	12.5
Illegal human trafficking	11.7	12.8
Other	8.2	8.3
Sending children to school	7.0	4.5
Resumption of interethnic conflict	4.0	3.7

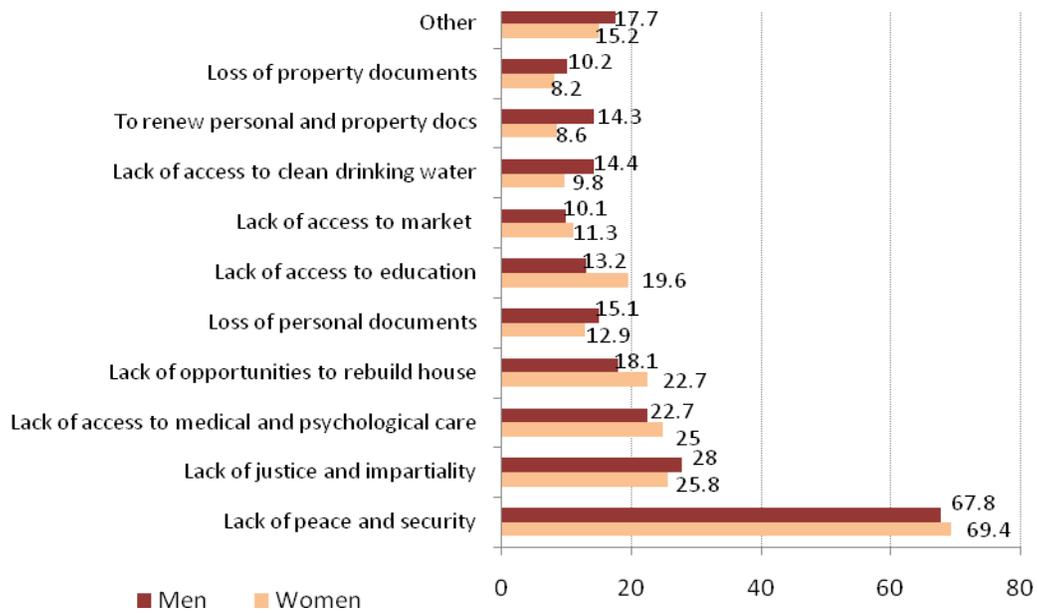
The fourth most common fear relates to *threats and intimidation*, mentioned by both women and men (25.8% and 19.3%, respectively). During the study, the research team learned about many cases of threats and intimidation carried out by unidentified forces. The absence of justice and rule of law makes it very difficult for people to complain to law-enforcement agencies, because people believe that there is a nexus between the police and other state security forces and organized criminal groups. Widespread corruption in the justice system and a lack of rule of law creates difficulties and a sense of hopelessness for ordinary people who do not have the means to protect themselves.

Disaggregated data on ethnicity and gender shows no significant difference in the level of fear of threats and intimidation. Thus, 35.7% of Kyrgyz women, 36.7% of Uzbek women, 33.5% of Kyrgyz men, and 33.3% of Uzbek men reported that they are afraid of being threatened and intimidated. Therefore, fears of being threatened and intimidated do not affect only one ethnic group, as is frequently reported in the press; rather, they affect all citizens regardless of ethnicity. Today, feelings of insecurity and fear are an issue of corruption, impunity, and the absence of rule of law in the government system.

1.4 Subsequently, *human rights violations* are one of the concerns of respondents (22.5%). Gender breakdown demonstrates that men (21.6%) are more concerned about human rights violations than are women (16%), likely due to the fact that men face a higher risk of arrest than women. The issue of human rights violations and illegal actions by law-enforcement agencies, including illegal arrests, was mentioned a number of times by respondents, particularly by ethnic Uzbeks. The research team visited an elderly man in a private hospital in an Uzbek neighborhood in Osh. The man had been physically assaulted by neighboring district policemen. In response to the question of why he does not complain about the abuse to police headquarters and report the incident to the justice system, he simply said: “...*It is not safe to complain. I do not trust our justice system, and I am fearful for my son and his family*” (in-depth interview, Osh).

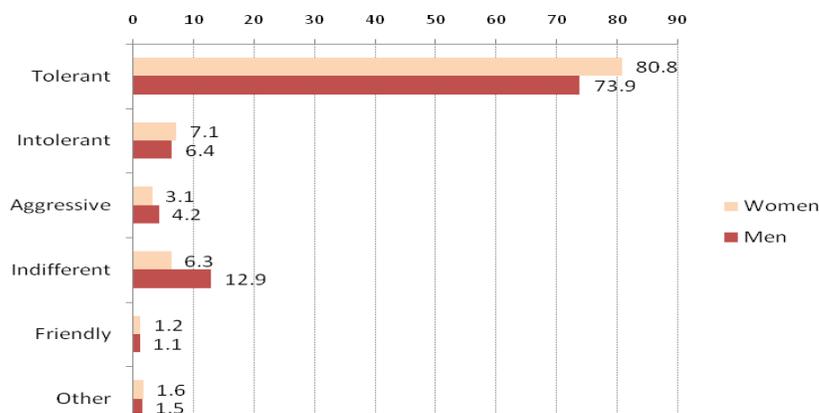
1.5 The provision of *peace and physical security*, as stated by respondents, is a key necessity for early recovery, since peace and security has a direct affect on the ability of the population to generate income and conduct livelihood activities (diagram 2). Both women and men state that feelings of insecurity create obstacles to obtaining employment, cultivating land, selling agricultural products and other goods, pasturing livestock, and simply being able to move around community and the region without fear.

Diagram 2. Major problems and need as a result of the conflict (%)



1.6 Concerning attitudes toward individuals of other ethnic groups, 80.8% of women and 73.9% of men, regardless of ethnicity, indicate that they are generally *tolerant* (diagram 3). Only 3.1% of women and 4.2% of men demonstrated an aggressive attitude. On the one hand, such a positive characterization of the situation between ethnic groups is due to the cultural mentality of respondents: local people believe that negative characterizations can bring bad luck and adversely affect subsequent events in their lives. However, on the other hand, such a generally tolerant response may demonstrate that the root-causes of the conflict lay in social and economic challenges, rather than in ethnic issues.

Diagram 3. Attitude toward individuals of another ethnicity (%)



There are numerous concerns among respondents about a *lack of justice and impartiality* and increasing *ethnic discrimination*. 28% of men and 25.8% of women pointed to the lack of justice and impartiality as one of the most pressing necessities for recovery (diagram 2). The slightly higher percentage in men might be explained by the fact that more men than women experienced detentions and arrests after the conflict.

In focus-group discussions, ethnic minority respondents complained about ethnic discrimination by law enforcement, as well as by the local state administration, particularly toward men. As a result, there has been a high level of migration abroad, especially among young and middle-aged Uzbek men, due to a fear of biased arrest, detention, or extortion of money. During the study it was reported that many Kyrgyz families are also selling their houses and fleeing to Russia for a better life.

Table 2. From whom respondents fear threats and discrimination (gender breakdown, %)

	Women	Men
Other ethnic group(s)	42.7	45.8
I don't feel discriminated against	25.0	27.2
Police	20.0	20.0
Neighbors	18.4	18.1
Customs and border guards	10.9	8.3
Judge(s)	7.8	10.9
Government representatives	7.1	9.0
Health care workers	3.5	1.9
Not sure	18.0	14.7
Other	1.5	1.5

Respondents' answers to the question "By which groups or individuals do you feel threatened or discriminated against?" confirm that the majority of women (42.7%) and men (45.8%) feel discrimination from '*the other ethnic group*' (table 2). After this, respondents feel most threatened and discriminated against by the '*police*': 20% of women and 20% of men gave this answer. Individual interviews with several leaders of non-governmental organizations reveal that the rise of nationalism was observed after the conflict, in particular among law-enforcement agencies. Finally, 18.4% of women and 18.1% of men felt discriminated against by '*neighbors*'. However, more than 26% of respondents stated that they do not feel discriminated against, and 16.4% were not sure.

The 'other ethnic group' was indicated as a source of threat and discrimination almost uniformly by Kyrgyz (45.4%) and Uzbek (42.5%) respondents. There is a difference in the responses of Uzbek and Kyrgyz respondents regarding the second group by whom respondents feel most threatened and discriminated against. Thus, 28.7% of Uzbek respondents feel threatened and discriminated against by 'police,' while 21.8% of Kyrgyz by 'neighbors.' More Kyrgyz respondents (31.3%) than Uzbek respondents (16.2%) indicated that they do not feel discriminated against.

1.7 More women (16.4%) than men (9.8%) mentioned *violence against*

*women and girls* as a fear at the present time. Almost an equal number of women (8.2%) and men (8.3%) indicated that they fear the possibility of *violence against men and boys*. It is recognized that sexual violence, especially against women, might significantly aggravate the situation. Therefore, steps to prevent and respond to such violence would contribute to the maintenance of peace and stability in the region (box 1).

The consequences of interethnic conflict have had a deep impact on all strata of society. Analysis of the data shows that respondents identify victims of the conflict based on different criteria. For instance, 54.8% of respondents (53.3% of women and 56.3% of men) agreed that men have been most affected by the violence. This opinion is likely related to the number of killed and injured men. However, many respondents share the opinion that women, youth, and the population in general were victims of violence, particularly psychological violence.

*Table 3. Violence against women witnessed by respondents before, during, and after the conflict (%)*

Types of violence	Before the conflict	During the conflict	After the conflict
Physical	3.1	22.0	3.5
Psychological	11.4	46.2	26.6
Sexual	0.6	3.1	0.8
Domestic	2.7	5.4	3.7

*Box 1: Gulsara Alieva, Head of press-service, Ministry of Internal Affairs of Kyrgyzstan, Colonel, Doctor of Philosophy*

*During the tragic event there were cases of sexual violence and other types of violence, including economic violence. Feedback from law-enforcement officers clearly showed understanding of the problem, and participants actively asked questions about crisis centers and got their contact information.*

*There is an agreement between the district police department and crisis centers, so in cases of violence law-enforcement officer could refer the victim to crisis centers for psychological, legal, and any other kind of help. We believe there is a need for this type of cooperation and coordination, a sort of social partnership between police and public organizations.*

*UNIFEM/part of UN Women "Coordinated response measures to victims of gender-based violence in Osh and Jalalabad" project.*

Table 4. Violence against men witnessed by respondents before, during, and after the conflict (%)

Types of violence	Before the conflict	During the conflict	After the conflict
Physical	7.7	37.6	10.6
Psychological	11.6	48.4	25.8
Sexual	0.4	1.2	0.2
Domestic	1.9	5.0	2.1

According to the survey, physical, psychological, and sexual violence against women increased considerably during the conflict, when compared to pre-conflict levels (table 3). The increased number of incidents reported of sexual violence might indicate that *sexual violence* was used as a deliberate tactic during the conflict (box 2). The facts demonstrate that sexual violence against young women became one of the causes for widespread interethnic violence in the region. Respondents pointed out that, since the conflict, they have witnessed psychological violence against women (35.2%) and against men (34.3%) (table 4).

The qualitative data demonstrates that youth, women, and men all need psychological rehabilitation (box 3). Many respondents are afraid to walk on the streets and fear that they simply will not live through the night—any minor noise causes them to panic and fear a resumption of the conflict. A number of respondents noted that they had witnessed violence and “*saw death*.” Indeed, violence will remain in people’s memories for a long time and will represent one of the biggest obstacles in the process of reconciliation.

*Box 2: A.S., victim of sexual violence, Osh city*

*I am 24 years old, a student in Osh. I was living in a dormitory before the night of June 10. On the eve of the violence, my friends and I were preparing for state exams. The dormitory residents started to panic when we heard gunfire outside. When three of us went into the hallway, we were approached by a young man. He told us that everyone should gather in one of the rooms in order to be evacuated. We did not have enough time to think things through and we followed him. Instead of escorting us to the room, he took us outside and pushed us into a car. We could not escape because two other men held us inside of the car by force, and the other ones took us out of the car and held something sharp against our necks. We were raped by two men.*

*After it was over, these men went somewhere and locked two of us in the room. We were able to break open the window and escape. We joined a group of people walking on the street and went to the local administration building. At dawn, a bus full of students arrived at the building. We joined them. Someone advised me to apply to "Ak Jurok" crisis center. At the center I am getting psychological support and general medical treatment. However, I am still afraid to go outside, and I feel like people look at me in a different way. My head still hurts and I cannot sleep at night. I feel like I need to find a job soon; otherwise, it is very difficult to live in such a state.*

*UNIFEM/part of UN Women "Coordinated response measures to victims of gender-based violence in Osh and Jalalabad" project.*

Data disaggregated by gender clearly shows the difference in the ways that women and men experienced violence. Respondents mentioned that men (32.8%) more often experienced violence from law-enforcement agents, while women (34.8%) more often experience violence from their husbands and in-laws. According to respondents, both Uzbek (32.4%) and Kyrgyz (40.8%) men experienced violence at the hands of law-enforcement and security forces.

There is still a high level of concern among surveyed people about the possibility of violence. Thus, 32.8% of women and 21.4% of men indicated that they fear violence against women and girls, whereas 16.8% of women and 19.6% of men fear the possibility of violence against men and boys.

*Box 3: Liliya Ismanova, Executive director "Meerban" crisis center, Osh city*

*Our center helps victims of interethnic violence receive medical and psychological assistance. Since June 2010, we have received about 200 people, among them 27 victims of sexual violence. A team of psychologists helps victims with post-traumatic disorders to recover after the stress. We have a mobile group, which helps those who are not able to be physically present at our center. Every case is assessed by a general therapist; the therapist makes a referral and only then do we send a particular specialist to the victim.*

*In addition to medical and psychological help to victims of gender-based violence, our center provides assistance with restoration of identification documents. In this endeavor we collaborate with state representatives from social services and local authorities. If a victim is eligible to receive social support, we help to gather all needed documents in order to appeal for the support. Also, we help people in need obtain humanitarian aid. Seven people work in our organization, among them psychologists, a lawyer, and rehabilitation specialists.*

*UNIFEM/part of UN Women "Coordinated response measures to victims of gender-based violence in Osh and Jalalabad" project.*

## 1. SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC SECURITY

2.1 Assistance in rebuilding houses was named one of the key basic needs by women (28%) and men (21.9%). Focus-group respondents in Uzbek communities expressed deep concern about the government's ability to rebuild houses before the onset of cold weather. The majority of houses destroyed during the violence mainly belonged to ethnic Uzbeks.<sup>16</sup> Taking into consideration time constraints and the ability of the government to restore houses, focus-group respondents expressed hope to have at least safe and warm public buildings for the winter. Many respondents have proposed providing returnees with construction materials and some cash to restore their houses in order to expedite the process. Respondents are expecting a rise in the price of building materials due to high demand. There is a high risk that many households, especially in Uzbek communities, will lack the labor force to rebuild houses because of the intensified migration of men abroad.

In addition, ethnic Uzbek communities are not willing to obtain interest-free long-term loans of up to 200 thousand soms [approximately \$4,300], as offered by the Kyrgyz government, to rebuild houses damaged and burnt as a result of the conflict, because returnees do not want the added burden of having to repay the loan in 17 years. Single and elderly women in particular demonstrate strong opposition to taking out loans. Some respondents suggested that the government give them 200 thousand soms without demanding repayment, especially since that amount is not enough to fully cover the cost of rebuilding a badly damaged house.

Uzbek communities have expressed strong dissatisfaction regarding the decision made by the central government and city administrations to build multistory houses, because Uzbek communities are accustomed to living with extended families in detached houses with small plots of land for gardening. Respondents from predominantly Kyrgyz communities, on the other hand, are willing to reside in ethnically-mixed multistory houses, explaining that inhabitants of mixed neighborhoods protected each other during the violence, regardless of ethnicity.

2.2. Customary practices of registering all property such as land, cars, and houses in the name of the man is the source of a problem faced today by women whose houses were burnt down or destroyed as a result of the conflict. In order to receive assistance for the rebuilding of their houses, every needy household must go through the bureaucratic process of having their damages evaluated by the state financial agency. In the process of evaluation and registration, state officials require the petitioner to provide the title of the house. As a rule, the title is in the man's name; however, as many men, predominantly from Uzbek communities, have migrated abroad, this creates problems for women attempting to qualify for this government aid. If the

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16 Human Rights Watch. "Where is the Justice?" Interethnic Violence in Southern Kyrgyzstan and its Aftermath," August 2010 <http://www.hrw.org/en/reports/2010/08/16/where-justice>

owner is absent, then the applicant has to prove power of attorney over the house, a legal status that many women lack.

Most female owners of destroyed and burnt-down houses expressed an acute need to restore their personal property, such as furniture and refrigerators (i.e., belongings needed for everyday life.) Many women expressed a need for underwear and other hygienic necessities. In addition, female participants of focus group discussions stressed that their children do not have even the minimal supplies (i.e., clothes, shoes, etc.) needed in order to attend school.

2.3 The conflict destroyed businesses and the established economic interactions between different ethnic groups in the region, which has greatly affected income generation. The absence of a source of income greatly reduces access to food, medical assistance, education, and so on. According to the results of the survey, about 20% of respondents stated that they have lost their means of conducting economic activities. As a result of the conflict, about 12% of respondents lost their houses, 5% lost livestock, 4% lost their personal cars, and 4% lost their trade spot in the market.

Women who lost jobs in petty trading, service, and agriculture industries face a very difficult economic situation. According to the survey results, petty trade declined from 27.2% to 19.5%, and the number of unemployed increased from 16.8% to 21%. Women from rural areas expressed concern about visiting conflict-affected towns to sell their agricultural products. Before the conflict, women used to walk around neighborhoods to sell dairy products and earn some money; now they have lost this source of income. In one of the focus-group discussions, women stated that, for early recovery and consequently reconciliation, there is a pressing need to provide jobs in order to *"make people busy"* (woman, 36 years old, focus-group, Aravan district, Osh).

The decision of the Osh mayor's office to eliminate Osh's central market and instead organize four smaller markets around the town has caused frustration and dissatisfaction, in particular among ethnic minority groups. Female respondents from the Uzbek community believe that Kyrgyz entrepreneurs are not going to let Uzbeks do business in the new markets. Moreover, Uzbek women noted that in order to get to the new markets they will have to cross a Kyrgyz neighborhood, which they consider unsafe. A woman respondent said: *"Open up the central market; economic interaction will be the prescription for recovery and reconciliation"* (woman, 34 years old, focus-group, Osh).

Social infrastructure has been heavily damaged. The service sector, which had mainly employed young people and includes such establishments as cafés, hair salons, shoe and car repair centers, and petty trade, has been affected. Consequently, many people lost access to services, and young people who used to work in the sector joined the ranks of the unemployed. Young people who lost their source of income are barely getting any attention from the government and international organizations. As one of the male respondents put it, *"Nobody listens to youth, to*

*our needs and opinions. I am thinking of leaving for Russia”* (man, 21 years old, focus-group, Suzak district, Jalal-Abad).

There is a risk of food deficiency and hunger in the coming winter and spring, mostly as a result of the political crisis and the interethnic conflict. The political instability created problems for established economic interactions both within the state as well as among neighboring countries. Due to the closure of Uzbekistan's border, rural women and men are experiencing difficulties in finding and buying seeds and fertilizers to cultivate land. Before the conflict, farmers needed money to buy fertilizer, but today there are no fertilizers on the market. Respondents complained that Uzbekistan's border closure has caused a rise in the prices of vegetables and fruits at the market. The local people are very upset with the huge gap between grocery prices at the market and the lack of opportunity to generate income.

2.4 Another problem farmer's face today, as a result of the conflict, is an absence of harvest collection centers. Male farmers complained that, during the conflict, the owner of the cotton factory escaped and the factory itself, located in Jalal-Abad, was looted. Farmers are upset and have no idea where to deliver the harvest, who is going to pay for it, and how they are going to make it through the winter. As women and men respondents put it, they feel that they are at the *“crossroads of uncertainty,”* with no idea what to do and what to expect next (man, 43 years old, focus-group, Bazar-Korgon district, Jalal-Abad). In the Nookan district of the Jalal-Abad region, participants of focus-groups reported cases of unknown perpetrators setting fire to wheat harvests. Apparently, these opportunists hoped to create panic and cause local people leave their homes, in order more opportunities for looting. Having received no help either from local government or from police, rural inhabitants have organized voluntary 'self-help' groups to capture and punish those who are inflicting harm and sowing panic.

2.5 Difficulties in replacing both personal and property documents was indicated by 8.6% of women and 14.3% of men (diagram 2). However, it seems that progress in restoring identity and ownership documents is occurring, if at a very slow rate, compared to the situation in the beginning of July. During focus-group discussions, though, there were still many concerns among women with respect to bureaucratic procedures and elements of corruption in the corresponding state agencies. One woman said *“...To restore a passport I was asked to pay 760 soms [\$16.00], but I do not have any income, all my property is destroyed—how am I supposed to pay that much money for a passport?!”* (woman, 32 years old, focus-group, Osh town). During the assessment, women in a couple of focus-group discussions complained that the passport office does not have a flat rate for the renewal of identity documents; officers request different amounts of money from different people.

2.6 More than a quarter of women and men indicated a need for medical and, in particular, psychological care, especially for women, children, and youth. As a result of the lack of qualified psychological support, inhabitants especially those who witnessed violence, are turning to traditional methods of healing. In almost every village there is a healer, usually a woman, who

conducts virtual “*uplift of heart*” (*Jyrok kotorot*). According to respondents, this ritual helps elevate people’s mood and decrease fear and anxiety.

The majority of the respondents indicated that they have medical facilities nearby. However, the data clearly shows that the majority of *women lack adequate access to health care facilities*, particularly in rural areas. Thus, 62.5% of respondents pointed out that the nearest woman’s health/gynecological facility is located a distance of 21 or more kilometers away. UNIFEM/part of UN Women’s proposals and efforts to establish mobile women’s health clinics were strongly supported by women and noted as timely and necessary, particularly by ethnic Uzbek women. The majority of women expressed a desire to include psychologists in mobile clinics, since many of them are suffering from emotional as well as physical stress. In addition, women and men from Uzbek communities suggested including a Kyrgyz specialist in Uzbek communities and an Uzbek specialist in Kyrgyz communities in order to promote understanding and foster reconciliation.

Mobile clinics are needed not only in the cities most affected by violence, but also in remote villages. In the course of the assessment, the team received a number of reports that in remote, predominantly Kyrgyz, villages there are women who have been affected by violence. In fact, the survey data shows that the majority of women turn for help either to relatives or parents. It is unlikely that those young women who escaped to remote villages will return to towns, either to continue their education or work.

As a result of the conflict, some schools in conflict zones have been damaged. However, as previously mentioned, parents are more concerned about their children’s safety and less about restoring the schools. In focus-group discussions, the majority of women in conflict hot-spots said categorically that they will not send their daughters to school for the first couple of months. In addition, Osh area parents anticipate school fights between teenagers, particularly on the first day of school. This concern is supported by the fact that fights occur between students on the first day of school every year, , and, in the aftermath of the June conflict, parents were fairly certain that ethnic differences would be another reason for fights. In fact, on September 3, a significant brawl reportedly broke out between Kyrgyz and Uzbek high school students in Osh, involving many students. In order to prevent arbitrary arrests, Uzbek women set up checkpoints on the road to Kara-Suu district near Osh. On the other hand, there were not many fights among school students across the region, probably as a result of preventive action undertaken by the youth organization “*Birimdik KG*,” with the support of UNICEF. The measures they took seem to have averted fights, and no major incidents occurred at the beginning of the school year (in-depth interview, Osh).

## 2. ISSUES OF TRUST

Analysis of the qualitative data shows that ordinary citizens are disappointed, and expressed little or no trust, in local and central government, specifically in its approach to preventing violence, addressing post-crisis needs, and solving immediate problems. This distrust is directly linked to issues of corruption, injustice, and unequal treatment of people by state authorities and law-enforcement agencies.

3.1 Uzbeks are more likely to distrust local government. Thus, during focus-group discussions and in-depth interviews, Uzbek respondents expressed grievances and distrust toward local government officials, police, and heads of educational institutions, such as kindergartens and schools. Distrust in local authorities is connected with the Osh mayor's decisions to build multistory houses, liquidate the central market, and so on, without any discussion or consultation with the local population. Another reason for concern is that, due to societal division along ethnic lines, ethnic Uzbeks lack a platform for expressing their needs, opinions, and interests. This lack of representation of ethnic minorities in local government could explain the lack of trust in the authorities. In addition, Uzbek respondents are displeased with the approach of the National Investigation Commission, on the causes and consequences of the conflict. According to respondents, due to an insensitive approach, the voices of ethnic minorities were not heard by the commission; consequently, they were not reflected in the National Commission report. In addition, many Uzbek women are upset with the hidden order given by local authorities to dismiss workers of Uzbek origin from kindergartens and schools.

Kyrgyz are more likely to distrust the central government. Kyrgyz communities expressed deep disappointment with the inaction of the central government in preventing the violent interethnic conflict. Many respondents strongly believe that the government missed several opportunities to prevent the conflict. People are convinced that the conflict was overlooked by the central government because some politicians in Bishkek made a deal with ethnic minority leaders to promote selfish ends.

Both Kyrgyz and Uzbeks are dissatisfied with the response of the central government. Both women and men unanimously expressed dissatisfaction with representatives of central government, political leaders.

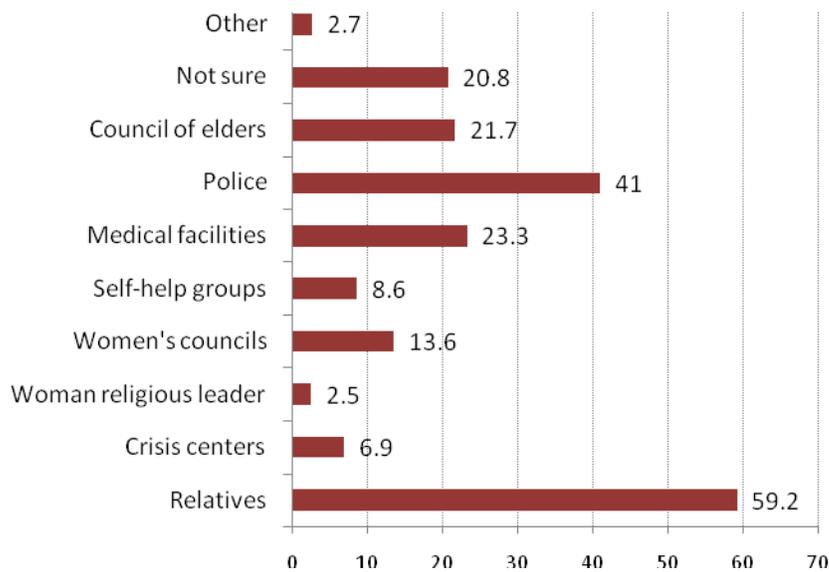
The lack of reliable information about the government's recovery strategies creates confusion and misunderstanding both between the government and residents as well as among different ethnic groups. For example, contradictory information exists about the loan and interest rates offered by *the State Directorate on Reconstruction and Development of Osh and Jalal-Abad* for the reconstruction of houses after the conflict. Focus-group discussion revealed the intention of these loans is unclear to people, especially as they do not understand why the government does

not simply provide compensation for the rebuilding of damaged homes. Victims expressed a readiness to rebuild their houses themselves, with little outside support except monetary compensation from the government. However, if this were to occur, vulnerable groups such as people with disabilities, the elderly, and women-headed households would be at risk of being left behind.

Unclear messages and confusion are the result of a weak connection between the government and citizens, which in turn is due to a lack of outreach, weak public participation in decision-making, and the unwillingness or inability of state officials to listen to ordinary people and take their needs into consideration. These issues lay the foundation for a deep divide, the perception of biased treatment, distrust, and the dissemination of negative rumors.

3.2 The data shows that, during the conflict, 'when faced with threats or violence,' women most often turned for help to *relatives* (61.1%) and *parents* (54.5%), while men referred to *friends* (46.4 %) and *relatives* (40.3%). Many ethnic Kyrgyz reported that they escaped to relatives living in mountainous villages, while ethnic Uzbeks, predominantly women and children, sought refuge in Uzbekistan during the violence.

Diagram 4. Existing protection mechanisms for women in communities (%)



The vast majority of respondents (59.2%) named *relatives* as a main protection mechanism for women in instances of violence, and 41% indicated *police* (diagram 4). As was stated above in the report, physical, psychological, and sexual violence against women increased considerably during the conflict. Roughly a quarter of male and female respondents named *medical centers* as a safe haven for women, 21.7% named elderly councils, and only 13.6% indicated women's councils.

*Crisis centers* received the least preference (6.9%) as a place where women could obtain protection and assistance. It seems that crisis centers are not the best mechanisms of protection for women mainly due to the established norms of behavior for women and entrenched religious and traditional prejudices in the communities. However, there are cases when crisis centers provide invaluable help to victims of gender-based violence (box 4).

Box 4: R. U., victim of violence, Jalalabad town

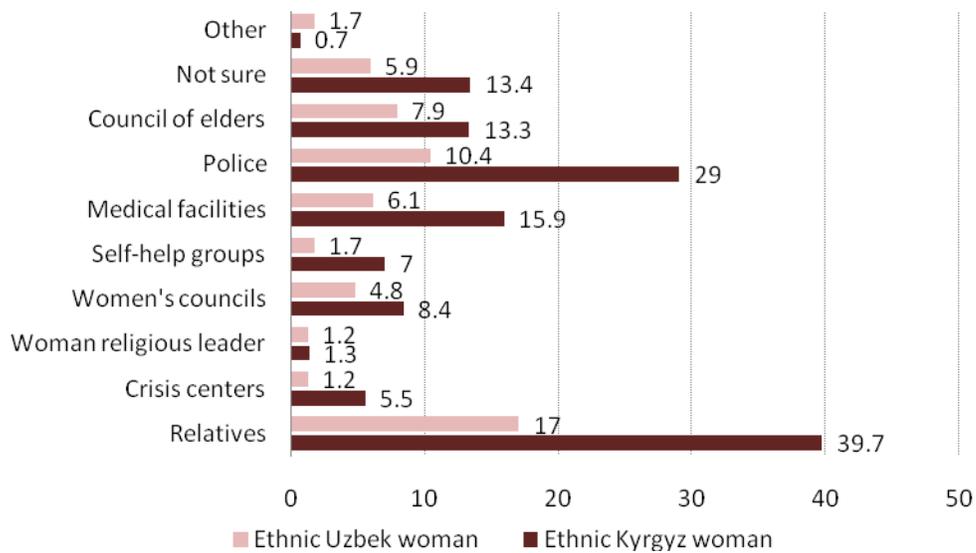
It is very emotionally difficult to recall all that happened on June 14, 2010. Everything happened late afternoon, around 4 pm. We were attacked at home. At first they [mob] tried to break open our gates; later they tried to enter our house through the roof. All this time we were trying to call the hot line, which was set up by the mayor's office and the region's state administration. Unfortunately, nobody answered the call. Later, when all my family members were severely beaten up, someone from the state administration showed up, but it was too late. During the attack, the assailants threw stones at us. One of the stones hit me in the head. As a result, I lost my eye. Janna, leader of a local women's non-governmental organization, helped me get to Bishkek and to get an eye prosthesis. All treatments were free of charge for me thanks to the crisis center "Sezim". Today I do not feel much of the terrible pain I used to experience.

After the awful experience I went through, I did not want to live here [Kyrgyzstan]. But after Bishkek and all the treatment I received, I have started to think differently—not all people are bad. The biggest support I am getting is that from my husband. After the surgery, I found out that I lost my eye. It was terrible, I was shocked and lost. I thought I had just lost vision in one eye, but not the eye itself! But my husband assured me that he loves me just the way I am.

*UNIFEM/part of UN Women "Coordinated response measures to victims of gender-based violence in Osh and Jalalabad" project.*

Diagram 5 shows that, in comparison with ethnic Kyrgyz women, ethnic Uzbek women less often turn to police, medical facilities, and crisis centers for help.. Apparently, this is due to a high level of distrust in state institutions and law-enforcement among the ethnic Uzbek population, as a result of the conflict. At the same time, the diagram also shows that fewer ethnic Uzbek women referred to relatives, self-help groups, and women's councils for help. This suggests that it may be necessary to study the needs of ethnic Uzbek women in greater depth, in order to provide effective protection for them.

Diagram 5. Existing protection mechanisms for women in communities, by ethnic breakdown (%)



The assessment team has identified a new kind of *self-protection mechanism*, found predominantly in Uzbek communities. Specifically, middle-age and older women have organized a form of check points, so-called “*life gates*” to the community. The mechanism is mainly oriented toward protecting men from illegal arrests, and preventing any kind of provocation or attack: as soon as a stranger or police officer appears in the community, the women approach and question them, in order to obtain as much information as possible about their intentions.

This proactive protection mechanism came about in response to “sweep” operations by police and frequent “night arrests” by law-enforcement agents or unidentified military forces right after the violence. It seems as though women are using the law of internal affairs agencies (police) to their advantage, as the law prohibits the use of “special equipment” and weapons against women, the disabled, and other vulnerable groups, except in cases of armed attack and the threat of weapons from them.

3.3 The research revealed that traditional ways of solving disputes are not well known in communities, despite the fact that the region faces seasonal small-scale conflicts due to lack of water, land, and pastures. Thus, 15% of respondents (12.9% of women and 17.1% of men) are aware of traditional ways of solving community disputes, while the vast majority of respondents (84%) are not aware of them. According to respondents, the most effective way of solving disputes is through *discussion at community meetings* (8.2% of women and 10.9% of men), and *elderly councils* (2.7% of women and about 2% of men).

Respondents in predominantly Kyrgyz focus-groups referred to *ak-sakal* (elderly) *court* as a traditional method of resolving disputes at the community level, while *mahallya* (locality)

councils were mentioned in focus-groups with ethnic Uzbeks. However, regardless of ethnicity and settlement type, nowadays each neighborhood has a leader, who is elected by the neighborhood's residents. As a rule, the "*street leader*" is a person who has some kind of power or status within the neighborhood who is able to resolve disputes, give advice or solve common problems, such as a teacher, wealthy farmer, or community activist. Opinions are divided along ethnic and gender lines on the issue of 'influential person who has the final word in decision-making' at the community level. The gender breakdown is as follows: women indicated that the final say in decision-making goes to *ayil okmotu* [head of local village administration] (29%), followed by *religious leader* (23.9%), and *el baschy* [local leader] (12.5%). At the same time, men pointed out that a *religious leader* has the right to a final say (30.6%), followed by *ayil okmotu* (21.6%), and finally by *el baschy* (14.4%). Seemingly, the importance of *el baschy* is directly linked to the fact that this figure is democratically elected by the people, without any outside influence, which makes this person respected and trustworthy. As a rule, the *el baschy* of a village is a man.

3.4 An ethnic breakdown demonstrates that within the Uzbek community the most influential person is a *religious leader* (25.6%), followed by *el baschy* (17.5%), and the *elderly council* (15.6%). Almost one-third of Kyrgyz respondents identified first *ayil okmotu*, then *religious leader* (27.7%), and finally *el baschy* (11.9%) as the individual whose opinion is most influential in decision-making. Despite the fact that Uzbek and Kyrgyz respondents differed in their ranking of the religious leader as the most influential figure in the community, the role of religion is increasing every year and becoming a more important aspect of the public life of the communities.

Both female and male respondents indicated *elderly persons* (34.9%), *an individual* (only male names were specified—19.5%), and the head of *ayil okmotu* (10.7%) as key leaders who could play a crucial role in peace-building. Only 4% of respondents indicated woman leaders as potential people who could bring peace and stability to the region. In sum, the crucial role in peace-building within communities is mainly given to representatives of local administrations and informal leaders.

The vast majority of the region's population is *Sunni Muslims, Hanafi Madhab (School)*, of Uzbek, Kyrgyz, and Tajik origins. The Muslim population of the southern part of Kyrgyzstan is historically more religious than that of the rest of the country. As a result of the violence, mosques are now divided between ethnic Uzbeks and Kyrgyz. If before the conflict Uzbeks and Kyrgyz used to attend the same mosque for Friday prayers, today they attend separate ones.

In spite of the divide, many respondents from both the Uzbek and Kyrgyz communities stressed that the holy month of Ramadan would be a good opportunity to start the reconciliation process. However, only a small percentage of respondents mentioned activities conducted by religious leaders, aimed at treating people's spiritual trauma and bringing together conflicting

parties. As respondents reported, some imams have been calling for forgiveness and friendship during Friday prayers.

As one of the steps toward building a dialogue, some communities have been planning to gather the conflicting parties and conduct *iftar*.<sup>17</sup> However, due to the economic hardships currently experienced in some communities, particularly those that suffered from fires, this initiative is somewhat problematic.

On the other hand, the research revealed a growing number of those who are confused by Islam's teachings. There were some who said, *"I don't have faith in this religion"* (woman, 47 years old, Aravan district, Osh region). Among women, particularly ethnic Kyrgyz, a deep frustration has arisen with the religion due to the fact that the mass violence started right after *Azan* [Islamic call to prayer]. A male interviewee points out *"... hajji<sup>18</sup> brutally killed two my friends who worked as policemen, after that I do not believe in a religion."* In conjunction with such strong statements, it should be noted that the majority of the population in the region does not know doctrinal Islam well; people typically follow "folk" Islam, which consists of traditions and rituals.

3.5 One third of the respondents noted that *no measures are currently being undertaken* in their communities *to reconcile conflicting parties*, and more than 37% are *not sure* whether such activities are occurring. However, 28.5% of those surveyed did notice efforts to bring people together. Thus, more than 16% of those who had noticed peace-building activities noted that the actions are being organized by *aiyl okmotu* [local village administration] and *elderly councils* in the form of meetings. In the course of the study, the team learned of several cases in which the heads of village administrations, in cooperation with elderly people, controlled the situation and did not let provocateurs destabilize the situation, for example in Uzgen and in some villages of Suzak rayon.

Among those who are taking measures to resolve the conflict are the head of the local/regional administration (14.5%), *aiyl baschy*, or head of the village (12%), and *El baschy*, or local leader (8%). There have been several reconciliation ceremonies organized by state officials involving animal sacrifice, invitations for elderly people from two conflicting parties, the exchange of national costumes, and a hugging ceremony. Many respondents consider such gatherings artificial and ineffective, and are convinced that they are just for show. One of the interviewees, a young man, said *"... All these reconciliations organized by officials are ostentation; only "official" ak-sakals [elderly men] were invited to mosques to pray together. It is not sincere, and hostility remains in people's hearts. I have both Uzbek and Kyrgyz friends and it is painful to see*

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17 Evening meal when Muslims break their fast during the holy month of Ramadan

18 A person performed pilgrimage to Mecca

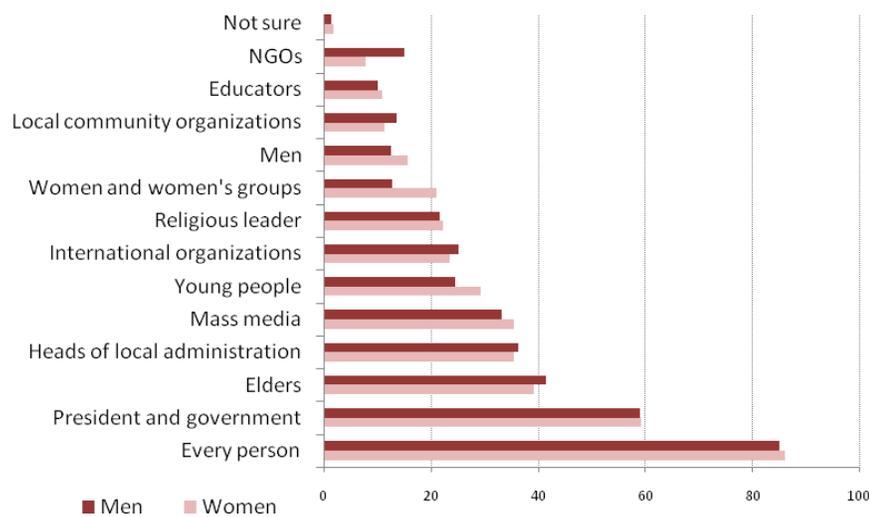
*how we are divided now. My two best friends, one Kyrgyz, the other Uzbek, were killed. It is young people who participated in and got killed during the violence. There is a need to bring youth together for peace, not the elderly...*" (in-depth interview, man, 19 years old, Osh).

Measures that have been suggested by respondents vary from "strengthening national ideology" and "punishing guilty parties," to statements like "trust will come with a new generation." Analysis of the responses shows that suggested measures for achieving reconciliation depend on the respondent's experience of the conflict and its level of impact.

The most frequently mentioned suggestions for how to begin a dialogue, rebuild trust, and build a stable peace are "call everyone to peace," "forgive each other," "start a dialogue," "promote unbiased and tolerant relations," "create a fair police," "attain stability on the state level," and "stop spreading rumors." Other important measures from the point of view of respondents are calls to "mix all ethnic groups and give them jobs," "local people should be kept busy with work," and "the state should be ruled by those who really work." In other words, people see resolution of the conflict in the solution of social and economic problems.

3.6 Analysis of the data allows us to distinguish three main groups on which the improvement of interethnic relations depends. As diagram 6 shows, the vast majority of respondents (85.5%) indicated that the improvement of relations depends first of all on *every person*; thus, respondents give a preference to themselves in the improvement of interethnic relations. On the central level, preference was given to the *President and the government* (59.2%). On the local level, a special place is given to the *elderly* (40.5%), *heads of local/regional administrations* (36%) and *religious leaders* (22%). According to respondents, *mass media* (34.5%) also plays a significant role in improving interethnic relations. More than 24% of respondents noted that improvement of interethnic relations will depend on *international organizations*.

Diagram 6. Who can help improve interethnic relations (%)



### 3. WOMEN AND WOMEN'S GROUPS IN CONFLICT AND PEACE BUILDING

4.1 The tragic June events proved that local non-governmental activists, especially women's organizations, served as an effective response mechanism to the needs of the people in a time of humanitarian crisis. By the third day of the violent conflict, civil society organizations were able to mobilize and establish two mobile groups to conduct a rapid needs assessment on the ground; to compile a list for aid distribution; to transport humanitarian aid (frequently risking their lives); to establish a monitoring system to make sure that all neighborhoods in need received food; and to assist the regional state administration in receiving emergency calls from inhabitants of the affected areas. This tragic event proved the potential, capability, and skills of local civil society organizations to work with communities in an unbiased manner and respond to the needs of people regardless of ethnic origin.<sup>19</sup> Thanks to international organizations' efforts to train and strengthen the capacity of non-governmental organizations, local activists have been able to react in a rapid and unbiased manner.

Owing to the impartial work of local women's organizations, our assessment team was able to visit and conduct interviews and focus-group discussions in both the Kyrgyz and Uzbek communities. According to respondents, local NGOs engaged in the unbiased distribution of humanitarian aid and provided practical help to vulnerable groups.

Overall, the study shows that local non-governmental and community-based organizations are excellent instruments for leading people-to-people diplomacy, dialogue, and mediation. Unlike government institutions and international development agencies, local civil society groups enjoy a trust among residents, serve as a bridge between the community and other stakeholders, voice the needs of vulnerable groups, and are able to transform positive ideas into action. After the conflict, sixteen local non-governmental organizations established a 'Regional Humanitarian Forum' (RHF) for a coordinated response to the needs of local people. Members of the Regional Humanitarian Forum are women's, human rights, youth, advocacy, and peace-building non-governmental organizations. The RHF calls for the active participation of local organizations in the process of reconstruction and reconciliation through the use of positive and constructive dialogue. However, many women's groups voiced the need to strengthen their capacity in peace building as well as in monitoring the situation for the prevention of violent conflict and for the mobilization of an early response. Women's groups expect help from the international community in terms of partnership, technical advice, and support in building peace and establishing conflict-prevention mechanisms in the region.

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<sup>19</sup> Report of the Regional Humanitarian Forum organized by 16 non-governmental organizations in Southern Kyrgyzstan, [www.advocacy.kg](http://www.advocacy.kg)

4.2 The survey results show that respondents support the participation of women in conflict-resolution and peace-building. According to the data, 17% of respondents believe that women's involvement will result in peaceful resolution, 8.5% think that it will ease tension, and 6.6% believe that the involvement of women will have no effect.

Women's involvement in decision-making is particularly crucial in times of crisis and instability. The data shows that only 22.5% of respondents believe that women do participate equally with men in the decision-making process at the local level. The main reason for the lack of women's participation is *inadequate representation of women in decision-making structures* (80.5%). Some respondents felt that there is a *low level of activity* by women at the community level (36.5%). One-third of respondents believe that the *lack of information* about opportunities to participate and express their opinions is another reason for women's unequal participation in decision-making.

The qualitative data suggests that women are excellent channels for transmitting ideas of peace, security, and reconciliation to family members and community fellows. The inadequate representation of women in decision-making structures, traditional and social norms, and the lack of information about opportunities create obstacles for women to take an active part in decision-making, and voicing the interests and needs of women and girls.

According to respondents distribution of humanitarian aid in the first days after the conflict has been mainly provided by men (47.2%) probably due to security reasons. However 38.3% of respondents indicated women as well. As for community service, respondents stressed that mainly women express the needs and interests of people in community meetings (27%) and often women's groups participate in resolving disputes in the community (23%). The proactive position of women at the community level gives a good opportunity to use the capacity of women in mediation, conflict prevention and resolution work at all levels. As known, women are the best channels for dissemination of ideas and actions across communities.

As one of the peace-building measures after the violent conflict, women activists initiated a national consultative meeting of women's non-governmental organizations within the framework of Global Open Day for Peace and Security. Consequently, women's organizations developed and submitted an Appeal to the United Nations Secretary-General and the United Nations Security Council calling on the government of Kyrgyzstan and member states to improve implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace, and security.

A number of respondents also mentioned that women played the *role of peacemakers and mediators* who tried to stop the violence during the conflict and called on young people not to get involved in the clashes. Respondents' reports and observations clearly illustrate that the role of women in the conflict was multiple. After the conflict, women played an important role in averting a humanitarian disaster (box 5).

*Box 5: Makhfuza, Head of Territorial Women's Council, Osh*

*Today, after the violence we face a lot of problems. In those dark days when our neighbors' and friends' houses were burned down, we certainly sheltered them. But time has passed, and almost several months have gone by and we feel that we have been forgotten. We are running out of humanitarian aid. People, mostly women and children, live in crowded conditions. The issue of hygiene and sanitation is acute. So it is an impossible situation. The state is obliged to provide us with protection and a dignified life. We have already seen that Uzbekistan does not need us. Our husbands and sons went to Russia and there they are not very successful with earnings. We keep our younger boys at home, as it is still dangerous outside. We are skillful in trade, but we cannot do it because we do not have places to trade. If the state does not solve our problems, a new social explosion may occur.*

*UNIFEM/part of UN Women "Coordinated response measures to victims of gender-based violence in Osh and Jalalabad" project.*

4.3 As a leader of women's youth group said "... *The NGO sector lacks a youth wing.*" The assessment shows that youth groups are underrepresented in community-based organizations and civil society groups (in-depth interview, Osh town). As the June conflict proved, the majority of participants in the violence were young males. It is well known that, due to age-specific characteristics, youth can form and be involved in both positive and negative social movements and ideologies. Today as never before it is time to involve and channel the energy of young women and men in a positive way in order to help them realize their dreams, aspirations, and hopes.

#### 4. NEED FOR INFORMATION

5.1 Various social and ethnic groups in society possess different information and interpret it in their own way, which in turn influences the behavior of the group. The more information people receive, particularly in times of such great turmoil, the more coordinated and collaborative the work of all stakeholders will be on the road to reconciliation and peace-building. A lack of information, especially as regards recovery programs and the distribution of humanitarian aid, creates more distrust, confusion, tension, and misunderstanding. The study revealed that inhabitants of Osh and Jalal-Abad regions lack information from the government about recovery and stabilization strategies, as well as information from the international community about the provision of assistance. The lack of information stimulates the spread of various rumors, creates tension between groups, generates panic and anxiety, and finally strengthens distrust. Mass media coverage was constantly and harshly criticized by all respondents. Information on national and local TV and in newspapers has been characterized by the Uzbek ethnic minority as unreliable, as having a nationalist bent, and as depicting Kyrgyz as the only victims of the conflict. In addition, Uzbek respondents expressed the necessity of restoring the “Osh TV” channel, in order to have at least one platform from which to voice their opinions, interests, and needs to a wider public and the government. At the same time, Kyrgyz respondents are unhappy with both local and international mass media coverage of the conflict. They feel that local media coverage is disturbing, divisive, and that it continues to remind viewers about the period of violence. As for the international media, respondents strongly believe that it portrays a one-sided depiction of Uzbeks as the only victims. The Kyrgyz have a strong need to publicize the fact that both sides were the victims of cruel manipulation.

The most popular source of information regardless of gender and ethnicity is *television* (85% of women and 85.2% of men). *Newspapers* (38.8% of women and 41.2% of men) were indicated as the next most popular source of information. More than one-third of respondents pointed out that *neighbors, friends, and relatives* are a source of information. It seems that the information provided by relatives, friends, and neighbors helps compensate for the lack of information from official sources.

5.2 Rumors are playing a big role in generating feelings of insecurity among the population. As a rule rumors are disseminated by in-person conversations or by mobile phone. During the assessment, respondents narrated a number of different “stories” of threats, fears of terrible kidnapping, and illegal arrests cases. These rumors are playing a very disturbing role in the stabilization of the situation, since rumors lead to tension, and tension leads to violence. In order to stop rumors from spreading, central and local government and law-enforcement bodies must provide the public with timely and reliable information about intentions, policies, and measures to stabilize the situation in the region.

More timely and reliable information could ease the situation and provide grounds for recovery and reconciliation. People's increasing level of awareness will result in better access to resources and the assistance that international organizations and the government are providing. Reliable, timely, and transparent information will play an important role in establishing positive public opinion and become a first step toward building trust between conflicting parties.

5.3 The research revealed the top three most needed areas of information by the population in the region. More than half of women and men expressed the desire to know more about possible *mechanisms and tools for conflict prevention and peace building*. It seems that the recent violent conflict proved to people that they needed to rely on themselves because there were no prevention and response mechanisms in place. The need for information on conflict-prevention tools proves the necessity of launching projects directed to strengthening the capacity of local civil society organizations in conflict-prevention activities with further dissemination of knowledge among community-based organizations. In addition, it is urgently necessary for the government, in partnership and cooperation with civil society and international organizations, to establish early warning and early response systems.

Next, respondents would like to know more about *human rights*, as was pointed out by 44.3% of women and 61% of men during the survey. A gender difference is visible in the numbers, probably due to high levels of human rights violations towards men by various forces. Finally, information is needed about *"to whom to turn for help in instances of violence"* (40.7% of women and 36.7% of men). An ethnic breakdown demonstrates that the need for information about *"to whom to turn for help"* is more prevalent among Uzbek (38.7%) in comparison with Kyrgyz (28.3%). The difference might be explained by the absence of a protection system for all people, but especially for ethnic minorities, from violence. All three categories of "necessary information" directly reflect the reality and problems faced by local people.

45.4% of women, compared with 19.3% of men, are interested in information about the *human rights of women*. The survey data shows that *women's human rights* is an issue of interest to 25-45 year old women. It is likely that this age group's high level of interest is directly connected with the fact that this is the age when women get married, and start families. Focus groups with Uzbek and Kyrgyz youth revealed that young women and men would like to know more about *human rights* and *mechanisms of conflict prevention*. In addition, youth expressed curiosity about activities of the newly established Ministry of Youth Affairs. Specifically, young people would like to know about its strategy, plans, and activities.

5.4 Television is the most popular channel of information. Thus, 76.3% of respondents, both females and males, expressed a desire to receive information through television. More than one third of women and men would like to learn more about conflict-prevention tools and human rights issues through participation in seminars and training sessions. One of the advantages to conducting seminars and training sessions is that people have a chance to communicate with each other directly, share information, and learn more about issues of interest. In addition, said

it was observed that women and youth in particular need a platform from which to share their experiences of the conflict in order to ease anxiety and trauma. The least number of respondents (9% of women and 11.7%) would like to get necessary information via booklets, pamphlets, and brochures. There is a gender difference in the preference for radio as one of the sources of information. Thus, 29% of women favored radio compared to 21.9% of men. The Internet was mentioned by 11.7% of women and 13.6% of men.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

The assessment shows that society is divided along ethnic lines as a result of the violence that erupted in June 2010. The situation, with regard to personal security, is acute; respondents reported that they feel unsafe in the streets, markets, public buildings, and even at home.

The level of extreme nationalism is increasing; it can be observed on all levels and in both communities. Nationalism and corruption are adversely affecting the human rights situation. The assessment shows that the human security issue has deteriorated, with frequent reports of illegal arrests, threats, intimidation, extortion, and discrimination along ethnic lines. There is a high level of distrust (with variable intensity depending on the group) toward law-enforcement and national security forces, the central government, regional authorities, and mass media.

An unstable and insecure human rights situation is forcing many men of productive age to leave the country, particularly from Uzbek communities. There are also a number of reports about the migration of young Kyrgyz families to Russia. An inadequate and confusing response to the needs of women and men, particularly returnees and victims of violence, in rebuilding their houses, reopening businesses, and restoring personal and property documents is causing uncertainty, hopelessness, and stress. The assessment revealed that the high level migration by men greatly affects women's ability to obtain the necessary documents for rebuilding houses from the appropriate state agency. The reason is the established custom in patriarchal families to register all property in the name of man.

As a result of the absence of the proper protection mechanisms on the part of the state to protect against human rights violations and threats of violence, women from Uzbek communities have organized check points, so-called "life gates" designed to protect their sons and husbands from arbitrary arrests, intimidation, and threats. As for traditional protection mechanisms from violence against women, the preferred method of getting help is to refer to parents and relatives, while men refer to friends and relatives. According to the survey, physical, psychological, and sexual violence against women increased considerably during the conflict, when compared to pre-conflict levels. The increased number of reported incidents involving sexual violence might indicate that *sexual violence* was used as a deliberate tactic during the conflict. Many respondents share the opinion that women, youth, and the population in general were victims of violence, particularly *psychological violence*. The assessment shows that crisis centers can be an effective instrument for providing assistance to women affected by violence. However the current conflict also revealed that the crisis centers need to be strengthened both in the perspectives of enhancement of human resources and budgetary support from the government.

The conflict has greatly impacted the ability of women to generate income. The assessment revealed that women from rural communities are facing difficulties in traveling around neighborhoods and city markets to sell their agricultural products as they used to do before the conflict. Local farmers face difficulties in accessing seeds and resources for land cultivation, due to closed borders with Uzbekistan. In addition, rural women and men have lost the ability to sell their harvest and generate income, because harvest delivery centers were destroyed. In general, many young people, women and men have been left without access to jobs, as a result of destroyed businesses and infrastructure.

There is division among the respondents in terms of the initiation of platforms for dialogue and reconciliation. Both of the conflicting parties have expressed a sense of victimhood, the desire to find a party to blame and punish. Indeed, after such a bloody and atrocious conflict, it might be idealistic to speak about restoring mutual trust at this point. Memories of the violence are still fresh, and people are suffering from severe shock and stress, irrespective of gender, ethnicity, or age. Houses, buildings, and businesses that have been destroyed and burnt down are still visible reminders of the recent brutality.

Nevertheless, the results of this assessment demonstrate the willingness of women and men to move on to restore and reintegrate their social and economic ties with each other. Moreover, there are small steps toward reconciliation, dialogue-building, and peace initiated by local authorities, religious leaders, and women's groups. We can see the promotion of interethnic tolerance and acceptance of each other's right to coexist, which may step by step lead to mutual trust and harmony.

The most urgent needs and gaps identified through the survey can be enlisted as follows:

- There is no mechanism or system in place to prevent violent conflict and mobilize early response. The tragic June events proved that the country lacks a strategy, system, and partnership for working with conflict effectively. The absence of a mechanism negatively affects the well-being of citizens and fails to respond to the needs of the people in times of crisis
- There is no mechanism to provide protection for women and girls from physical, mental, economic, and sexual violence before, during, and after conflict. According to the survey, physical, psychological, and sexual violence against women increased considerably during the conflict, when compared to pre-conflict levels.
- There is a need for more attention to solutions for providing personal security for the population to conduct livelihood activities. Personal security and safety on the streets, public places and at home will positively affect the interethnic relations within society.
- There is a gap in providing reliable and timely information. The lack of information about strategies, approaches, and responses to socioeconomic recovery needs on the

part of the government and international organizations creates uncertainty and misery, especially among those who lost their loved ones, houses, and means to earn a living.

- There is no platform from which women, youth, ethnic minorities, and disadvantaged populations can voice their needs and interests after the conflict. Due to fear and personal security concerns, women and men, particularly from Uzbek communities, lack a platform from which to express their needs, views, and interests. The problem is that due to distrust in law-enforcement bodies, the central and local authorities, and mass media, ethnic minorities are unable to voice their concerns amid the current crisis. In addition, dissatisfaction has been expressed toward representatives of the central government for showing a lack of interest in the needs and problems of direct victims of the violent conflict, particularly ethnic minorities.
- There is a gap in the response to the restoration of returnees' personal property. Restoration of personal property, such as furniture, refrigerators, clothes, and even underwear, lacks proper attention. Humanitarian agencies and government bodies are focusing mainly on rebuilding houses, with little success. There is no visible evidence of progress. The majority of female respondents are concerned with this issue.
- The lack of psychological support for the population, particularly women, children, and youth, was reported constantly. Despite efforts by international organizations, there is still a lack of efficient psychological help for the population, especially those from conflict-affected areas. As a result of the lack of qualified psychological support, women and men, especially those who witnessed violence, are referring to local healers in hopes of decreasing anxiety, stress, and constant fear. Locals call the treatment "*Jyrok kotorot*," which is literally translated as "*uplift of heart*."
- Another gap is the lack of response to the needs of young women and men. Youth is considered the social group most affected by the conflict, especially those who witnessed violence firsthand. If vulnerable groups, such as women, the disabled, and ethnic minorities, have received at least some attention, the youth has largely been overlooked. The study revealed that young people are suffering from great psychological stress; many young men in particular have reported that they "*saw death*," "*my friend was killed in front of me*," "*I have been a hostage...*," "*I have anxiety*," and the list goes on. Along with psychological help, young women and men need personal security, housing, access to jobs, and healthcare. In addition, it is very important to provide equal opportunities for young women and men in peace, ethnic tolerance, and conflict resolution education.
- There is a gap in revealing and responding to the needs of young widowed women with children who, as a consequence of the increased practice of unofficial marriage, lost access to humanitarian aid and housing. With the revival of traditional and

religious practices, many people get married by religious ceremony without official registration in state agencies. Thus, in the course of the assessment, the team encountered at least three cases of young women, widowed as a result of conflict, who had been thrown out, along with their children, by their in-laws. In addition to having a housing problem, these women have been excluded from humanitarian aid and other assistance, particularly that which is provided by the government. For housing, widowed women turn for help to their relatives, who initially help them out of pity, but whose help will not last long. There is a need for humanitarian agencies to identify such a category of women and provide help to their children, and help them acquire skills for conducting economic activities.

- There is urgent need to build the capacity through peace education training for civil servants, and social workers for conflict-sensitive, equal, and effective service for the people. The need for knowledge and skills in the field of conflict prevention, interethnic tolerance, equality, and non-violent conflict resolution has been expressed by representatives of state agencies and social workers, and those who directly work with people such as public servants, medical workers, and teachers.
- There is a strong need to build the capacity of local women's and other non-governmental organizations for effective participation and collaboration with state agencies and international organizations working toward early recovery and reconciliation. Local civil society groups need technical assistance from international organizations in establishing a system of monitoring and evaluation, and peace education, for example. A strong civil society is necessary for establishing a dialogue between all stakeholders and building sustainable peace. Today, non-governmental organizations in the Osh and Jalal-Abad regions expressed a need for technical support in establishing a monitoring and evaluation system, in order to ensure an effective response from state institutions, in particular from the State Directorate for the Reconstruction and Development of the Cities of Osh and Jalal-Abad.

## 7. RECOMMENDATIONS

The complexity of June's violent conflict and the current volatile situation on the ground demands the application of the holistic, multifaceted, coordinated, and partnered approach of all stakeholders in the resolution of the causes of the conflict and in building a sustainable peace.

Based on the assessment's findings, and considering the provisions of UN Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820, as well as CEDAW, aimed at the promotion of equal participation of women in decision-making and highlighting the important role of women in peace-building, conflict prevention and resolution, as well as the protection of women and girls from violence, the following recommendations were developed for addressing identified needs and entry points for establishing dialogue and reconciliation.

### **1. Ensuring security of women and children in gender sensitive early recovery and reconciliation. necessary measures for coordination and cooperation between relevant organizations**

- The primary responsibility of the state is guaranteeing the security of each citizen and the state. Reformed security and military sectors, with inclusive ethnic and gender representation, for timely, effective, equal, and accountable provision of security for individuals, communities, and the country, with direct subordination to the central government, are needed.
- As a short-term measure in response to the security needs of individuals, it is recommended that a wide awareness-raising campaign be launched, with positive messages about the importance of mutual respect and responsibility for maintaining security and peace, , with a strong message about the significance of tolerant interaction of all ethnic groups for keeping the peace for socioeconomic development and political stability in the region.
- Set up hotlines and public information centers where every individual may complain and report unlawful behavior such as threats, intimidation or extortion, and discrimination along ethnic, gender, or any other lines. Be sure to identify and keep accountable publicly those, in particular law-enforcement and military officers, who violate human rights, discriminate on the basis of ethnicity, or disobey the code of conduct.
- Along with the support of crisis centers, it is strongly recommended that mobile clinics and hotline services be set up for the provision of medical assistance for women, particularly survivors of gender-based violence, both in conflict-affected areas and remote villages, to ensure equal response to the medical needs of women from different ethnic groups.

- To establish national and regional mechanisms for the prevention of violent conflict and work with conflict effectively. One such mechanism might be early warning and response systems, which heavily depend on the effective collaboration, partnership, and active support of a multitude of participants, but with a strong sense of local ownership. Local authorities, citizens, and community leaders must be capable of taking appropriate early action at the first signs of potential threat.
- To establish one coherent, well-coordinated and subordinated response system, inside of the seven new aid bodies set up by the government. This system should be able to provide effective gender- and ethnic-sensitive responses to needs, transparent, reliable, and consistent information about funds, planned and on-going reconstruction efforts, and collaboratively partner with international and civil society organizations.
- To conduct a wide campaign with information about on-going measures for the reconstruction of Osh and Jalal-Abad and surrounding regions, so that every individual of the region is aware of where and what kind of houses are being built; when, how, and under what conditions loans to rebuild houses are given; where victims can get information about or aid in the restoration of possessions.
- To provide government sponsored financial compensation for direct victims of the violent conflict, particularly those who lost family members, the injured, the disabled, and those who lost houses, possessions, and businesses.

## **2. Integration of gender issues in social-economic recovery programmes and plans**

- To accelerate the process of aid for addressing needs of women, men, children, and youth, the disabled, and the elderly in conflict area. Specifically, rebuild houses, restore identification and property documents free of charge, and reopen markets and destroyed businesses, so that women, men, and youth will be able to generate income.
- To organize construction teams to help rebuild houses for families left without a laborforce, and particularly to assist the elderly, disabled, and single women with young children.
- To organize mobile passport and property registration offices for the free and rapid replacement of identity and property documents for the affected population. There is a need to involve local non-governmental organizations. For example, in one of the districts of Osh, about 100 passports were renewed with the assistance of local NGOs.

- To improve the mechanism of distributing humanitarian aid and establish a system of monitoring to ensure equal provision of aid to the most needy segments of society, such as single women, children, the elderly, and the disabled. This measure is necessary for an effective response in case of food insecurity and hunger during the winter and spring time.
- To set up public information centers in each of the most affected communities, or use existing public administrations for providing reliable information about reconstruction efforts and humanitarian aid. In addition, public information centers would be a good opportunity for marginalized groups to voice their problems and needs.
- To organize agro-centers for the collection of the harvest with a fair price for agricultural products, particularly for cotton, to ensure that rural women and men may generate income to survive the winter with relative confidence. The provision of security will allow farmers to continue collecting the harvest and selling it in the local markets.
- To develop and support projects that concentrate on micro-enterprises and small business development. Economic projects particularly oriented toward female-headed households, and youth could greatly help in the promotion of interethnic cooperation, mutual tolerance, and understanding. Along with traditional social reconciliation programs, economic interventions will assist in capitalizing on shared economic interests and provide an impetus for social reconciliation.

### **3. Ensuring women's participation in conflict prevention, resolution and post-conflict recovery**

- Women's, human rights, and other civil society organizations should play an important role in the development and monitoring the policy of the security sector, by articulating real needs of different groups, and developing recommendations on norms for the functioning of security forces, and providing input for security policy development.
- To provide legal and humanitarian support for widowed women with children who have been abandoned by in-laws as a result of the conflict. Women's civil society and human rights organizations could play a key role in providing protection and assistance to this category of women.
- To create *Peace working groups* with representation from women's and youth groups, human rights organizations, and community leaders and other interested groups, with a balanced representation of various ethnic groups, particularly conflicting ones. Peace working groups could be an open channel of communication by providing a platform for discussions, the expression of interests, and the generation of dialogue for further reconciliation.

- To enhance the capacity of local non-governmental organizations and community-based organizations to engage in grassroots, people-to-people dialogues and the establishment of a mediator's network at the community level. It is important to maintain an equal share of women, youth, and representatives of various ethnic groups for bringing the perspectives and interests of all segments of society to the table, building sustainable trust, and seeing each party's points of view.
- To enhance the capacity of and raise awareness among women's, youth, advocacy, and other civil society organizations about existing global documents such as UN Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820, which empower women's equal participation in decision-making, highlighting the role of women in peace-building efforts, conflict prevention and resolution, as well as the protection of women and girls from all types of gender-based violence.
- To develop and adopt a National Action Plan, including monitoring indicators as a response to the implementation of UN Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820 on women, peace, and security, with the aim of involving women and encouraging their participation in establishing dialogue, peaceful initiative, conflict prevention, and resolution.

#### **4. Strengthening capacity and accountability of state, non-government and international organizations for promoting equal rights and opportunities for women and men in early recovery and reconciliation process**

- International organizations are recommended to empower civil society groups seeking to play a greater role in monitoring and holding the government and security agencies accountable in security policy implementation through handbooks and educational training.
- Conduct intensive education training and seminars for military, law-enforcement, and security officers on the issues of rule of law, ethnic tolerance, gender sensitivity, human rights, non-violence, conflict prevention, and conflict resolution. For effective implementation of educational seminars it is advisable to involve local non-governmental organizations together with respected retired officers. There was a good experience with the training of law-enforcement officers by local women's non-governmental organizations on the prevention of and response to domestic violence, and the implementation of the law against domestic violence in communities.
- To establish a reward and motivation system for excellent service, not only for top-level officers but also for associate officers who serve on the ground.
- To adequately fund and develop high-quality trainers for the promotion of peace education and activities for various stakeholders, including teachers of secondary schools, schools and university students, state officials and public servants, law-enforcement agencies, leaders of communities, local state authorities, community-based organizations, NGOs, youth, local

businesspeople, local and national mass media, and other stakeholders. Examples of peace-building activities include: a review of existing legislation and policies inventory of curriculum and training materials, and the introduction of peace and conflict resolution education, support forums, seminars and conferences, share knowledge, practices and expertise.

- International organizations are advised to provide technical expertise in the process of developing infrastructure for peace education and conflict prevention, but international development organizations should remain unbiased toward conflicting parties and be aware of peculiarities of the local context.
- To establish effective partnerships with international development agencies for the successful establishment and implementation of early warning and early response systems. For example, UN agencies may provide technical and methodological expertise to national partners, as well as help in resource mobilization. For instance, UNDP and UN Women already have expertise in early warning systems.
- To build the capacity of civil society organizations, local state authorities and local communities, to establish and ensure functioning of early warning and early response systems, as a platform for multi-stakeholder dialogues.
- To encourage civil society to partner with local businesses in establishing dialogue, mediation, and conflict prevention activities. Local businesses have well-developed networks, skills, and some resources, which will bring positive outcomes in the promotion of mediation and dialogue for peace and reconciliation.
- To conduct educational seminars and training with journalists of print and electronic media on issues of interethnic tolerance, sense of nation-state, peace and stability in the country.
- To develop expertise in preparing and broadcasting television programs devoted to reconciliation between ethnic groups, and building dialogue and peace. Particularly, there is an urgent need to develop youth programs for peace, tolerance, and trust.

## ANNEXES

## Annex 1

## Methodology of the assessment

To ensure the quality of information gathered, both qualitative and quantitative methods were used in the study: a survey, focus-group discussions, observation, and individual in-depth interviews. The assessment was conducted in close collaboration and partnership with local women's non-governmental organizations "Ensan-Diamond," "The Association of Women Leaders of Jalal-Abad" and the "Community Development Alliance." Additionally, twelve interviewers from the network of monitors established by UNIFEM's "Gender Dimensions of Early Warning and Conflict Prevention in the Ferghana Valley" project (2005-2006) were involved in conducting the survey.

In order to collect quantitative information, a survey was conducted in twelve sites around the Osh and Jalal-Abad areas. In total, 519 persons were surveyed—303 in Osh and 216 in Jalal-Abad areas. For a more accurate representation of viewpoints, shares based on gender and ethnicity were taken into account in determining the sampling. The gender share consists of 255 women (49.5%) and 264 men (50.9%). As for ethnic representation, according to the Kyrgyz National Statistics Committee in Osh and Jalal-Abad regions, 60% of the population is ethnic Kyrgyz, 30% is ethnic Uzbek, and 10% is of another nationality. In this regard, the survey encompassed 335 (64.5%) Kyrgyz, 160 (30.8%) Uzbek, and 24 representatives of other ethnic groups (5.3%). As for age range, 28.1% of respondents were 18-35 years old, 51.4% were 36-55 years old, and 20% were 56 and older.

In total, eleven focus-group discussions were conducted with women and men of different ages, and professional and social backgrounds; six were conducted in Osh and five in Jalal-Abad and surrounding areas. Focus-groups allowed the assessment team to gather a wide range of opinions about the current socio-economic situation and issues of security, peace, and reconciliation. Due to the high level of interests among participants, focus-group discussions expanded to larger numbers than envisaged; at some sites about forty participants attended the focus-group.

Individual interviews were conducted with key informants: representatives of government institutions, civil society organizations, international agencies, law-enforcement, community/village leaders, ethnic minorities, youth, the religious community, small business, and educators. Altogether, twenty seven in-depth interviews were conducted in Osh and Jalal-Abad regions, as well as in Bishkek, during the assessment.

The twelve interviewers involved in conducting the survey provided observation notes in which they shared their impressions and feelings about situation of communities, as well as about women in particular.

## AREAS COVERED BY THE ASSESSMENT

Community	Method
Osh Area	
Cheremushki, Osh	Focus-group discussion, survey, in-depth interview, observation
Territorial district-7, Osh	Focus-group discussion, survey, observation
Navoi Str., Osh	Survey, observation
Sharq, Osh	Focus-group discussion, survey, in-depth interview, observation
Osh (various locations)	In-depth interviews, observation
Furkat, Kara-Suu district	Focus-group discussion, survey, in-depth interview, observation
Kaarman, Kara-Suu district	Focus-group discussion, survey, observation
Gulbaar, Aravan district	Focus-group discussion, survey, in-depth interview, observation
Kenesh, Kara-Kulja district	Focus-group discussion, survey, in-depth interview
Jalal-Abad Area	
Jalal-Abad (various locations)	Survey, focus-group discussion, in-depth interview, observation
Oktyabr, Suzak district	Focus-group discussion, survey, in-depth interview, observation
Tash-Bulak, Suzak district	Focus-group discussion, in-depth interview, observation
Yrys, Suzak district	Focus-group discussion, in-depth interview
Bazar-Korgon, Bazar-Korgon district	Survey, focus-group discussion, in-depth interview
Masy, Nooken district	Focus-group discussion, survey, observation
Ala-Buka, Ala-Buka district	Survey, observation
Kerben, Aksy district	Survey, observation