

*European Conference Report*

**Honour Related Violence  
within a Global Perspective:  
Mitigation and Prevention in Europe**

*Stockholm*

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# Preface

Honour related violence (HRV) has come to manifest itself more clearly in Europe during the last decade. It includes honour killings, forced marriages, early marriages, and honour based violence of predominantly males against females. The European Union (EU) has set gender equality as one of its primary goals. Many girls and women today all over Europe are subjected to discrimination and violence within their families and community settings. However, the recognition and the level of awareness about honour related violence vary between the countries.

The key objective for holding a European conference in Stockholm was to exchange knowledge and experience between the European countries as well as gaining insight from work in different countries in the Middle East. It also aimed to place the Swedish and the European problems concerning HRV in a global context and to co-ordinate and ensure more effective national and transnational work against HRV in Europe. Concrete outputs we hoped to achieve were to adopt an action plan for the future European agenda, and to highlight examples of good practice from various parts of Europe, which succeeded.

This conference is part of two initiatives to combat HRV within EU-funded projects that Kvinnoforum co-ordinates with partners from eight countries; New Scotland Yard and Change, UK, TransAct, the Netherlands, Papatya and Terre de Femmes, Germany, Mannerheim Child Foundation, Finland, Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies, Cyprus, Bulgarian Gender Research Foundation, Bulgaria, Fundacion Mujeres, Spain and Institute of Equality, Greece. Another example of this work is a conference on honour killings in June of this year held in collaboration with the Metropolitan Police Service at EUROPOL's Headquarters in the Hague. This led to the establishment of a network of senior police officers from 20 member states.

The ambition with this report was partly to document as much of the knowledge and experiences exchanged during the conference as possible in order for those who were unable to attend to take part of this exchange. We also hope that it serve as a tool and inspiration for the future work in Europe and internationally against violence in the name of honour.

During the conference a plan of action was produced for Europe to combat HRV. The plan of action was named the Stockholm Declaration. It can be found at the end of this report and constitutes an efficient tool for the future work in the member states and transnationally.

Bam Björling  
President  
Kvinnoforum

Sherin A. Saadallah  
Executive Director for  
International Development  
Kvinnoforum

Johanna Förberg  
Project Manager  
Intercultural Department  
Kvinnoforum



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**Thursday 7 October  
Opening, Introduction and Plenary  
Session I**





## Welcome by Bam Björling, president of Kvinnoforum

Your Majesty, honourable speakers and colleagues of this conference,

Together with our European partners New Scotland Yard and Change, UK, TransAct, the Netherlands, Papatya and Terre de Femmes, Germany, Mannerheim Child Foundation, Finland, Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies, Cyprus, Bulgarian Gender Research Foundation, Bulgaria, Fundacion Mujeres, Spain and Institute of Equality, Greece, I want to say welcome to two days of intensive sharing and work to make mitigation and prevention of honour related violence in Europe more effective and transnational. The aim of our conference is to increase awareness, knowledge, actions, and strategies; interdisciplinary as well as international co-operation to reduce and prevent honour related violence. Hence we have gathered several of the world's most knowledgeable and drivande activists, researchers and debaters on the topic honour related violence.

Throughout these two days we will be guided by Anita Gradin, former EU-Commissioner, and Minister of justice, integration and labour in Sweden. The programme is based on all the conference participants' active input and contribution in workshops and plenaries, which will be given a frame by the speakers' short expert introductions. The work with mitigation and prevention in Europe is put in a gender perspective and a global context.

We will take some important steps forward, but to be able to step forward, we have to look backwards. I once wrote a paper for a UN conference with the title "Backwards towards the future". And if we look at this specific issue, I want to remind you, how it was in Sweden about twelve years ago. At the time, Kvinnoforum was very alone working with this issue. Why did we start working with issues of honour related violence, you might wonder. The answer to that is that we were working with different projects in the Middle East. There the problem was obvious and visible, but at the time we did not realise that this problem was to be found in Sweden, as well as in many other European countries. Most people did not realise or did not want to admit to this. When young girls, virtually, started to make themselves visible on our doorstep, we had to deal with these issues, e.g. girls came for protection or teachers came and told about girls that disappeared, was forced into marriage etc.

And then, six years ago, there was a young girl, Sara, up north who was stabbed to death by her brother. When this happened we arranged a manifestation here in Stockholm, and we sent out information about it through all our networks, Kvinnoforum has networks at all levels and in all arenas in the Swedish society. At the manifestation there was only one Swedish man and a handful of Swedish women that participated, but there were plenty of immigrant women and men that took part that time.

A few years later Kvinnoforum held the so-called "Fadime seminar", together with some of our co-operation partners in Sweden. At this point honour related violence was beginning to become a visible issue in Sweden. At this occasion we focused mainly on the young girls' situation. Fadime, the young girl that was murdered by her father almost three years ago was unrevealed guest speaker at our conference.

This time we will try to broaden our framework, and also recognise other types of problems in relation to honour related violence. At the conference mentioned earlier, I had Fadime Sahindal as a speaker, she was not announced in the program, she was there secretly. Today we have Jack, sitting here, representing the same kind of speaker, because we also want to look upon the boys' and young men's situation, which is another perspective that we really want to make this floor open to on this conference and all over Europe.

Four days before Fadime was murdered by her father, she called me because she was on her way abroad. For those of you who haven't heard of Fadime yet, I want to say she was a very brave young girl that for many years was threatened by her family, her father, her mother, her brother, her sisters, her cousins, and many others in her surrounding. This for two reasons: because she had a Swedish boyfriend and because she had chosen to educate herself. Four days before she was killed she phoned me, and she was at that time around 500 km from her hometown, and she said, "I'm going back to my hometown to see my sister and mother, because I'll be away from Sweden for six months and I want to say goodbye to one of my sisters". She had contact with one of her sisters. "And I love my mother, so I want to say goodbye to my mother." That was her destiny, because it was probably her mother who then told her father of her whereabouts and it was her father that later killed her during that visit. This is why we have to broaden up the framework in order to understand the mechanisms of this very complex issue. To use the Swedish model for understanding domestic violence, with men as perpetrators is not enough. In Sweden and Europe we have to learn from feminist researchers and activists in the Middle East that have discussed methods and more complex theories about honour related violence. We can and have to learn from each other to be able to deal with mitigation and prevention of honour related violence as well as care and treatment for the victims and perpetrators.

The victims are mostly girls, but also boys. Using a gender perspective we will find that both young girls and boys are socialised and forced into a concept of honour related violence and therefore even the perpetrators in some aspects are victims and need to be involved in preventive measures if we really want change.

We also want to understand the Swedish situation and the European situation from a global perspective. That is why during these two days we also have speakers with experience of honour related violence in different ways; researchers, authors and debaters, from other parts of the world.

The outcome of this conference will be;

1. a documentation of the situation of the situation in Europe in a global and gender perspective
2. a European agenda for action

Anita Gradin will now present the background and the aim for this conference more in detail and once again: Welcome!

## Opening speech by HE Ambassador Anita Gradin

*Your Majesty, Dear Colleagues,*

We are gathered here today to commemorate several issues of importance to Europe and the global family of nations worldwide. We are gathered to mark a new beginning in addressing important problems that still dis-empower and affect women after nearly ten years from Beijing. By the end of this year, it has been 10 years since governments adopted the Beijing Declaration and Platform of action, agreeing to become proactive in changing legislation that affect gender equality, the status of women, and all forms of discrimination against women. At the conclusion of such a decade, we need to re-examine some of the issues of concern that have come to arise globally, as well as regionally within Europe. One such issue is honour related violence.

There have been many developments, global political frameworks, declarations and resolutions that can be used as tools to support girls, young women and women as well as boys and men who live with the reality of honour related violence. The United Nations has issued important resolutions, for instance, Resolution 55/66 from 2001 that calls upon nations to 'work towards the elimination of crimes against women committed in the name of honour'. A United Nations Secretary General Report from 2003 reconfirmed the need for global efforts to eliminate such violence and crimes. On the European level, the EU Parliamentary Assembly has issued a report highlighting and encouraging European efforts to address the incidence of such crimes.

The reality today, is that honour related violence is not a geographically prescribed type of violence. Due to Globalization, immigration and greater influx of localized cultures – European societies are today facing similar concerns shared by social movements in different parts of the world. Honour related violence and honour killings is a reality for us today in Europe. It has also become a concern of deep ramification to democratic Europe, and the status of human and women rights in general. It is timely for us to question its legitimacy. Democracy, human rights, and gender equality, is the answer and the key to address such a phenomenon. All of us have the right to live in a safe and supportive environment.

Honour related violence has also raised debate over issues such as integration, social inclusion versus exclusion, gender and culture, just to name a few. It is important that these issues are discussed from a perspective that holds principles of human rights, social and gender justice as basis.

### **So, what has been done?**

First of all, Europe has just begun to address these issues.

Sweden has been proactive in discussing honour related violence and crimes and made an impact on the European efforts. The EU has extended support to European organizations for a co-ordinated, and effective, civil society response.

Kvinnoforum is one of these organisations. As a Swedish international NGO, engaged in gender equality, gender justice and gender and development in Sweden and internationally, Kvinnoforum has taken important steps to highlight and address the issue of honour related violence through a variety of inter-linked initiatives. This International Conference is one initiative, linked to two EU-funded projects dealing specifically with mitigating honour related violence. Through the project entitled "Shehrazad" – whose name comes from a very brave girl in the fairytale "A Thousand and One Nights", Kvinnoforum cooperates with four European organizations to develop methods for collaborating and advocating against honour

related violence. These organisations are here today: Terre des Femmes (Germany), Fundacion Mujeres (Spain), Change (UK), and Institute of Equality (Greece).

Further, Kvinnoforum is working together with partners to map the incidence of the different forms of honour-violence in Europe. The project represents a European cooperation that includes organisations, social services, research institutions and law enforcement. Sweden is working together with the Mannerheim Child Foundation (Finland), Metropolitan Police Service/New Scotland Yard (UK), TransAct (the Netherlands), Bulgarian Gender Research Foundation (Bulgaria), Papatya (Germany) and the Mediteranean Institute for Gender Studies (Cyprus). The organisations are also represented here today and here today and this collaboration will result in a comprehensive resource tool.

Kvinnoforum also engages in grass-root initiatives. Through the project "Sherpa" which means pathfinder in Nepalese, Kvinnoforum supports and strengthens young women with immigrant background to enter the Swedish labour market. These young women are helped to develop their own CVs, something that might seem elementary but has proven to be incredibly important. The women are given tools to show their strengths and to make reality of their opportunities.

In another national project, "Flera Kulturer, Ett Liv" which translates to "Several Cultures, One Life", Kvinnoforum works with boys and girls, helping them discuss gender roles, sexuality and structures of power with a basis in their cultural backgrounds. Teachers and school staff are sensitized on how to deal with young girls and women who might be exposed to honour norms, or live under its control. Teachers are supported in detection and reaction without presenting judgements, to become aware of the realities many young women and young men face.

Based on the numerous experiences related to addressing this issue, the most important purpose of this conference is to create transparent and effective forms of co-operation between all actors necessary for the work against honour related violence, in Sweden and in Europe. The first objective of the conference is to share experiences, knowledge and strategies to work on these important issues, we will widen the perspective by addressing the European context through a global lens. The second objective is to set the stage for a discussion that bring in perspectives from both girls and boys and young men and women, in addition, to touching on how men and women can participate, perpetuate and facilitate honour related violence. The final aim of the conference is to form a European network for this work; where ethnic minority organisations, women's organisations, human rights organisations, and other civil society units, research institutes, authorities and politicians, police and the legal system can find ways to facilitate co-operation and co-ordination.

I have the honour to open this International Conference, and to highlight the important task ahead. A task that holds human rights, social and gender justice as its most valuable norms. Once again Sweden, and Kvinnoforum, is proud to lead this important journey of empowerment and democratic awareness for the citizens of Europe and the global village.

## Evelyne Accad; HRV and Patriarchy: Honour Stronger Than Life

*I am very thankful, especially to Kvinnoforum for organising this conference. I am also thankful for the presence of Her Majesty the Queen, who shows real concern for these issues.*

I would like to start with a quote by an anthropologist, Germaine Tillon from her book "Le harem et les cousins", who studied the Mediterranean basin and has written about this more than fifty years ago. She says:

*"The Mediterranean woman is one of the serfs of our age, generally spoliated in spite of the laws, sometimes sold, often beaten, bound to forced labor, and assassinated almost with impunity."*

She wrote this, as I said, 60 years ago, and unfortunately it seems to me that it is just as relevant today.

In my short presentation today I shall look at crimes of honour, or as what you have called more appropriately HRV or honour related violence under its various factes, patriarchy, to women's position in society, to virginity, to war, to incest, to the concept of purity and impurity, to tribal institutions, to sexuality, to the notion of sacrifice and blood spilling, to male control and violence, all of them being condoned by laws that have not changed for centuries, and continue to baffle women and keep them under submission and fear. My contention is that unless we try to change the system of sexual relations conceived, dominated or submitted in power struggles and a structure of submission and domination, the abuse of women will continue and so will other forms of oppression, abuse and degradation.

### Some background

In my part of the world, the Middle East, a girl is brought up from early childhood in constant fear of losing her virginity. There are several psychological explanations for this virginity mania. There maybe, certain Koranic and Biblical injunctions regarding virginity, but, in general, overrating of the hymen seems to spring from more down-to-earth reasons. A man is only convinced that he has made a wise choice if his bride brings an intact hymen to the marriage bed: he considers it evidence of exclusive possession, proof that the merchandise is brand new. Further, it means that the man is assured that his wife has had no prior sexual experience and thus will not be able to compare his performance unfavorably to that of another man.

Beyond these personal considerations, however, virginity has an intrinsic value in that it represents the "honour" of the girl and, more importantly, of her family. Honour is very closely connected to women's virginity. In the event that a girl brings dishonour to her family by losing her virginity, it is considered normal for her brother to murder her in order to avenge or wash the family's honour. Even worse, public opinion permits such ritual murder and in the courts it is considered only a misdemeanor. I was in Lebanon in the last two weeks doing research on this isse and I learned that a female lawyer named Laure Moghaizel, who died recently, had been very active in trying to change the law in Lebanon, because now for example the law stipulates if a man kills his sister or his wife and she was committing adultery or proven that she sha had a bad conduct. It was called attenuating circumstances. He would only be charge four years of imprisonment and two days later he would go free. This happens a lot. So, those ewho avenge their honour, therefore know in advance that the laws will be lenient. So far, no court has ever handed down a sentence of life imprisonment or capital punishment for a man judged guilty of having murdered a woman for "misconduct". Once it is established that the victim had led a "disorderly life", the sentence does not exceed

fours years of forced labor. Those who avenge their "honour" therefore know in advance that the law will be lenient.

There is heavy social pressure on a brother to take such vengeance: he is made to feel that he is "unmanly" if he does not wash the family honour with blood. In most cases, it is the brother rather than the father or husband of the woman who is responsible for avenging honour, but in some cases the whole village turns out to stone the woman as a display of collective social responsibility. As is usual in other parts of the world, the seducer is not punished, only the seduced, the woman. Sometimes the little girl or adolescent has been raped or forced into sexual relations, yet she is considered the guilty one, the sinful and impure one, the one who has to pay the price even onto death!

As I started reading about crimes of honour, I became increasingly shocked and felt it would be more realistic to call them crimes of horror. Rana Husseini, who will be talking here today, has well documented the fate of Jordanian women victims of these crimes. Several other countries all around the Mediterranean basin bear witness to honour murders and I wish I could name each woman victim of such crimes here today, but it would be an impossible task since it has recently been documented that 5,000 women fall prey to such violence each year around the globe!

A recent Time Magazine article documents how "for many Iraqi women, the tyranny of Saddam's regime has been replaced by chronic violence and growing religious conservatism that have stifled their hopes for wider freedoms for women. The most terrifying development has been the rash of honour killings committed by Iraqi men against sisters, wives, daughters or mothers whom they suspect of straying from traditional rules of chastity and fidelity. Iraqi professionals believe that women are now being murdered by their kin at an unprecedented rate. The number of victims of honour killings in Iraq since the US invasion in March 2003 may total in the hundreds."

### **HRV, blood and virginity**

Failing to bleed on the wedding nights leads to honour killing, a call for more blood, blood to erase the shame not bleeding to account for one's purity. Why so much importance put on blood and virginity? Honour killing is a rite of purification. The group or tribe looks at the failure to bleed as a stain that needs to be washed in blood. And it is the woman who is sacrificed. The notion of purity and impurity is closely linked to this rite and has nothing to do with Islam per se (it is practiced by other religious groups all over the Mediterranean) but it has more to do with tribal behavior and institutions. Tribes are competing political military organizations and competition is mostly symbolic: it is located in honour, and honour is located for the males in defending their territory, their group, people in the group who are not fighting, essentially the women. To sacrifice a woman stained by rape or adultery is to give back to the tribe its purity, therefore its honour. A man who rapes or commits adultery does not fall under the economy of the pure and impure because he is not considered as someone who reproduces and creates life.

### **HRV and patriarchy**

The tribe or group is patriarchal. The myth of blood's purity or impurity is linked to the myth of the honour of the common ancestor. In such system, women are not allowed to choose their own sexuality. They are mainly for procreation; they must produce male descendants to the common ancestor; they are only instruments for reproduction. And this instrument for reproduction enters into the political strategies of the tribes. Sexuality and reproduction must be controlled. In the political tribal hierarchies, women are valued only if it can be assured that they are pure, i.e. have been untouched, hence the importance attached to virginity. Virginity is not only a mean to ascertain paternity (since there are other means for that, such as delay in remarriage, etc.) but it belongs to the myth of purity, which is one of the central

anthropological values of tribal communities in the Arab world. The sacrifice of a woman engaged in illicit sexual behavior, whether victim or accomplice, reestablishes the purity order in its patriarchal lineage. Men are the sacrificers, they reestablish their tarnished honour by killing the woman who has become impure. Thus they reaffirm their control over women and their fidelity to the law of the patriarchal group.

### HRV and incest

Crimes of honour must be connected to incest. The refusal to mix with other tribes is incestuous, it is an instrument of power. The taboo of incest allows the accounting of who belongs to whom, while incest plunges one into uncertainty. It is an instrument of control over people. It was instituted by the Catholic church as an instrument of control over compulsions and sexual desires in making people feel guilty. In tribal patriarchal societies, the control of women is also an instrument to control sexual desire. This control is much more severe and strict in tribal societies because marriages are political operations with women as reproductive instruments. All matrimonial alliances are controlled and there can be no relations outside of marriage, while sexuality is over valued. Respect for the authority of ancestors in men/women relations, each person being accountable to the ancestral totem of the tribe, is mythically invested by a flawless honour. Men and women are not equally responsible for this ancestral honour. Women considered irresponsible for their acts, and passive "irresponsible" beings, if raped or committing adultery, are stained and stains must be washed, purified. All women of the tribe are to be pure. Those who fall must be eliminated.

According to a psychology professor I interviewed in Lebanon, the taboo of incest is not very strong in Middle Eastern societies (even if it was primordial in Phoenician civilization), thus the spread of honour related crimes and the bloody wars. The family or group relates to each other incestuously, yet such behavior is accepted as long as it remains within the group. If a woman falls and "sins" outside of the group, she puts the group in danger and must be eliminated in order to restore the order. Men of the family feel that by killing her they prove that nobody touched her and the group could remain intact. Only educating children and adolescents about the importance of the incest taboo could restore a society and void it of such crimes, leading to the wars we are witnessing. In her opinion, education is the answer to crimes of honour.

### HRV and war

In my study of the relationship between sexuality and war through the literature of Lebanon, I managed to publish a study entitled "Sexuality and War, Literary Masks of the Middle East". I was able to determine and establish how sexuality is a force that has a revolutionary potential so strong that many political women and men are afraid of it and prefer to dismiss its importance. Yet to get at the roots of the important issues confronting us today, it can no longer be ignored.

In my study, both male and female authors paint the disastrous consequences of virginity rites connected with the notions of honour, ownership of women and sexual relationships. In most of the novels under study, the codes of honour – related to virginity and to crimes meant to wash the family's or tribe's honour/pride in blood – are connected to rape, itself associated with death. Rape is linked to the notion of death. It is the absolute forbidden (specially on women of one's tribe) therefore the absolute temptation of death (when inflicted on women of the other tribes). Men prove their masculinity through sexual acts of violence against women of the other clans. It, therefore, reinforces the system of the clan by making women vulnerable and in need of the men's protection. An obvious conclusion to my study was that the fear men have of women led them to domination and war, while the fear women have of men's violence led them to masochistic submission or/and rejection of the men, and commitment to political, human and feminist causes. Both the female and male authors agreed on this. I also concluded that the meaning and importance given to a military weapon and to the sexual weapon were

equal. Man used his penis like he used his gun: to conquer, control, and possess. The whole macho society had to be unveiled and condemned because in the present system, one tried to obtain material goods and territory, not in order to enjoy them, not out of need, but to enlarge one's domain and authority. Similarly, sexual relations were not built on pleasure, tenderness or love, but on reproduction, the preservation of girl's virginity (so-called 'honour' of the family), the confinement and control of women for the increase in male prestige, and the overestimation of the penis.

## Conclusion

Are there solutions to the desperate situation exposed here? Would laws punishing the murderers be enough to dissuade the perpetrators of such crimes? And how about educating the young and adolescent about the taboo of incest, the respect and love of women away from possession and jealousy? Have some of them been tried? How about inculcating the importance of mixity, hybridity, creolization rather than purity and exclusivity?

In Lebanon, in commemoration of the late Laure Moghaizel, a lawyer and feminist activist who struggled all her life for women's human's rights and peaceful resolutions to conflicts, the Lebanese Women's Council organized a conference which was attended by a crowd of 500. During the celebration about four years ago, Justice Minister Bahij Tabbara declared that he had presented the cabinet with a draft law to render crimes of honour punishable by law. So far none of these solutions have been implemented, or developed with any kind of success. How much longer will we have to wait? How many more innocent women and girls will die before the world wakes up? In Palestine where honour crimes are quite prevalent and where Israeli laws do not interfere, unlike in other domains, women's rights activists (both Palestinians and Israelis) decided to have a special ceremony with candle lighting every time a woman or girl would succumb to such crimes, since no real ceremony accompanies here burial and she is denied even a decent funeral because of her "downfall and impurity." How many more candles before the night falls on a world indifferent to the cries of 5,000 women slaughtered in shame each year?



## Rana Hussein;

### HRV and Human Rights, the Jordanian Experience

*Dear colleagues, I will talk about my experience as a reporter. On May 31st 1994 I heard about a woman who was killed by her brother. I was new, I had only been working as a reporter for a year. I went to the crime scene to investigate, why this sixteen-year-old schoolgirl was killed.*

I discovered that her family had killed her because she had been raped by one of her brothers, and they blamed her for the rape. I talked to her uncles who plotted the murder and of course they were sitting happily outside boasting about their crime. I started asking them why was she killed: "Why did you kill her?" In the beginning they told me: "She is not a good girl, you know, she was behaving immorally". Then they told me they killed her because one of her brothers had raped her. I said to them: "It is not her fault, why did you kill her and not her brother? Why did you punish her and not the brother?" First they looked at each other and then one of them told me: "Do you think we killed the wrong person?" I felt like they were talking about a goat or something. The other one said: "No, no, don't worry we did the right thing." I kept insisting: "Why her, why her?" In the end they told me: "Well, she seduced her brother to rape her". I became furious and I told them: "Well, there are many men in the streets, why would she want to sleep with her own brother?" I was wearing jeans and tennis shoes in order to be able to run away if something happened. They looked at me and said: "Why are you here? Why do you care? Why are you dressed like this? Why aren't you married? You studied in the states, you are a bad girl" So, all of a sudden, I also became accused of immoral behavior.

At this point I left and I wrote the story for the Jordan Times, which is the English daily newspaper. The following day we received a call from a woman, an intellectual woman, in a very high position. She was calling on her own behalf. She was screaming and yelling at my editors that they should stop me from writing for the Jordan Times because this is not us doing this, it's not our society and these things are not happening here, according to her we were tarnishing the image of the country. I became enraged, even more since this call came from a woman and she was asking me to stop doing what I was doing. I decided to show her, and everyone else too that this was us, our society, that we have problems and we need to face them instead of putting our heads in the sand.

I started reporting these crimes, and I discovered later on, as I went on in my career that there were a lot of people making fun of me. They were saying: "What are you saying? What do you write about? Nothing is ever going to change here. You are only addressing the English speaking readers." But I did not listen because I knew that one day somebody was going to hear me. And luckily, the Royal family got involved, they didn't support me directly, but they were supporting the cause. It needs to be pointed out that this happened after I had been writing about it for almost ten years. I discovered that not only society tells a man "Yeah – go and kill", but when I went to court I discovered that killers were getting away with lenient sentences; three months, six months, one year.

I discovered that women who survived these crimes, for example a woman who escapes out of wedlock or goes missing and the police find her, after she takes the humiliating virginity test they put her in prison to protect her life. I discovered that we had around thirty women, at a certain time, imprisoned by the authorities in order to protect them. Everywhere else in the world, the person who threatens somebody is put in prison. In Jordan it's the other way around. They put the victim in prison. I met a woman who had been there for twelve years, without any charges. They can't release these women because if they release them, their families would kill them.

These are the three things that I've been fighting for as a journalist and an activist for the past ten years. I want to explain why. Women killed in Jordan in these circumstances are not unusual. First of all if she goes missing, as I said before, if she's raped, or if they just suspect bad behaviour they might kill her. Based on rumours, like the neighbours talking about her and saying that she behaved badly, they'll kill her, without asking her or investigating anything. Secondly, for reasons connected to inheritance or for financial reasons, for example they want to inherit her, because unfortunately a lot of families believe that a woman should not inherit even though it's stipulated in the religion. They create a story about how they killed her. If the woman wants to marry a man she loves, and again this is stipulated in the religion, somehow that doesn't work in some families. Becoming pregnant out of wedlock, a lot of women are killed because of this. The people who kill according to my experience are, firstly the brother, secondly the father, the cousin and the husband. The most common weapons are knives and guns. The victims are primarily daughters. Sometimes you have mothers or sisters who are also taking part in the crime somehow. Some people may wonder – why mothers? There are several reasons for that, according to my experience. Some of them do not have a choice. Because if they stand on the side of their daughters, they think they support their daughters of their immoral behaviour, so they can not do anything. I spoke one time to a mother, her daughter was not killed, but I asked her: "If your daughter would do something immoral, what would you do?" She told me: "I would hang her from a tree, so that people would see her and she would be a lesson to others".

### **Men, victims of HRV**

As my colleague, Evelyne Accad, said in her very well written paper, men are also victims, according to my experience, because I don't think that anyone really wants to kill his sister or relative. They are pressured by society and by their family. The family comes and tells them that if you do not kill her, people are going to look down on you, they are gonna spit on us, they are gonna throw shoes at us, you have to do it. Unfortunately, the society somehow turns a regular person into a killer.

I have spoken to several killers who became depressed after killing their sisters. One of them, was the one who killed his sixteen-year-old sister that I told you about earlier. I was going to the area and I met him by coincidence. He spent five years in jail, which is unusual. The court decided it was not an honour crime, which was a good and unusual judgement. I went and talked to him and I said: "Do you regret that you killed your sister?" He said "No, the only thing I regret is that I wasted five years in prison." That was his regret. I said: "If you put yourself in the same situation again, would you kill your sister?" He said: "No, if I was put in the same situation again, I would lock her in the house, tie her and just keep her in the house. I wouldn't waste five years of my life for that." This was his answer. I argued with him about the rape, and that it was not her mistake that she was raped, and that the court punishes rapists. It was proven that one of the brothers raped her and the other one killed her. The one who raped her, by the way got thirteen years. The one who killed her got seven and a half years, but he only spent five years in prison. It was proven in court that the man who raped her put sleeping pills in her food and then raped her. I kept saying: "It was not her fault" And he said: "It does not matter, she was not a girl anymore, (talking about virginity), and to us that was the only solution."

You all know that this is not a religious crime, because in my country I have reported of twenty to twenty-five women that were killed in Jordan. I would say that over the ten years that I have been reporting on this issue, there were several Christian families that killed their daughters too. It really has nothing to do with religion.

### **Positive development**

These were the dull facts, there are some positive things that have happened. The good thing happened when I started writing. In the government, no one would talk about the issue, it was

taboo, this is why I won some international awards, because I was brave enough to write about these crimes. There were a lot of people that were against me, and a lot of people that were with me. The good thing is that this government and the civil society started acknowledging the issue and started to talk more about it, and they got involved. One of the things we were nagging to change were the laws. The government suggested some new laws and amending some of the existing laws, but they were the wrong laws. As usual when it comes to women's situation they are not serious, but we felt that it was a start, at least they were starting to talk more about the issue.

Another thing was that we were calling for the women that were in prison, because Jordan is a very small country and it is very hard to relocate to start a new life. Most of these women in prison are not educated, they do not have a degree, and therefore it is very hard for them to start a new life. We were asking for at least a shelter that would keep these women separately from the other prisoners, because they are living with other prisoners that are criminals. In 1998 or 1999 the government became interested and they wanted to open a shelter for these women, but we are still waiting. During this time the name 'shelter' changed to 'family conciliation house', and supposedly it is not gonna house these women. But when the shelter opens I'm sure they're going to have plans for the future of these women. But it is a beginning, I mean we are trying to push as much as possible. At least now the government is talking more about it, there are more workshops, more activities going on.

I am very happy to be here because I think it is about time that other countries in this world recognise this problem, so we can all discuss it together and share experiences, because I think this is a universal problem. I do not think it is only a problem related to the Middle East or Jordan. I think it is a universal problem and I'm very happy to be here and I think I will benefit from the experience and you can benefit from me.

Thank you very much.

## Ann Cryer; HRV and the EU: Crimes of Honour

*I would like to thank the organisers of this conference for inviting me to join you today and giving me the opportunity to speak. I am sure that there are many of you here today who are more aware than I of the realities of the abuse of women and it is fitting that we meet in Sweden, a country that has taken the lead in raising awareness of and challenging “honour crimes”.*

May I start by paying tribute to the bravery of all those women worldwide who have – in the face of determined opposition and often at personal risk to themselves – spoken out and campaigned to expose the brutality and inhumanity of crimes that are excused by so-called “honour”. There is, of course, absolutely nothing honourable about these crimes. The fact that murder, rape, false imprisonment, torture or breaches of fundamental human rights have actually been associated with the word “honour” demonstrates how, for too long, the agenda has been set by the perpetrators and excusers of these terrible crimes. It also demonstrates the up-hill task before us.

I would like to think that my report to the Council of Europe, adopted by the Council and Member States last year, has gone some way in helping to raise awareness of these crimes. I was delighted to hear, after the debate in the Council Plenary Session that adopted the report, that it was considered to have been one of the most lively and constructive debates the secretariat of the council had ever seen. I was yet more delighted when a Turkish MP told me that the report was being used in Turkey to assist in the drafting of new legislation there.

Indeed, there has been a significant shift in the debate over recent years. Issues often considered taboo for too long are now being openly discussed. I recall in 1999, when I first raised the question of forced marriage in the UK House of Commons, I was told by many in the Asian community that they simply did not exist and was criticised for speaking out on a subject, they argued, that I knew nothing about. It is amazing how I now see some of the very same critics – in public at least – condemning forced marriages.

The debate has moved on. In the United Kingdom, the government is piloting through Parliament the first ever Domestic Violence Bill – a major achievement for those of us who have campaigned for so long. I am pleased to say that violence and abuse of women is very much on the political agenda throughout Europe – and we need to ensure that it stays there. And it is here that we – all of us here today – have a problem. Now that honour crimes, domestic violence and the human rights of women are creeping near to the top of the political agenda – discussed in their own right or included in debates centring on immigration – our campaign has to change to meet new demands.

### What are we achieving?

As delighted as I am to see you all today – and this thought crosses my mind at the numerous conferences I have attended on related issues – what are we achieving? Networking, visibility and increased awareness are all useful and positive achievements. However, is the net result, in fact, only to take away workers and professionals from their normal duties for a couple of days?

I am sure that everyone in this room today is as passionately opposed to crimes of honour as I am. But it is not us that need to be convinced, it is those people who are not here, would never dream of coming or who would deny the very existence of crimes of honour.

It is those people to whom we ought to be directing our efforts and campaigns. Education and increased awareness plays a major role in sending out the message. However, it cannot work alone and I am increasingly convinced that legislation is required, certainly in the UK and I would imagine in many other states.

Too often, however, I get the impression that campaigners and organisations are terrified by the prospect of more effective legislation and see it as a punitive measure that somehow encroaches on human rights itself. This is nonsense. Where perpetrators will not voluntarily – as a result of education or reasoned argument – alter their behaviour or give up outdated practices, the state should intervene to protect the victim.

Coupled with this apprehension regarding stronger legislation is a tendency to produce non-specific recommendations. At a recent meeting in London, I was given a copy of a report that recommends to: “Ensure that effective legislation exists to punish and penalise all forms of crime committed in the name of honour”; and “Ensure that crimes of honour are investigated sensitively”; or “Create appropriate conditions”.

As interesting as the report is – and as worthy the recommendations – they take the debate and the campaign no further. For us to have credibility – with crimes of honour and domestic violence creeping up the political agenda – we need to be specific. What is that “effective legislation”? What are the “appropriate conditions”?

And why do we need to “investigate sensitively?” I do not believe that the perpetrators of an “honour killing” or the parents forcing their daughter to marry someone at gun point are acting sensitively. There is nothing sensitive about murder or threatening someone. To try and treat such crimes as anything other than that – a heinous crime – serves only to accept the attempts by the perpetrators of such crimes to see them as different or excused by their interpretation of cultural values.

### **A crime of honour or just plain murder?**

Was the killing of Fadime Sahindal in Sweden in January 2002 a crime of honour or just plain murder? Her only crime was the desire to live as she pleased as a twenty first century woman in a twenty first century society. To label her murder as a “crime of honour” is to accept the mitigation and reliance upon unacceptable cultural values employed by the perpetrator.

We should, of course, understand the circumstances of the crime, but we must not allow those circumstances to receive star billing in any discussion or investigation. That place must be reserved for the crime itself and the victim. Murder is murder and legislation – rather than being sensitive – needs to be clear beyond doubt.

For this reason I have campaigned in the UK for the introduction into our laws of a specific criminal offence for aiding, abetting and coercing someone into a forced marriage. Despite the increased awareness and education in schools and in communities, the numbers of forced marriages are on the increase. Whether this phenomenon is attributable to the increased awareness itself, a changing demography with increasing numbers of young people approaching marriageable age or as a result of some communities (such as the Pakistani community in my own constituency) seeking to strengthen their own cultural traditions – one thing is certain: there are more women suffering from the horrors of forced marriage today than there were when I first raised the matter in the House of Commons in 1999. The only difference is that, now, those young girls and women can find help and know that they are not alone.

A specific criminal offence will send out the message – if you force your daughter into marriage not only are you acting un-Islamically, but you are also acting illegally and for that crime (for that is what it is) you may feel the full weight of the law and any defence regarding “honour” would be futile.

I am concerned by the patchiness of understanding of these issues across Europe. I was recently unable to assist a young 17 year old girl, who lived in my constituency, who was tricked into a marriage in Pakistan. She was not a UK citizen but an Austrian. The British Foreign Office asked the Austrian government to intervene. Whilst the Austrian Embassy in London was sympathetic, their colleagues in Islamabad refused to interview the young girl on her own, on the grounds that she was a minor, without the presence of her father! She is now married, against her will, and remains in Pakistan.

It is the confusion surrounding such crimes – encouraged and developed by the perpetrators, themselves – around the inter-action with culture or tradition that makes some governments wary of taking action. Take that confusion away – and see the crime for what it is – and the battle to eradicate the dark culture of “crimes of honour” enters a new phase.

Some countries are taking the lead. I am aware of the Danish governments decision to introduce a minimum age for both sponsor and applicant seeking leave to enter the country from outside the EU of 24. This, alone, will not eradicate the problem of forced marriage but will grant the woman the chance to mature, possibly go to university and decide (for herself) what she wants to do with her life and who if anyone she wants to marry. It is bold legislation of this kind that is needed across Europe. In the UK I have sought a similar change in legislation – I have asked for a lower age limit of 21 and the government has already agreed to 18 for sponsors.

### **Preaching to the converted**

Finally, everyone in this room knows about the horrors of “crimes of honour” – we are preaching to the converted. In a changing world, where our campaigning is bearing fruit and politicians are listening, how best can we progress the cause? Non-specific wish lists are not the answer. Sensitivity, in the face of murder and oppression, is not the answer.

Rather, we need to be bold in our campaign – exposing these crimes for what they truly are: unacceptable murders and attacks on the human rights of women across the world and be prepared to legislate as well as educate, since the latter may be too slow to protect the lives of too many innocent young women.

## Plenary Session II





## Jack Briggs; Living under the Threat of HRV

*My name is Jack Briggs and I am co-author of the book 'Jack and Zena, a True Story of Love and Danger' with an introduction written by John McCarthy, a former Beirut hostage. My wife Zena is an Asian Muslim woman who was expected to marry the man chosen for her by her parents.*

I first met Zena in the summer of '92 whilst I was visiting my sister. She lived on the same street and over that summer period a relationship grew, and from that relationship grew love. It was then that Zena told me of her impending arranged marriage that she had at the time. She also warned me on a number of occasions never ever to let her brothers know who I had become friends with. This became a particularly good advice one day when I was out with the brothers. They were informed of a relationship of a couple from their community and they disapproved of the relationship. The change in the brothers was absolutely horrific, I will try to describe it in words, the way that they transformed was as if they had taken some sort of potion. I could see the altered way they looked at me, because, like I said, they had noticed what had taken place and they quickly changed back. I don't know what happened to this couple. I never heard of it and they never discussed it again in front of me.

### Missing passport

By the end of '93, the talk of Zena's marriage became more and more frequent in the house and she had also noticed that her passport had gone missing. This was a clear indication that she would be taken back to Kashmir, where her parents are from, under the pretext of visiting a sick relative or going on holiday. And it was then that the arranged marriage would be forced through. We made our decision to leave. We knew that we had to leave our friends and our families behind. And in January, 1993, in the early hours of a Sunday morning, Zena, whose room is at the top of the house tied her sheets together, gathered her bags and lowered them out the window. She then went the two flights of stairs that passed her father's and her brother's bedroom. To her horror she found, when she came to the front room, that her sister was asleep on the couch and she couldn't find the keys to the door, so she eventually managed to climb out the window. I still shudder to this day to what the consequences would have been if Zena had have been discovered at that point.

Zena arrived at the place where I was staying and it was approximately 6-7 o'clock in the morning. By that evening we had managed to put 30 to 40 miles behind us, away from our hometown. We knew that we had to act quickly, because if the family had discovered that she had gone missing they would immediately have gone down to the local train stations and bus stations.

It was on that Thursday evening that my education would really start. I told Zena that I would make contact with her family and naively, which some people may think, I tried to say to them that my intentions were honourable and that we were in love and that we wanted to get married. The first person to pick up the handle of the phone was the sister, but this was quickly grappled, I could hear the commotion in the background, and taken by her older brother. And he told me in a calm, cool matter of fact way that we were both walking corpses and he was going to sell his cars and his possessions and he was going to hire bounty hunters and he said "When we find you, you will be found in several garbage sacks." The sister then came back on the phone and told us that the father had suffered a massive heart attack and had been rushed into hospital. This again would be another plot by the family to get Zena to go back. We checked the hospitals, but there was no mention of Zenas father having been admitted to any hospital.

## Attacks upon my family

We knew that the key to our survival at the time was to keep moving, and to keep moving fast. And we moved from one guesthouse to another. I knew then that I had to make contact with my family, and it was then I would learn of a series of attacks upon my family. My sister who lived on the same street had also been told that she and her children would be set on fire alive if she did not give out any information that would lead to our whereabouts. It got to the point where the threats and abuse over the phone led to the police actually placing a tap on the phone. Worse was to follow. My mother who was not elderly, but just recovering from cancer, who lived on her own was visited one night at midnight. Two cars pulled up by her house, the men got out, smashed the windows, kicked in the door and introduced my mother to the man that was going to murder her son. This again is a basic tactic, by the families, of psychological violence against those who are left behind. I said to Zena that this was not her fault and she was not to be blamed for this whatsoever. This was the family that was acting.

## Out of money

By this stage the little money, that we had left, had run out and we had to claim welfare and social security. We went down to the local office and filled out the relevant forms. And we had to return. It was 48 hours later that we received a phone call at the guesthouse, which we were staying at, a Mr Adams saying that we had to come down to the benefit office to collect our cheque. Something aroused my suspicion straight away, because I knew that this phonecall had come too early. But we were in a financial position where we desperately needed help. So we went down to the office.

The woman who I spoke to said that there was no trace of a Mr Adams there, but maybe he worked in another department. As we left we were seen by a woman who was staying at the same guesthouse and she said "Oh, shortly after you left a phonecall came asking what time you had both left". We knew instantly then that something was definitely not right. I went to the local phone box and luckily enough the woman who I had just seen at the welfare office, picked up the phone. And she said "Thank God you called, literally as you walked out of one door, four or five Asian men had walked in through another, demanding to know at what time you would be arriving". I dropped the phone and grabbed Zena. Zena had noticed a small police station across the road. It was there we had our first contact with the police.

## Wanted for theft

You have got to remember that this is 1993 and although now, within the media and at the Scotland Yard and various other police forces, honour related violence is documented and known, at that time the murders were still happening, but were not that well known. The officer listened in disbelief as we recalled our recent events. Eventually we were told to come into the back of the police station. It was there that our names were fed through the police national computer. The officer came back in, looked at me and said "You are ok, but she is wanted for theft". The family had alleged that Zena had left with a large amount of cash and gold. Again another tactic used by the family by laying false theft charges to get the individual back to the home town. After being interviewed by an officer I managed to convince him that this is actually what it was, it was a plot no more and nothing less. They had to act according to the rules and regulations of the law. I can still see Zena's face, full of shock and horror, as she was led down to the cells. This was the very first time Zena had actually been inside a police station.

We were told that officers from our hometown would come down and pick the pair of us up and take us back to our hometown. About an hour after we were told this I asked if I could see Zena again and I was told by the officer that "she is gone". And I said "What do you mean she is gone?" He said that the officer had come from our hometown and picked Zena up. I asked the officer if I could stay within the police premises, knowing that the family was outside still searching the area. The officer said no.

My main concern at that time was that I knew that Zena was safe in the custody of the police and being taken by car. I managed to find accommodation for that evening and it was there that I made contact with our hometown police officers. The officer that I spoke to was extremely annoyed that I had been left behind. He had actually been involved in the work on the attacks on my mother's house and in that of my sisters. He told me to go back down to the police station and wait there and Zena would be brought back down to me. True enough to his words, Zena arrived in the early hours of that morning.

### From guesthouse to Safe house

We were then told that we would be transported over the countyline to another county within the UK and there officers would be briefed and we would then be set into a safe house. When we arrived at the station there was a woman there, from a women's refuge, who took Zena by the hand and said "She will come with me and she couldn't allow me, obviously for security reasons to see where Zena was going. I managed to find a guesthouse. At this time I was starting to get a feeling that something wasn't quite right. I noticed, what I am about to say wasn't believed by all the police force, but it is a tactic used by the families, Zena has told me this. They will plant people within refuges and hostels to see if an individual that they are tracking is actually in there. When Zena had arrived at the refuge, where she had been taken, she had noticed that there were two women there from her local area. This made her extremely frightened and anxious. She contacted the police and she was brought to the guesthouse where I was staying.

We reported back to another police station in the morning and it was there we had to recall again the recent events, which had happened to us. The young police constable that we talked to listened intently. He would later tell me that as he left the interviewing room he went to see a senior officer. His senior officer said "I think that they are", as we say in the UK, "throwing you a lie and telling you a story". It was only after the young police officer insisted, and I will remain grateful to him forever, that the senior officer came down and actually listened to us. It was then that our situation started to be taken seriously.

We were moved to a safe house and we were told that arms disposed would be in the area. It was at this time that we were introduced to a woman from an institute called Victim's Support. This woman who came to visit us, again this is early 1993, she had no experience of what honour related violence or honour killings were, so we had to explain everything to her. She told us to think of two new names that we could use, so that maybe our files couldn't be accessed so easily again. We were given a temporary social security number. She also told us to try to think of an area within the UK that we could travel to where we would feel safe. Every time I mentioned a city within the UK: Glasgow, Liverpool, Birmingham, Zena would say to me "I can't go there, I've got family there, a sister there, an aunt there or an uncle there". This is not uncommon, with the Asian families' extended network. Eventually I managed to think of Isle of Wight, which is a small island off the south coast of England. Luckily enough the victims' support woman had contacts there and we were told that we would be transported down there and would be met by the people from the refuge. I was given a code word to be given to a woman that would meet us off the ferry.

### To the Isle of Wight

When we stepped off the ferry I approached the woman and gave the code word, which I think was 'the battles of Scotland' or something like that. I realised immediately that I had approached the wrong woman, because she looked at me as if I was from a mental institution. The actual woman eventually turned up and we were taken to the safe house. We were told to contact the police on the island immediately, but the woman from the refuge told us that under no circumstances are you to have any contact with the police. If you do you are on your own, you will be left. You have got to remember at that stage our mental and physical health

was deteriorating and if somebody would have come up to us and said go and stand in that corner in that room with your hands in the air, we would have done so. We were told that we could stay on the island for three weeks and that we had to stay there on the island to be married. It was there that Zena in the last week of our stay made contact with her family. I can still see the tears running down her face, (excuse me, at times it just comes back) as she was told by her father that she died the day that she left. What do you say to someone you love who has just been told that? The day came for our marriage and Zena looked absolutely beautiful. And first after the ceremony we were told that we could no longer stay on the island, that we would have to leave.

### **A new identity**

Yet again, we found ourselves on our own, moving from guesthouse to guesthouse, not knowing which way to turn, not knowing who to turn to. It was then that a national insurance agent, someone who works within the social security, had contacted us. He said that he would come down and visit us. He was trying to make our names “nationally sensitive”, in other words, no one can access them on a computer whatsoever. When he arrived and I opened the door, with Zena at my side, he later would tell me that we looked like two people who just walked out of a plane crash. It is incredible how you do not realise your own mental and physical deterioration. This gentleman then said that he would take us back to where he lived and it was there that the police contact was made yet again. Also with the woman from Victim’s Support. We were told then that we would have to pick two new names and a new, complete, identity would be given to us. This would include a passport, social security number and other forms of ID. We were also told that we would receive a full work history. We were relieved, but this was to be short-lived. When eventually the package arrived with the new identity, we were told that because we didn’t fall into a certain category we wouldn’t receive the work history. The only way I can describe this to you is if I was to take one member of this audience now, and drive that person 200 miles away to a new area, take all your identification, this is who you are now, your cartwheels, your schools, your work records etc. If You fill out an application for a job without a CV it is virtually impossible to get a job.

Yet again we found ourselves being transported over another county line. We were then told that we had to find accommodation for ourselves. We managed to do this and we said our good-byes to the people that with all good intent had tried to do their very best for us. But unfortunately due to rules and regulations and financial constraints there wasn’t really anything more that they could do for us.

### **Making contact**

It was then that I managed to contact a local police officer within the village and told him about our predicament because we were given no number to phone in case of emergencies. It was then a specialist officer, from a special branch visited us. They were extremely annoyed that we had just been left and dumped in their patch, so to speak. After a short while we decided that all we would do was to write to individuals who we thought might be able to help us, like John McCarthy, the former Beirut hostage. It was on a Friday that I posted these letters that I made contact with my family again. I then found out that my mother had been taken seriously ill into hospital. The number that I had been given was a recorded message, so I left a message saying that I needed assistance to try to get to her bedside. Unfortunately, I came too late. It was a Monday morning that I heard the phone ring, and it was one of those moments when you just know that someone has passed away and I knew instantly before the sound of the phone hit the bedroom that my mother had died. Zena went downstairs, and I heard Zena answer the phone and say, “oh my God no”, and sink to the floor. I went downstairs, and told Zena to get ready. I walked the two miles to the local social security welfare office and there I was assured with a travel warrant. We went up, said our good-byes to my mother and we came back down.

Upon our arrival a letter was found on our doormat. It was indeed from John McCarthy, the former Beirut hostage. You will have to excuse me if I have gone through this a little quickly and I finish quickly, it is quite difficult to talk about these circumstances in front of people, especially in front of an audience, because it is all flashing in front of me. Our book was published in 1997, and since then we have come into contact with good officers, especially the ones at Scotland Yard, dedicated officers.

### **Nothing to do with religion**

I considered myself, before I met Zena, to be able to handle any situation due to a strict education and the rough area which I grew up in, but nothing could have prepared me for these twelve years. The tactics which the family have used; involvement of bounty hunters, private investigators, the use of the extended family, the laying of false theft charges, the ability to access confidential files, the pressure of the physical and psychological violence of those left behind and the sheer determination of the families to hunt and track us down, and their belief in what they are doing as absolutely justified. I am sure that the tactics used by the family will be known to the majority here today.

The use of the strongest word by Zena started a series of events that would not just change my life, but change that of many others too. That word was *no*. I hope that Zena's word inspires you to know that there are alternatives and that there is help and support from those dedicated professionals I see here before me today. If Zena would have been Christian, Catholic, Muslim, Hindu, Sikh, belong to any of the world's religions, I would still be standing here today if she was facing a forced marriage. It has nothing to do with religion whatsoever! Religion is used to try to justify the physical and psychological violence. It is just my belief that the forced marriage is used to extend the family power base and keep the property within the family. It is as simple as that. It has nothing to do with religion.

### **Education to combat HRV**

I believe that the way to combat the crime of honour related violence goes through knowledge and education, by listening to those with first hand experience and getting help and support directed at those who are in need. Zena and I have talked to the media since 1997. We have tried to campaign for a national free phone number, and this free phone number should be placed onto posters in bus stations, train stations, colleges, schools, places of high visibility, so that people who have the problems we have faced, do not have to go through the events that me and my wife had to go through, but get the help and support they need.

Although it has been supported by the police and the academics, and I know Ann's (Ann Cryer MP, UK) work here has been absolutely amazing back in the UK, and this is by no means directed at Ann, but the wheels of the political machine with the power to implement such ideas are slow to turn. I hope that by speaking out here, that it will in some way, create a debate and within that debate, so much is found. I have written to many government ministers within the UK asking them to speak to police officers, social security workers, welfare, education, housing and although I have had 100% support from Commander Baker at Scotland Yard and also the Foreign Office, within the UK, I have not received one reply. I fully understand that when people discuss honour related violence, I'm not the image that they think of, but I do know what it is like to live your life in fear and to live your life in hiding. I noticed that one of the aims at this conference is to share knowledge. I hope that Zena and I, our predicament, is in some way helpful. I believe we can only learn lessons, if mistakes have been recognized.

I would like to thank Anita, Bam and Johanna for inviting me here today and I would also like to thank the Scotland Yard officers who have accompanied me here today. For their help, their faith and their support. Thank you!

## Mehrdad Darvishpour; HRV and Tradition: Cross-Cultural Encounters and Power Conflicts

*Immigrant girls often suffer by their parents' social segregation and at the same time by their authority. Honour related violence could be caused by a collision between tradition and modernity and a power displacement in the family.*

### Introduction

The murder of Fadime Sahindal three years ago put the immigrant family in focus of the society debate. Several cases of honour related violence against immigrant girls got a lot of public attention. However, this had a contradictory impact on research about the immigrants' daughters and the generation conflicts in immigrant families. The honour related murders has on the one hand illustrated how immigrant girls can be one of the most exposed groups in society, whose situation need to be studied deeply. The County Administration (Länsstyrelsen) newly presented research showing that more than 1500 immigrant girls could have been exposed to honour related violence during the recent two years in Sweden. On the other hand more and more scholars seem to reduce the problem to a cultural conflict between separate norms.

The question is if a power perspective can give a better condition to study generation and gender conflicts between parents and their daughters in immigrant families? Girls' exposure in many immigrant families is much more complicated and is about more than only honour-related violence. New research indicates that many girls in families with foreign background can feel that they are living with two different cultures, which are not compatible with each other. These girls are in other words trying to combine the different demands and expectations that their parents and the society have on them. Even if many girls can manage to live a double life it seems as though it is very hard and mentally trying.

The question is in what way conflicts between parents and daughters can deepen this double life and make these girls situation even more difficult. For example, loyalty conflicts can occur as a result of this double life, which means that the youths are forced to choose between family and society. In that way they the girls can experience that they end up outside the community in both family and society and the conflict can as a result of that be intensified. The immigrants' children are in other words running the risk of further marginalisation.

### The changing power relationship between parents and adolescents

Generally a generation conflict is in progress between youths and parents irrespective of their ethnical background. Some generation conflicts in the immigrated family are surely a result of the youth's emancipation from their parents. The immigrants' youth have furthermore a stronger will, and also a better opportunity to quicken the integration progress than their parents. The parents are at the same time skeptical to the fact that their children are "becoming Swedish", which in its own turn can lead to conflicts within the family. The more intensified conflicts in many immigrant families are often explained as a result of their ethnical background. Such explanations originate in a cultural essentialist way of thinking. This way of looking at the problem risks giving a homogeneous picture of "the immigrant family" which in fact is a result of the ethnical majorities' social construction of the immigrant family.

My earlier research points out how the changes of power relationship between Iranian parents in Sweden, intensifies gender conflicts after emigration. Moreover, another change in power



relationships is between immigrant parents and their children. While the first immigrant generation often has difficulties adapting to the new culture, the children are more easily influenced by new norms. Moreover, tension can arise when the children in certain cases contribute to the socialisation of their parents. These conflicts are more intense between fathers and daughters, that is, when both the generation conflict and the gender conflict collide within immigrant families. All this changes the balance of power in the family, which in turn means that when control of important resources changes, the relationships also takes another form. It can be supposed, however, that those whose position is worsened in the new situation will promote the cultural tradition of the country of origin as an argument for their cause and thereby the conflict becomes even more acute. Under such circumstances the risk of differences of opinion on various decisions and determinations increases.

At the same time there is on the one hand a constant conflict of power and culture and on the other hand a compromising relationship between the man, the woman and the children. To sum up it can be said that among many immigrant families the men tend to live in the past, women in the present and children in the future. All this implies great changes in the power structure within immigrant families, which often leads to intensified family conflicts.

### **From a patriarchal family structure to a more democratic mentality?**

Possible factors which can effect power relations and conflicts between young girls and their parents are among others the family's socio-economical and cultural background, level of parents' education; the parents' and the youth's position in the new country and the actual time of residence. This means that the relation between youths and their parents in immigrant families with a modern background can be more democratic, but in families which are characterised by more traditional and patriarchal patterns the family order can be illustrated with the following pyramid: The man is on top with a comprehensive power in the family. The woman is subordinated the man and the sons have a higher status than the daughters. Younger girls are at the bottom of the pyramid. In the patriarchal family, the father's interest is at the center and governs how relationships between family members are organised. While in the democratic family, the children's interest is basic in the relationships between parents and children.

Parents' position and the grade of integration in society have a big influence on what type of relation they develop with their children. The immigration has in many families led to a development where the pyramid – the symbol for the hieratic patriarchal family order – has been turned upside down. Many children and women have become independent and economically free in comparison to their situation in their home country. But families who come from relatively modern and urbanised surroundings in their home countries can easier adapt to norms of equality than the ones who come from surroundings with strongly traditional living standards. The conflict can in other words be deeper between parents and daughters in families where the parents are living after more traditional and severe norms than society's modern rules and norms.

To base the up bringing of children on dialogue is important for a good relation between parents and children. In families where the parents find a balance between their own values and the new society the children can feel safe and secure and learn how to get the best out of both cultures. In a safe environment, with support from their parents, the youths can develop their own identity with anchorage both in their own ethnical group and in the majority society. Thus, they learn to go from living in between two worlds to live with two worlds. Families with big resources of power, which are well integrated in Sweden, can have better conditions to create such a democratic environment for the children.

### Immigrant girls: Four-fold oppression?

But, unfortunately, many daughters to immigrants are four-fold oppressed. First of all, many of them belong to the lower class. They often live with their unemployed or low paid parents in segregated suburbs. These immigrant families have on average worse health and less opportunity to education and a qualified job in comparison to Swedes. Many of them are exposed to ethnical discrimination. They feel depreciated in the meeting with the ethnical majority and experience segregation. They are women oppressed by the patriarchy that exist in the whole society. Unfortunately they often experience a more severe patriarchal environment because of their parents' cultural luggage, which in its own turn weakens their position and resources of power. Many immigrant girls do, as children and as a part of the new generation, suffer by the parents' authority. When some of them despite this oppression, dare to challenge the traditional patriarchal culture, the people around them respond with sanctions. Many can be isolated, live in worry and feel like prisoners.

It is obviously problematic to determine in advance how society can help the immigrants' daughters to assert and emancipate themselves and to decide over their own bodies and destinies. The situation is paradoxical. These girls are on the one hand one of the weakest groups with the most limited resources of power in society. On the other hand they do dare to challenge the parents' authority just because of their unique role and thanks to the displacement of power.

### Conclusion

Right now I am starting a project where I want to examine conflicts between Iranian and Turkish girls and their parents. Questions that I am looking to find the answers for are among others how the relations of power changes between parents and daughters after the immigration to Sweden and what impact these relations of power has on the conflict between parents and children. How does the families' socio-economical background affect the relations of power and what meaning does this have in its own turn for the families, but foremost for the girls' possibilities to handle conflicts. My study is only at its beginning, but I am convinced that the immigrants' own organisations as well as society in general have to take the women's – and not least the daughters' – situation seriously.

The immigrants' organisations ought to work more actively for equality and obtain distinct representation of women in their administrations. Social networks are a resource of power. Therefore society ought to increase the resources to Women's Shelters and Young Women's Shelters – but also support male networks against violence. By spreading the image of the good manhood many fathers and boys who lack modern male role models, can be strengthened in their democratic male role. Society can through its subscription-system? Put pressure on organisations that have a strong patriarchal culture in their luggage to support and activate the women. Harder legislation against gender based crimes – violence towards women in general and towards young immigrant women in particular – strengthens young women's resources of power as well.

Even by counteracting arranged marriages and abolishing "the two year rule" – which implies that women in "import-marriages" are ordered to leave the country if they get a divorce during the first two years in Sweden – immigrant women's opportunities are strengthened. These are just some of the necessary steps. A deepened research of the immigrant families – and the daughters' – situation, can surely point out the upcoming. One thing is however certain. We all, authorities, organisations, but also individual persons have to work together and mutually to counteract segregation, discrimination and segregation. This way we can increase the daughters' – the immigrants' as well as natives' – chance to a more equal life.



## Dilsa Demirbag-Sten; HRV and Integration

In Sweden over 150 different ethnical groups live together, that means that we live in a time where most of the population is no longer blond and blueeyed. Sweden is now a diverse country and indeed a multicultural society. Assimilation of the immigrants is nowadays considered oppressive. Like most of the other Western countries, Sweden is now seeking to diverse politics to a more tolerant and more responsive to cultural differences. Still there is racism and there is a greater difference between politics and the reality for many immigrants. Sweden has still a long way to go. It is a fact that non-European immigrants have 60% less chance to get a job than native Swedes and there are ethnically segregated areas where over 80% of the population is immigrant from non-European countries. The ten schools here in Stockholm with more than 70% of immigrant children in so called ethnical segregated areas show important results in. Actually, one could sum up the situation for the immigrants in Sweden by saying that the further away from a Western culture the immigrant comes from, the harder it is for him or her to integrate into the Swedish society. And growing ethnical diversities in Swedish society has growing challenges. And the demand for rights and group rights is growing from different ethnical and religious groups. Demand for equal rights to get a qualified job, to be able to get classes in mothertongues at the school and the right to practice their culture and religion. But when this demanded it is important to see which part of the religion and the culture that is at stake. Particularly in regard to equal opportunities and human rights of women. Since there is an important connection between culture and gender is most cultures has one or several principle aims to control of women by men. There is a risk that the question of women's rights may become subordinate to the issue when the civil rights of the minority groups come out for discussion. Men generally have had a priority when it comes to interpreting and defining things in particular in regard to culture and customs. And women's particular experience and concerns subside. Women are often marginalised in discussion on ethnicity, or multiculturalism even though, the overall goal of the integration is often defined as equality within the multicultural society. I'll come back to this later.

We had a situation here in Sweden in 1991 when almost seven percent of all the voters in the national election voted for a racist party called 'Ny Demokrati', which in English means new democracy. The whole nation is since then in guilt, Sweden showed a very ugly face and we like to see ourselves as a very tolerant and liberal group and country-obviously not. But the positive outcome of the results of the election was that it raised an awareness of the problem with racism and discrimination in the country. Since Sweden did not have the same colonial history like, for example Great Britain and France, we thought that we would be free from the structures of racism, which actually is a very naive point of view.

But as I said the whole situation created guilt and insecurity and we still ask ourselves how this could happen. As a result of the discussion about the integration between the immigrant and the majority community in Sweden it has become like a walk on thin ice, everyone is afraid of breaking the thin ice and to be called intolerant or even worse a racist. I would actually sum up the intellectual climate as very infected.

Then two years ago the killing of Fadime Sahindal, January 21<sup>st</sup>, 2002, highlighted this issue in a very dramatic way. A cold evening in Uppsala Fadime's father shot his daughter because he had felt that he had to clean his honour. Fadime, a young Kurdish girl, had years before left the family to live with her Swedish boyfriend, but her boyfriend Patrik died tragically in a car accident, but she didn't return to her family after his death. Her family, who threatened her for years, didn't accept her choice and her younger brother, living himself with a Swedish girlfriend threatened and beat Fadime up a couple of times in public. Fadime moved to Northern Sweden, far from her family, with the hope to live in a more secure environment, but she missed her sister and mother too much and returned to Uppsala. So she plans to

quickly meet them without the father's knowledge, but the father found out, went to the sister's apartment and shot Fadime, with the mother and the sister witnessing the killing of their sister and daughter.

Unfortunately, honour killing is not a new form of violence against women, to us who are familiar with the context of honour, within many countries like Turkey, Iran, Iraq, Jordan and so on. But for most of the ethnical Swedes this was a new and horrible experience. How could a father kill his own daughter and get support from the family and friends? The country again was in shock and then the debate started. On the one hand, there were those who saw honour killing as part of a culture with a traditional role for the women as subordinated to the men and to give birth to children. In countries like this you can find traces of it in the language, for example both in Arabic and Turkish, we have a special name for honour called 'namus'. It is a title for the sexual honour, which propose the physical and the moral qualities the woman ought to have. And the law in many of these countries, I will take a Turkish example. I do have to say that the Turkish law changed two years ago, that was mainly after pressure from the European Union, this was actually the only reason they changed it. Turkish law said that men was still considered to be the providers for the family, this was constitutional. All the rape was considered a very serious offense, the marital rape was not covered unless there were serious injuries. Until very recently the victim was the only one who could lay charges against an abusive partner. In this patriarchal society, this required assurance in cases of abuse of women. In the Turkish law non-traditional family arrangements have no recognition or protection, in legal marriage the principle of property is one of separate ownership, during and after marriage, unless contracts that are stipulated by the partners say otherwise. In practice, almost all property is registered in the man's name. A rape on virgin gives a harder punishment, than a rape of a non-virgin and a rape on a prostitute actually reduce the sentences three times. These were examples from Turkey.

Then, on the other side, as I said on the discussion here in Sweden. We did have a group of mainly ethnical Swedish and men from the minority groups who rejected the cultural expression as crazy and postcolonial. They even declared that no culture is more egalitarian than others. They claimed that Fadime's father was a mentally ill man and that honour killings was an act compared to the killing of Swedish women, killed by ex-lovers, husband and boyfriends. Even though Fadime's father, Rahmi Sahindal, himself said that he killed his daughter because his culture required it. The politicians and the majority of the feminists refused to see the difference between the Swedish case and in this case the Turkish/Kurdish context of honour. So, why is that? First of all, honour killing in Sweden has never had an attention like in the case of Fadime because she had herself done a tremendous amount of work to raise awareness about the problem in relation to honour and the young girls' situation in the minority groups. One could say that the knowledge of honour killings was not so high. The other problem was the guilt that I was talking about before. Media, politicians and activists were afraid to give the racist parties and organisation, as we say in Sweden, fuel of the fire. But what becomes more and more obvious for me was the attitude about the minority culture. The attitude seemed to be if you call honour killing part of a certain minority culture, then you have to accept the culture to be static and although horrible. It seemed as if the Swedish society failed to see other cultures as alive and diverse and just like the Swedish culture in change. Yes, honour killing is a very extreme part of the Jordanian, Turkish Kurdish, Iranian culture, but our cultures consist of so much more. All culture is in many ways wonderful, rich, but you do have this horrible part as well and we are working on it to change the structure.

Another thing that seemed to be very confusing were the Swedish feminists that suddenly gave the explanation and the definition of the context of honour in our culture. These feminists had a gender perspective in the Western complex, which leaves out the ethnical and class dimension, and there are other dimensions as well.

So, how do we handle the issue of women's rights and ethnical rights when these two areas are sometimes regarded as separate, non-relation issue or as opposite to each other? Cultural minorities need special rights, because the culture might otherwise be threatened by extinction. Cultural extinction is likely to undermine the self-respect and the freedom of movement. Special rights for minorities put minorities on an equal footing with the majority, so it is important to give minorities rights. For example, speaking their languages or practicing their religion, but it is also very important to oversee the context of the rights. In addition to be democratic and tolerant and liberal the majority society actually go against the declaration of human rights. One example is here in Sweden is the Somali group who wanted to keep the tradition of female genital mutilation on girls here in Sweden, but after discovering the horrible impact of it, it is, fortunately, not legal here in Sweden any more. Another example is the fact that immigrant were able to marry already at the age of 15 whereas the Swedish citizens had to wait until they were 18. This law changed this year. The UN several times reported this as a concern to try to make Sweden to change the law that allowed child marriage. The reason that we had this law was from an announcement from the ministry of Justice and Integration that we need to respect other cultures. The main problem is that the majority fails to see that most cultures are patriarchal, and many, not all, of the cultural minorities that claim group rights are more patriarchal than others.

Most cultures are stuffed with ideas and practice concerning gender. Until now, no recognition has been given to the fact that minority groups in Sweden, like the society in which they live, are themselves gendered, with differences in power and advantage between men and women. Suppose that a culture endorses and facilitate the mechanisms of men's control over women, suppose also that there are clear disparities in power between the sexes, such that the more powerful male member are also the member in position to determine and articulate the group's belief, practice and interest. Under such conditions, groups rights are potentially and in many cases antifeminist. They limit the capacity of the women and girls in these cultures to live with human dignity equal with men and boys. Advocates of group rights seem to pay little or no attention to the private sphere. Home is after all, where much of the culture is practiced. It is in the private sphere that the authority of either actual or symbolic father enforces the control over women, the patriarch often acts through or with the complicity of the older women in the cultures. And the more a culture requires or expects of the women in the domestic sphere, the less opportunity they have to achieve equality with men in other spheres. Religious and cultural groups are often and particularly concerned with the personal law, which is the law on child marriage, divorce and division and control of family property. The defender of cultural practice is likely to have much greater impact on the lives of women and girls, than those of the men and boys. Hence, far more of women's time and energy goes to preserving and maintaining the personal, familial, and reproductive side of life. Obviously, culture is not only about domestic arrangement, but they do provide a major focus of most contemporary cultures. The Swedish society had in many ways the same cultural structure, like for example the Turkish, just seventy years ago, slowly the feminists in the country have managed to create a debate, political awareness, changing laws and regulations, but Sweden is still an unequal society and that is the context in which honour related violence has to be understood and dealt with.

# Nazand Begikhani; HRV in a European Context: The Case of Heshu Yones

*This paper focuses on combating honour based violence inside Kurdish communities. In so doing, the following format is assumed:*

- *In part 1, the work of Kurdish Women Action Against Honour Killing (KWAHK) is presented.*
- *In Part 2, I shall focus on the case of Hesu Yones, a young Kurdish woman who, at the age of 17, was killed by her father in London.*
- *In part 3, I consider the problematic status of culturally grounded representations and explanations of honour crime.*

*Finally, my paper ends with a number of practical recommendations.*

## **What is KWAHK?**

Kurdish Women Action Against Honour Killing is an independent voluntary network organisation. It was formed in March 2000 by Kurdish women activists from the diaspora. The campaign was launched under the slogan “No honour in murder”.

KWAHK is staffed by unpaid women, who are often subject to the pulls of domestic labour and childcare while also made pariahs within their own community. KWAHK is chronically under-resourced, in need of recognition and resources to carry the project forward. However, much has been achieved.

KWAHK aims to raise national and international awareness about the issue of violence and discrimination, in particular honour crimes, experienced by Kurdish women and girls, both in Kurdistan and in the Diaspora. It attempts to establish dialogue with human rights organisations, international NGOs, governmental agencies and service providers to identify the strategies and legal procedures most appropriate to fight against different forms of violence against women. (see [www.kwahk.org/about.asp](http://www.kwahk.org/about.asp)).

Honour crime is enshrined in silence and fear. KWAHK sees the task of raising awareness about honour crime as central. To achieve our aims, we have staged several important national and international conferences on the subject. We have also initiated dialogue, consultations and public debate with party representatives in Iraqi Kurdistan. In addition, KWAHK has registered its voice within Amnesty International. And, what is more, the organisation has been actively involved in helping the Metropolitan Police to bring the killer of Heshu Yones to justice.

It is the case of Heshu Yones that I now wish to address.

## **The case of Heshu Yones and KWAHK’s intervention:**

On the evening of October 12<sup>th</sup>, 2002, Heshu Yones, aged 17, was murdered by her father. Her body was found mutilated in the family flat in West London.

The news of Heshu’s murder shocked members of the Kurdish community in Britain and elsewhere. Some immediately saw it as a case of honour killing. However, most wished to believe a rumour that the family had fallen victim to a racist attack.

At first, Heshu's Father attempted to deny involvement. It was even suggested that the death of Heshu was the result of an al-Qaida attack upon the family. Eventually, though, the father confessed. Nevertheless, he attempted to claim that he should be treated with leniency on the pretext that his actions should be regarded as a "cultural matter". In September 2003, he stood trial for murder, was found guilty and condemned to life imprisonment.

KWAKH was the case on several levels.

### **KWAHK's intervention with the Metropolitan Police Service**

Soon after Heshu's murder, we addressed a letter to the police. In the letter, we highlighted the issue of honour killing and drew the team's attention to relevant literature on the subject, including KWAHK's website and offered to assist the investigation.

The Metropolitan Police at that stage did not have a highly developed understanding of honour crime and its place inside the Kurdish community. Yet, a line of communication between the Metropolitan Police and KWAHK was established.

KWAHK provided detailed and grounded analytical papers, charting the historical, ideological and materialist underpinning of honour crime.

In addition, through our close relationship with the Kurdish community, we were able to provide timely and crucial advice to the police about the practical measures that should be taken to ensure the successful prosecution of the case. In particular, when attempts were made to secure release on bail for Mr Yones, pending the trial, KWAHK was on hand to make clear that it was highly probable that he would use this opportunity to abscond and relocate to Iraqi Kurdistan, where his political connections and the fact that honour killing is tolerated, would ensure that he could live without fear of extradition.

KWAHK also followed very closely the conduct of the trial of Mr Yones, with the primary purpose of providing up to date media coverage to the Kurdish community both in Kurdistan and in the Diaspora. Here, the use of the World Wide Web and the Internet was crucial in breaking the silence and getting the message across that women are not destined to be victims, who must learn to live lives of fear in silence.

Work with the Metropolitan Police has continued. KWAHK contributes to a Task Force set up to tackle the issue of honour crime within the UK and played an important part in the Metropolitan police's first national conference on honour killing held in June, 2004.

### **KWAHK's position and action inside the Kurdish community in the UK**

Women activists and campaigners against honour crimes are often marginalized and stigmatised inside the Kurdish community. According to the cultural norms, killing in the name of honour is merited and not a crime. When a father kills his daughter for the sake of honour it is he who attracts sympathy and it is she who is condemned in the eyes of the community. Likewise, those who defend the "dishonourable" add to the dishonour of the group. Hence, the majority of the community views women campaigners against honour crimes as a disgrace, who do no more than expose internal conflicts to the outside world.

It is therefore not surprising that KWAHK's members have been stigmatised. What is more, as we are collaborating with the police, our collaboration takes a political dimension. The police, according to the Kurds, are associated with the oppressive state apparatus. This interpretation is due to the fact that Kurds, in all parts of Kurdistan, are oppressed by agents of the state. Collaborating with the police, for the majority of the Kurds, is considered as an act of treason. Therefore, KWAHK's action inside the Kurdish community has been

problematic. However, KWAHK has never cut the line of dialogue and discussion with the community. We too are members of this same community and it is important for us to try to work together, while bearing in mind that there can be no compromise when it comes to honour crimes. Our task requires a great deal of risk, intelligence, comprehension, patience and diplomacy.

In the case of Heshu, the Kurdish community was divided. Mr Yones used to be a member of one of two main parties in Iraqi Kurdistan. He and his family were supported by the party, that is popular in the Kurdish Diaspora. It should also be said, that Mr Yones was working in the office of his party in London and it is there that he received an anonymous letter telling him about his daughters conduct. It is not surprising, then, to see that the rumours around “the racist attack on the family” was generated by the party members. At Heshu’s funeral, a public statement was read denouncing those who challenged the rumour and implored all to stand by the family at “this difficult moment”.

It has, indeed, been a difficult moment for Mr Yones’ family. In an honour crime, even if the family members approve of the killing, most of the family members are traumatised and need psychological support, especially the children. Mr and Mrs Yones have two other children, one of whom was 11 years old at the time of the crime.

After the crime, KWAHK approached the mother; a member of KWAHK went to meet her to offer help. We understood that the mother was highly disturbed. However, it was difficult for us to stand by her, as she was suspicious of our initiative and did not collaborate. On several occasions, we passed recommendations to the social services dealing with the case to offer special psychological support to the family, and especially the 11 year-old child.

With regard to the community in general, in the week of Heshu’s murder, we staged a seminar for a Kurdish scholar to talk about the historical roots of honour crime in Kurdistan. Although the seminar was organised well before the killing, concerns were raised inside the community. Many boycotted the seminar, seeing it as a forum to condemn Mr Yones.

In the meeting, KWAHK read out a statement and clarified its position towards Heshu’s murder. In the absence of any official announcement from the police, KWAHK chose not “to add to the hearsay circulating in the community and to wait until the Metropolitan police finishes its investigation.” The statement reads:

*“As our campaign has proven since its launch in March 2000, we rely on verifiable evidence in our campaign against violence against women. Not only do we refuse to follow the rumours inside the community, we also believe that rumours damage Kurdish people in general and Kurdish women in particular. So much so, that it should not be forgotten that some of the honour related killings, which we have documented, have happened as a consequence of hearsay. We want to be rational and independent in our action. This is why we have decided to wait for the result of the investigation being carried out by the Metropolitan police.*

*Luckily, in this country, it is the widespread belief that the law is an impartial instrument for justice. We rely on British law to resist the weight of any group or force and to deliver justice on the basis of truth.”* We ended the statement by asking “all members of our community, men and women, to stand by us to defend justice.”

I would like to say here, that in sensitive cases like this we are very cautious and even seek legal advice before making our position public.

Our intervention with the community becomes more problematic when it comes to the Western media representation of honour crime. I will develop this by now talking about our advocacy work with the mass media.

## **KWAHK's advocacy at the level of the mass media**

Raising awareness necessitates interventions into the mainstream media. Since KWAHK's inception, we have been able to make our voices heard and gain visibility on national television and radio, both in Kurdistan and a number of European countries.

What is more, KWAHK has seized the opportunities offered by the Internet to release voices, showcase experiences, retain memories and promote the campaign (see [www.kwahk.org](http://www.kwahk.org)).

Following the verdict of Heshu Yones, the Metropolitan Police staged a press conference. The media showed a great deal of interest. KWAHK was inundated with requests for information and invitations to appear in television, radio and newspaper interviews. In addition, KWAHK's website received its highest number of visits thus far during that week.

It is saddening to see, that most of the articles published about Heshu's story were simplistic. Most reports diverted public attention by focussing on the sensational at the expense of the analytical.

Previous experience with the media had taught us to be careful. In no way do we wish to be used by journalists and newspapers wishing to promote anti-immigrant/asylum seeker ideas. In the aftermath of September 11<sup>th</sup>, and the emergency of a stigmatising dominant ideology towards Muslims and migrant communities, it is important for us to avoid feeding animosity towards any community, culture or religion.

Our position on this matter was that to insist on having a firm agreement on editorial control if we were to co-operate. Given the sensitive and complicated nature of the issue of honour crimes, it is necessary for the journalists to demonstrate a profound understanding and avoid a homogenising discourse about ethnic minority cultures and communities.

What is more, the ideological and shallow representation of honour based violence has negative repercussions on members of the community and those who combat honour crimes. During the intensive coverage of Heshu's case in the media, I interviewed several young members of the community. The findings were shocking, for even those who were against this practice, felt injured and said that "their neighbours had been looking down at them" following the negative coverage. Also, these kinds of representations stigmatise us further within our community.

Because of all that, KWAHK decided to denounce negative coverage about the Kurds, by releasing a statement both in Kurdish and English. More importantly, I felt it necessary to send out an open letter to the judge, Neil Denison, who tried Heshu's father and criticised his position. While passing the sentence, Judge Denison said: "This is, on any view, a tragic story arising out of irreconcilable cultural differences between traditional Kurdish values and the values of Western society". This statement was quoted by almost all of the journalists who wrote about the case.

My main concern in my open letter to the judge, which was published in several national newspapers and websites, was that the application of justice might be diluted whenever considerations of cultural difference enter into the 'equation'. And that cultural relativism paves the way for the division of human rights according to culture and religion.

## **Follow up of the case**

KWAHK has sought to keep the memory of Heshu alive. For example, in October last year, KWAHK participated in an international conference in Paris organised by Madam Mitterrand's organisation "France libertes and l'Envol d'Alcyone". In that meeting, attended by more than one thousand people including the Dalai Lama, Heshu was commemorated. Her

commemoration took two forms: with a minute of silence and an exhibition. The exhibition consisted of a number of paintings including two special ones painted in Her memory by the famous Kurdish artist, Rebwar Saeed. The paintings are part of a project KWAHK developed in collaboration with a French organisation "La Pluie d'Oiseaux" and a women's organisation in Iraqi Kurdistan. A number of the paintings are exhibited here today and I would invite you to make some time to appreciate them. (please view the conference program for a presentation of the exhibition)

We have also commemorated the life of Heshu with a group of Middle Eastern and Asian women organisations in London, including South Hall Black Sisters. In addition, there is an online exhibition, hosted on KWAHK's website, dedicated to Heshu.

### Concluding remarks

In promoting awareness we are forced to face the fact that understanding is all too often hidden from view because rigid categorisations of the culture of a whole people are seen as the explanation for the problem of honour crime. We do acknowledge that honour killing is often culturally and historically defined. However, this statement should not invite the idea that all Kurds accept this practice. The Kurds, both here and elsewhere, contain within their number both hidden and visible dissenters, different voices that defy the idea that 'the community' is a homogeneous entity, static and incapable of reflection. It is, after all, the space for difference and dissent that gave birth to an organisation such as KWAHK.

Associating a whole community with a particular practice, such as honour killing, is not only erroneous scientifically but may also lead to greater racial and ethnic tension, feeding the far right within the "host" society as they create a divide between their world and the outside one. Ironically, it is exactly the same understanding that dominates the mind of perpetrators of honour based crimes, but in reverse; for example, someone like Abdulla Yonis, Heshu's father, created boundaries between his "Kurdish" universe and the outside world, a space that he had feared and distrusted. This resulted in an extremist attitude, one where he sought to impose ever tighter rules and restrictions with the aim of controlling the behaviour of his family members, especially the female members for they were perceived as the vessel for the preservation of tradition.

Yet, on the other side of the same coin we have the xenophobic approach where someone like Yonis is the standard bearer of a whole culture and religion, of that great mass of immigrants who have not learnt to appreciate the gift of residence in the "civilised" Christian west. This approach adds to the increasing hostility existing already towards migrant and refugee communities. Brutal murders in the name of honour exacerbate the animosity and women in this equation become more isolated and subjected to violence and discrimination. In order to protect themselves from outside hostility, they will be pushed to associate themselves with the actors who are responsible for their abuse, thus leaving them less receptive to the work of women activists and, more importantly, propelled further away from the realisation of basic rights to live without the fear or actuality of violence.

With the activities and works of civil and women rights groups like KWAHK, cultural norms can change. Ten years ago, inside Kurdish communities, no one could debate publicly honour crime. Now in 2004, it has made an impact in public debate and the Kurdish authorities in Iraqi Kurdistan have undertaken legal reforms. In all cultures there are men and women who challenge accepted wisdom. KWAHK is composed of women and men from this same culture that is called Kurdish and yet, we are defying conservative voices inside our community and struggle to influence the prevailing mentality. Combating honour crimes is not a priority among others, it is an absolute priority that demands mobilisation of all of us.



## Recommendations

We endorse the recommendations presented in the Change report on honour based violence in the UK (KWAHK has participated in the work carried out by Change). However, there are additional points that we wish to add:

- That all the outstanding cases of honour killings are investigated and brought to justice.
- That legislation is made effective to pursue those who commit murder abroad, that is, in the country of origin, and that they are subjected to the rule of the law in their country of residence.
- That refugee status is given to women who face violence and the prospect of murder and cannot stay in their country of origin.
- That awareness of honour based violence is incorporated into the training of media representatives and journalists so that they may treat the issues in a more informed and sensitive manner.
- That women's rights groups inside ethnic minority communities are included in debate, along with the training and policy making processes.
- That women's rights groups be assisted with resources so that they can develop intervene and contribute more effectively in their communities.
- That shelters and rehabilitation centres be established for women at risk and victims of honour based violence, with medical and counselling facilities along with the police protection to ensure their liberty and physical safety.

## **Sihem Habchi; HRV and European Advocacy, the French Experience**

### **For equality based on respect! Pour ne plus raser les murs!**

*Ni Putes, Ni Soumises (neither bitch, nor submissive) is a mixed mass movement that sprung from the Women's march against ghettos and for equality (February 1st to March 8th 2003). Symbolically, the march set off from Vitry-sur-Seine, where 19 year-old Sohanne was burnt alive in her housing estate's garbage dump – a victim of her desire to be free. For five weeks, five girls and two boys walked across France to denounce the condition of girls and women in the ghettos. After being received by the Prime Minister's office, NPNS was joined by 30,000 sympathisers on International Women's Day. The silence had been broken: no one can now claim that they did not know.*

Backed by a wave of support (65,000 people signed the national petition!), NPNS has been setting up local committees across France. Lawyers and psychologists have been working voluntarily with victims.

NPNS believes passionately in racial and sexual equality. Each local committee spreads the values of secular republicanism, the foundation of a diverse society.

### **For a secular and mixed republic, "The Mariannes of today"**

To mark the final stage of the Women's march against ghettos and for equality, giant posters of 14 young women from the ghettos were draped across the entrance of the French national assembly. Who could better represent the indomitable Marianne, the liberator and guardian of the Republic? The 14 young women from the ghettos are the descendants of Marianne, a woman of the people who rose against tyranny and fought for liberty, equality and fraternity. The event, organised by the contemporary art gallery "Edgar le marchand d'art" would not have been made possible without the active support of Jean-Louis Debré, the president of the National Assembly.

### **At the heart of democracy**

At the first "Ni Putes Ni Soumises" congress, 3, 4 and 5<sup>th</sup> October 2003 more than 600 people, activists and sympathisers, came from all over France to debate subjects ranging from secularism, multiculturalism, the ghettos and international solidarity. The congress brought together the new local committees to train them in setting up and running local community organisations. A number of politicians, community leaders and civil society leaders attended in order to hear youths from the ghetto speak out.

At the end of the event, Fadela Amara, the president of NPNS, called publicly on Jacques Chirac, the President of the Republic, to make the condition of women a national cause.

### **Background**

The burgeoning incidents of rape of young women point to an increasingly common phenomenon in what are known as cites the massive housing projects that forms a ring around most of the country's large cities.

The girls there are trapped between the restrictive culture of their families and the aggression

of boys their own age, who verbally (and often physically) harass any of them who show signs of independence.

"There are only two types of girls" in the *cites*, Samira Bellil writes in her book about the gang rapes she suffered as a teen-ager near Paris. "Good girls stay home, clean the house, take care of their brothers and sisters, and only go out to go to school," writes Bellil in "Dans l'Enfer des Tournantes" (In the Hell of Gang Rapes) "Those who . . . dare to wear make-up, to go out, to smoke, quickly earn the reputation as 'easy' or as 'little whores.'"

Tired of being labelled and harassed, a group of girls and women from the *quartiers* took to the streets throughout France this spring to denounce their situation. Their movement, called "Ni Putes, Ni Soumisses" ("Neither Bitch Nor Submissive") culminated in a march through 28 cities, a 30,000-person protest in Paris in March, and a meeting with the Prime Minister the same month. They are organizing an eclectic benefit concert for next fall that will include some of France's biggest pop, traditional and world music stars. The movement has certainly made an impact: Posters were plastered in subway stations and on kiosks and the march made the front page of France's major newspapers, including *Le Monde* and *Liberation*.

Housing projects are located in the suburbs surrounding such large cities as Paris, Marseille and Bordeaux, built in the 1950s and 1960s to provide low-income housing for the influx of immigrants, most of whom were from Algeria, Tunisia and sub-Saharan Africa. There has long been a high concentration of social problems in these areas, but "during the last 10 years, the worsening of the economic situation has really accelerated," says Helene Orain, a sociologist and one of the movement's main organisers. "All of the social indicators have skyrocketed in these neighbourhoods" she says, pointing to an unemployment rate that now hovers at 25 % -more than double that of the overall nation.

To counter these problems, many young people in the "quartiers" have turned to religion, in most cases Islam. In the fundamentalist, often distorted version of religion to which many of the youth adhere, women are inferior to men in every respect. At the same time, violence in the housing projects has turned inward. In the 1980s and early 1990s, teen-age boys burned cars and scribbled graffiti to protest against marginalization and to attract the government's attention. Today, says Orain, boys are often belittled and discriminated against in jobs and in school, so they take out their aggression on those they can still dominate: girls.

20 years ago, women in the *quartiers* were either "closed in or had no rights" or were "considered prostitutes." "But today", she says in an interview, "they also suffer from rapes and violence." In fact, rapes in the housing projects have gone up by between 15-20 % every year since 1999, according to government statistics. Women's-rights advocates estimate that unreported rapes make the figure even higher. Members of the group say girls are subjected to a hidden system of surveillance, in which neighbours, older brothers or even other girls scrutinise them everywhere they go. Any deviance – smoking, hanging out with boys – is promptly reported back to their parents. First and foremost, the girls are judged by their clothes, which, according to the code of the *cites*, are expected to cover up their bodies. Most girls drape themselves in baggy athletic jackets and track pants. Those who don't conform are harassed, called "prostitutes" and "whores."

So girls dress conservatively and make complicated detours to avoid walking in front of groups of boys. Some even resort to wearing a veil – not necessarily because of their Muslim beliefs – but as a way to protect themselves, says Orain. The right to wear a veil to school, meanwhile, is a matter of huge controversy in France, a country that takes pride in the strict separation of church and state. Legislators have introduced a bill to forbid the practice, while civil-rights advocates argue that any attempt to outlaw it is an infringement on freedom of expression and a direct assault on Muslim traditions.

Chastity is so important that some parents ask a gynaecologist to testify to their daughters' virginity and some girls undergo operations to stitch up their hymens. Faced with the double-edged danger of becoming victims or of losing their reputations, many girls are banned (or ban themselves) from going out at all.

Eric Debarbieux, an educational science professor at the University of Bordeaux in Southern France, wrote in a study on youth violence that small acts of aggression in the *quartiers* "lead to daily oppression, causing the victims to isolate themselves, to feel powerless and anguished, and to abandon public spaces." Hence, say the movement's organisers, the girls are more likely to give up their education and succumb to forced marriages imposed by their parents. They become submissive, silent, and resigned to their fate.

The goal of the movement is to show these girls and young women an alternative and call attention to their condition. It began two years ago through an association called "Federation Nationale des Maisons des Potes", a national network based in Paris that helps young people in France's impoverished neighbourhoods. Spurred by Fadela Amara, the organisation's president, who grew up in a *cite*, the group's leaders met women and girls in *cites* throughout the country in 2001. In 2002, they circulated a "manifesto" outlining their goals: "We are the women of the *quartiers* who have decided to no longer be silent in face of the injustices with which we live, and to reject the idea that in the name of a 'tradition' or of a 'religion' or simply of violence, we are condemned to suffer." The group immediately went about creating "vigilance committees" in each of France's 95 governmental sectors to help women to create anti-violence programs and aid the victims of violence or harassment. They also forged partnerships with such local associations as family planning groups and battered women's shelters. They also called for sexual education as early as elementary school; courses on gender equality and women's rights; and more after-school programs, as well as wider availability of counselling and medical services.

This spring, as the marchers took on the major cities, change seemed to be on the horizon. The movement's leaders met the prime minister to present five proposals, including shelters for victims of physical and sexual abuse, and a "guide of respect" to be distributed in middle and high schools. All the proposals were accepted, and 50 apartments have already been reserved for women in crisis. The concert next September is expected to raise thousands of dollars to help fund the other measures.

## Four Illustrative Cases

### *Sohanne, burnt alive*

Symbolically, the march of "Ni Putes, Ni Soumises" began in the city of Vitry-sur-Seine, where a young woman, Sohanne Denziane, was burned alive in October 2002 when she refused the advances of a group of young men who had been regularly raping and harassing the young women of this large Islamic community located in the south-eastern suburb of Paris.

### *Gang Rape, Samira Bellil*

Bellil's 2002 autobiographical narrative, "Dans l'Enfer des Tournantes" (In the Hell of Gang Rape), explores the violence she endured during her childhood in a tough Parisian suburb, from drugs to gang rapes at the age of 13. The book, written in the street language Bellil grew up speaking, was the final step in her fight to regain a sense of self-worth and quickly became a best seller.

Bellil herself was rejected and abused for bringing charges against her aggressors following the gang rape, thus breaking the law of silence that reigns in the high-rise zones where men and boys hold sway. She was in the avant-garde of the French women's rights movement. She died of stomach cancer when she was 31. Her strength allowed numerous girls to resist, to achieve their emancipation.

*A 34 year-old woman was murdered because she decided to be free after her divorce*

The 12<sup>th</sup> of June 2004, a man killed his ex-wife in the street in front of their four kids in the middle of the ghetto. After her divorce Kadhija decided to have a baby with another man and began a new life. After the execution in front of the commentary tribunal, the killer received the support of everybody by saying “it was her fault”.

*Rim, Forced Marriages*

Rim went on holiday to Tunisia as every year. She had just graduated. When she arrived her father presented her -- to her future husband. She was still a child in her own mind and could not believe it. A forced marriage is an official rape. At 18, she lost her innocence. With the help of a sister who bought the airline tickets she escaped from Tunisia alone. She arrived, only with the clothes on her back, to our place in Paris. After a year of psychological support, she has now continued her studies and live in an apartment of her own.

According to the government, there are 75.000 women in France that might be victims of forced marriages. A commission was created in 2004 to reflect on this matter. But there is at this moment no legal issue for the French girls that have been forced to marry in other countries.

## Repudiation

According to Franco-Algerian treaties signed in 1964 after independence of Algeria (1962), any judgement passed in Algeria is applicable to Algerian citizens living in France. However in 1964, it was 20 years before the revolting Algerian Family Law (known as "Family Code in Algeria, passed in 1984) The application of this 'infamous' law in Algeria should have led the French authorities to question and review its application in France. Our country does not have to and should not apply arbitrary legislation, whether it concerns foreign citizens or not.

At the very time when Islamic fundamentalists in France itself surreptitiously attempt, through some preachers in mosques, to create a situation that will lead to the application of Sharia, it is not tolerable that egalitarian laws be trampled on, and that this be done at the time when our legislation more and more aims at equal rights. The laws of the republic and the principles of equality should be applied to all citizens living in France, regardless of their nationality.

A strange co-existence of French law and the Algerian Family Law (Code de la Famille) allows it to happen: The procedure for repudiation is applicable in France to immigrant women.

## Recommendations

Hundreds, if not thousands, of women are murdered by their families each year in the name of family “honour”. It is difficult to get precise numbers on the phenomenon of honour killings; the murders frequently go unreported, the perpetrators unpunished, and the concept of family honour justifies the act in the eyes of some societies.

Most honour killings occur in countries where the concept of women as a vessel of the family reputation predominates.

Our enemy is the patriarchal oppression which takes different forms: Violence against women; honour violence (Crimes in the name of honour are not only honour killings, but also the maltreatment, oppression and outcasting of a girl or a woman, which are carried out to save or restore family honour); and the law of silence.

*How many women in the European union actually live in repressive conditions, without access to the full rights guaranteed by their republic?*

In Jordan, journalist Rana Husseini explained, victims of crimes of honour are imprisoned for their own protection from male relatives.

*How is it that in “democratic” Western Europe, the land of “cultural diversity”, crimes of honour are tolerated?*

The issue of “honour” has become the last line of defence for the more traditional members of immigrant communities, justified in the name of upholding the “traditions” of ethnic minorities. And in the name of “cultural sensitivity” (out of fear of being accused of racism), authorities in Western European democracies have turned a blind eye to the phenomenon. The perpetrators are often charged with manslaughter and not murder. The first victims of the failure to aggressively prosecute “crimes of honour” are women.

*How can we break the law of silence? Help women by giving them the courage to speak out and to feel free to live in another way?*

In Sweden, since the death of 26-year old Fadime Sahindal, who was killed by her Kurdish father for dating a Swedish man, the government no longer recognises marriages of minors – of any nationality – under the age of 18 and has provided safe houses for girls from immigrant communities.

In the UK, Ann Cryer, a member of Parliament together with Scotland Yard officers drew attention to the measures taken to combat “crimes of honour”.

Ever since the highly publicised case of Zena and her English boyfriend in 1999 – the couple, under threat from her family, had to live on the run for years –, the Home Office and the Foreign Office have set up a joint commission to investigate “crimes of honour”.

*How can we give to the youth the democratic weapon to fight the patriarchal values, fundamentalism, and discrimination?*

“Ni Putes Ni Soumises” fully supports efforts to expose and combat “crimes of honour”.

The separation of church and state and resistance against any form of religious fundamentalism is an integral part of the liberation of women.

All Europeans must stand firm against the discrimination that allows women from ethnic communities to be sacrificed in the name of “cultural sensitivity”.

*How can we live together and not just co-exist? How to promote the citizen participation?*

“Ni Putes Ni Soumises” believes in a Europe where all our children will learn to live together – and not merely coexist. A Europe where citizenship will be applied to all, and not denied to women from ethnic minorities. And a Europe where equality between the sexes is a priority.

The Swedish government has invited NPNS to participate in another conference about “crimes of honour”, 7-8 December, 2004, in Stockholm.

## **The NPNS manifesto**

We, the women living in the ghettos, of all origins, call for our rights to freedom and emancipation. Society has exiled us to ghettos, breeding grounds for poverty and exclusion. In the name of tradition, we are being suffocated by the machismo of our men, who deny us our most fundamental rights. On the occasion of this first “Assembly of women from the ghettos”, we affirm our will to win back our rights, our freedom and our femininity. We refuse to be bound by false choices or to sell our bodies to the consumer society.

### **ENOUGH MORALS**

Our situation has worsened. The media and politicians have done nothing, or almost, to help us.

### **ENOUGH PITY**

We are tired of others speaking on our behalf, treating us with contempt.

### **ENOUGH EXCUSES**

Of our oppression in the name of multiculturalism, of those who force us to keep our heads down.

### **ENOUGH SILENCE**

In public debates, about violence, poverty and discrimination.

The feminist movements have deserted the ghettos. Facing a crisis, we have decided to act. No one else will free us from the struggle for freedom and emancipation and against racism and exclusion. We have raised our voices so that our sisters and mothers in every ghetto in Europe can hear our cry for freedom and join our struggle to carve out our own space in our own neighbourhoods.





**Friday 8 October**  
**Plenary Session III and Panel Debate**



## Sara Mohammed; Cries for Help: Letters from Threatened Girls

I am very glad to have been invited here today to participate at this important conference. It is not easy for me to read out letters in English, and even more so when it comes to sad and emotional letters that have made me cry. These two letters are the voices of two of the anonymous girls that have asked our association for help.

*“Hello!*

*I hope that all is well with you and that your work with the Never Forget Pela and Fadime-association goes well.*

*My name is Nadia and I have read everything about the Pela and Fadime cases. I have been very interested in questions related to honour and have therefore started to borrow books, to surf the Internet daily, and have simply tried to find information in every possible way.*

*My interest in such cases started very long ago. The reason for that was that I was and still am in a similar situation. By similar situation I mean that I live under constant threats and supervision by my family, and particularly by my elder brother who is around nineteen years old.*

*He has threatened to kill me and I am not allowed to return home from school even one minute late, or telephone friends, or go out alone at all. This is because I have loved a man for three full years now and I refuse to give up my love.*

*I cry every day because I cannot stand lying to my family. Only my brother knows of my love to this boy, and now he controls me. I love my father above all and the same goes for the rest of my family.*

*But this summer, on the second of July, we will visit my father’s homeland and I know that my brother plans to tell my father that I have been with a man. Then my father will kill me there or simply abandon me there by marrying me away. I am so scared that I can not concentrate on my studies.*

*I have to go now. And please reply to my letter because I really need help.*

*The best to you,*

*Nadia”*

*“Hello,*

*I don't know why I am writing this letter just for you, but I have the feeling that it is safe to write to you. I hope that I have not been fooled by my feelings. You can call me Samira. I have two choices now: 1) to kill myself or 2) to undergo surgery to repair my virginity.*

*I was together with a man from another culture. We loved each other very much and he died in a car accident. My parents knew nothing of our relationship. I lost my virginity and now my parents want to marry me to someone that they have chosen. It is not that I do not like him, that is not important anymore, but if he or they find out during the wedding night that I am no longer a virgin, my death is certain.*

*Please Sara, is there any way to perform surgery on the maidenhead to make me a virgin again? If so, I will pay any price to do that. Please help me, Sara.*

*Regards, Samira”*

I would like to conclude my talk by thanking the organisers of this conference. I am sorry, but I must soon leave to participate at a seminar in London for the two-year memorial day of Heshu. I hope that this will be rewarding to all of you, good luck and thank you.

## Elisabeth Fritz; HRV the Legal Aspects

*“She was seen around town with boys and our fellow countrymen was beginning to speak about us. It finally became too much and we tried to stop her”.*

*“She deserved to die. She had tarnished our honour by losing her virginity”.*

*“They marked me with a glowing hot fork to remind me what I have done to them”.*

*“I just wanted to live my own life”.*

*“I’m scared every time I go out. I know that one day, they will come and find me and will carry out their death threats”.*

*“Three times I tried to stop him, but in the end he shot my sister. He shot her with a gun”.*

These are quotes from actual cases in which I have represented immigrant girls. Immigrant girls who were the victims of serious honour related crimes. One of these crimes and the last quote was concerning the killing of Pela. Pela was murdered in Kurdistan, during a vacation trip in 1999. According to her family she was killed because she had brought shame on the family’s honour. Pela’s murder prompted a debate in Sweden, and for the first time it was about the immigrant girls, girls who were the victims of honour related crimes. There were many in the communities who questioned the existence of honour killings and honour related crimes. Especially in the form of physical abuse, threats and child marriage, and of course the honour killings. Several politicians publicly compared these forms of honour related violence to the violence, which Swedish women are exposed to.

It was clear to me that these problems needed to be highlighted and clarified. It was equally clear that in general, The politicians, and officials in public authorities and functionaries in the legal system needed to increase their knowledge of this important subject. Since that time I have worked together with many other people, mostly members of non-profit organisations to spread this knowledge. Through my work, as an attorney, I have represented a number of girls and women who have been subjected to honour related crimes. It can be murder, mistreatment, threats and forced child marriages and I can see that during the past few years, a change for the better has occurred here in Sweden and I am very proud of that. We can now see an increased understanding of the problem among people working in the public services, including schools, the social services, the police and other parts of the judicial system. Today, for example, we have a number of sheltered homes, specifically for girls who are under risk of honour related crimes. In these homes we also have professional persons who are able and available to help these girls.

The Swedish criminal law does not take into account cultural reasons that might be sighted by the perpetrators of crimes. There are no mitigating circumstances that a person, accused of crimes, can use simply because they have a different culture. Nor is there anything in Swedish law saying that honour, as a motivation for crimes, is an aggravating circumstance, leading to a more severe penalty. I regard this as a shortcoming that should be changed, since a girl or a woman that is victim of an honour related crime always has suffered from various restrictions to her freedom. Moreover, these types of crimes always violates the concepts of peace for women as well as their human rights. I believe that honour related aspects of crimes should always be considered aggravating circumstances that ought to result in a more severe penalty than crimes that do not have this motive. Prison sentences in Sweden are in my opinion too mild, especially when it comes to threats or physical abuse, while murder can of course lead to life sentence.

In Sweden, we need to extend the statute of limitation of crimes committed against children. In Sweden we call it "preskriptionstid". I was in France in the spring studying the French system, especially the law system. I could see that in France the statute of limitation is starting from when the child reaches the age of eighteen, it is not the same in Sweden. When the child has reached an age of legal competence, it is easier for the child to go to the police and make a police report. I hope we will change this law in Sweden. A child who has been the victim of an honour related crime or other physical harm in the home can immediately be taken from their home by the social services and put into care, this is called LVU in Sweden, "The care of young persons act". It is a special law for children. The parents need not to be informed in advance that the child can be placed in a shelter or accommodation and the address can be secret from the parents. I think this is very special for Sweden. In addition, the social services can also regulate all contact with the parents in the manner that is considered the best for the child. The social services here in Sweden can decide that you cannot have any contact with your children. A child who is immediately taken into care can also be taken in for a longer period. In such cases a careplan must be drawn up so that the child receive the necessary help needed.

Since May 2004, Sweden has new rules regarding child marriages. It is now forbidden to enter into marriage under the age of eighteen, without the consent of the authorities. It is also easier to dissolve forced marriages and marriages entered before the age of eighteen. However, there are still shortcomings in the law that must be attended to. For example, in my opinion, the parental responsibility, in respect of child marriages and forced marriages needs to be regulated, also in the criminal law. In Sweden, we have different forms of protection and this issue is very big, but I can give you some examples. One example is a restraining order, in Swedish "besöksförbud", whereby any person who violates such a ban has committed a new crime. We have something we call "spärrmarkering", an application that can be submitted to the tax authority to block access to personal information. You can also ask for an unchanged registration or personal information, "kvarskrivning" in Swedish. You can also ask for a change of identity, that means you change your name, and in Sweden we also have personal numbers (social security numbers). The place you were born at, your parents' names, etc can also be changed. You can get special alarm telephones and in some of these big cases of honour related violence we had here in Sweden, the girls even had bodyguards.

In cases where serious threats have been made to a plaintiff or a witness, security checks are made in the courthouse and there are secure courtrooms for the proceedings. It is especially used in the honour related cases in Sweden. A plaintiff may, for example, request that her or his case is heard without the accused present in the courtroom. If the plaintiff is extremely frightened he or she does not have to meet the accused at all. We also have a rule that says, that if there are listeners in the courtroom that disrupt the court proceedings or disturb the plaintiff in such a manner that she or he is unable to tell the truth, the court can order the person to leave the courtroom. I use this rule very often, because these families have many uncles, cousins, etc just being there to press the plaintiff or the witness. In special circumstances you can also request to have the court behind closed doors. In these criminal cases the plaintiff is entitled to be represented by a lawyer, as a counsel for the plaintiff, or "målsägandebitråde" in Swedish. In cases where the child has been taken into care the child has the right to have a lawyer of its own, different from the parents' lawyer, we call it "offentligt biträde", a translation to that is a public counsel. It is also possible to obtain legal assistance when applying for different sources of protection. In Sweden we have made considerable progress in helping the victims.

The big problem that we need to focus on is to reach the people who commit honour related crimes and people who have a negative view of women and girls. People who believe that the actions made by Pela's father and uncles or Fadime's father were justified. We must make greater demands on religious leaders within their own religious communities. We also need to make greater demands on the immigrant organisations. Everyone must become involved and

assume their share of the responsibility in this issue. This is not a women's problem but a social problem. It is also simply a matter of human rights. An important measure would also be to work together with other countries on these issues within the whole European Union and also with other countries further away. I think this conference will bring us a step closer to this kind of co-operation.

Thank you very much for this conference and I really hope we can work together in the future to make this better.

## Lewis Benjamin; HRV and the Police

Good morning Ladies and Gentlemen. Before I start this presentation I would like to acknowledge the work of my good friend and colleague Salman Asif, who wrote an excellent paper upon which this presentation is based, and I recommend it to you who have not read it.

### **A brief introduction.**

You may know that I am from the Metropolitan Police at the Scotland Yard and am a Detective Chief Superintendent there. I have been involved in murder investigations there, investigating this for six years. Some of the murder investigations, unfortunately involved honour related killings. The Metropolitan Police have looked at this issue and in conjunction with other issues involved in the tried to deconstruct these murders, so that we can build it up, examine it and then understand this phenomenon and hopefully prevent people from getting killed this honour killing for us is part of a wider look at murder and murder prevention. I am going to concentrate in this presentation on the police reaction to this issue. It is not just the police reaction We have got colleagues as Salman, Jack and Nazand here and we formed a group that would look at the issue of honour killings and we are working towards preventative measures of murdering. I will also talk about EUROPOL and the European Homicide Working Group, and about effective tactics dealing with these issues. I will also mention preventive measures. I will end with an outline of challenges and we should be realistic about it because we have some huge mountains to climb.

This is not addressed to a particular gender, although it is predominantly against women, we have had some male victims, and it is not restricted to any particular religion. The terms honour related violence and honour related crimes and honour related killings are misnamed, in our view these are crimes of dishonour, they demean the perpetrator and they degrade the victim and the memory of the victims, of those who died. I also provide a mitigating screen which can hide and oppress women, it's important to get that right. Words are very important, especially when you investigate these crimes. We feel guilty in some respect as we have been slow to realise what this issue is. The Metropolitan police realised what honour related violence really is about when "Heshu Yones" was killed. But there are others as well. I have investigated the case of "Pal Dal", who was systematically raped and then strangled by her own brother-in-law in 1999. Another case that we have not solved is "Surjit Athwal" who disappeared, taken by her mother in law to India. Her husband was so confident that she was dead, that he declared her dead only after a week. Her mother in law came back, but Sergio did not, and we never found her body.

We think that enlightened law enforcement agencies should approach these issues by engaging intensive consultation. Intervening by using predictive events to predict exactly what cause of events will be and intercede before it gets to an honour killing, or a serious assault. We use proactive interventions and appropriated enforcement methods. Our intention is that such intervention will save the lives of women. An inappropriate terminology can lead to unintended assumptions of the level of expertise and understanding possessed by the team of the investigation. It is important that the investigation officers understand what honour related crime is and an honour related killing, so that when they investigate, they can take appropriate measures. If we do not know what we are looking at to begin with we might go down the wrong route. That is why we use lot of time in training at the Metropolitan Police to build up a proper understanding.

We find honour related violence can occur in three contexts: Within the family union, within the community where violence is perpetrated by social, economic, cultural and religious



institutions and at the state level by discriminative laws. If we briefly explore the concept of honour and violence in three areas, that is; the control of women, the male feelings of shame when control is lost over a woman, and the wide level of participation in the collusion of the society around the offenders, I refer you to Salman's paper. We believe that there is a distinction between traditional societies and western honour related violence. In the traditional societies honour related violence is administered to maintain the male domination and regulate the female behaviour, it has a wider male participation. In the west we can see this patriarchy limited to the confinement of the family, the nuclear containment, although others would probably condone it. In Heshu's case for instance, her father claimed that he had received a letter from other people in the community saying his daughter was a slut and that was one of the excuses that he used. We never actually found a letter, but if it exists, that would indicate a wider community participation and thinking around Heshu.

### **Prevention strategies**

While we are committed to tackle honour related violence by partnership I will just say a few words about EUROPOL, European Homicide Working Group. Earlier this year in Haag, in Holland, the European Homicide Working Group debated this phenomenon. Our aim is to raise awareness, to spread good practice, and to foster willingness across European law enforcement agencies to investigate the matters properly and to prosecute those responsible for honour related violence. We engaged in a series of workshops to share our experiences and to talk about examples that we have investigated and shunt our way forward for the European Homicide Working Group. We were also there to offer advice to those that are investigating these types of crimes. The result of that conference is an integrated training program administered through the European Homicide Working Group.

Underpinning national and international institutes is a need to build in a global and cultural legitimacy for human rights, to engage in a global dialogue and we just heard earlier on in the letter from the UK saying that we should not indulge in cultural relativism and I would like to emphasise that. What is wrong in one culture is wrong in another and legitimacy in human rights is global. One of the points that we should get from this conference is that states have a duty to address and remove harmful customs and religious laws and practices that condone honour related violence.

### **Our prevention strategy**

One of the first points I want to make is that we heard yesterday of the reaction of one European law enforcement agency to cries for help from girls from certain communities and the Metropolitan Police Service will always investigate and seek to prosecute those who commit assaults, and certainly those who commit murder. Our records have been reasonably successful in that area.

### **Our actions**

We have introduced a force policy on potential victims of honour related violence and forced marriages and those who have contacted the police. We expect a certain standard from our staff, a certain standard in the way they are dealt with, in the treatment and the support they get. We have also introduced training for our frontline staff, as well as for our senior investigation officers and for investigation officers in serious assaults and murders. And our engagement with international, European and other agencies as well. I think that it is important to look at the direction we are going when we talk about prevention. In order to prevent anything you have to understand it and to understand it you have to have information about it. So one of the things that we do is we are going to engage the health agencies, fire brigades, women's groups, like the Southhall Black Sisters, the academic institutions, the national police forces to demand a certain standard across all police forces and most

importantly the wider relevant community. Hence to gather all information and to feed our targets in the picture in relation to honour related violence, and particularly of the concept of the near miss, because it is by defining the near miss that we can intervene, because we know at what stage we are at in the honour related violence, and before it gets to the stage of serious or fatal physical abuse we can move in and stop it, practising preventive strategies, hopefully.

### **What do we expect people to do?**

We are doing this in the UK therefore it could equally apply to any police enforcement in any state, anywhere. In terms of the police and the justice system, we expect offences to be treated as serious. Effective collaboration with the EUROPOL, providing the Europeans with a wider perspective and showing a very good practice. Great awareness of conspiracies, investigators should be more willing to consider the conspiracy aspect while investigating, which could lead to a conviction. Confidentiality for escaping females. We need to build that into any investigation. We should be cautious about mediation, if at all and it should be unusual rather than usual. Women's groups should be recognised as experts and employed in the victims' support role. Social services, we will expect them to investigate cases and protect victims and they should be aware of their statutory duties to protect minors and that includes to provide them a safe and supportive environment.

### **Health care and educational system**

Education is one of the most important things I can talk about. Health authorities and professionals must be vigilant enough for advice and to help to prevent a victim. It is an educational role for us to get to them and to be engaged in lectures and to pass on our good practices onto them. Governments should set targets for reduction of suicide among females from ethnical minorities. Koran schools should accept expert knowledge in cases of honour crimes. Education authorities must promote awareness on the issue of honour crimes as an abuse of human rights in schools and colleges as dealing with the next generation. Absence from school should be properly investigated by educational authorities and excuses for holidays for long periods should be investigated. There should be education for the criminal justice system, and November 22 we will start our first series of seminars for prosecutors in Britain. A housing act should be amended in Britain, to accept domestic violence including honour crimes as a priority ground for determining homelessness and granting homes for these women.

### **Foreign commonwealth and home offices in Britain**

There are a number of measures that should be taken, one of them should be an extension of the one year probation period that traps women into abusive relations in terms of immigration status. The foreign consulate services, this could apply to any consulate in Europe or anywhere else, must provide systems of protection in the UK. We also need a judicial response and to establish a legal framework.

### **High risk factors**

Severe ideological differences, could be a conflict of personal choice versus accepted behaviour, Heshu is a classic example of that. She was behaving in a way that all Western girls do, which is perfectly normal and acceptable but not to her father. Pressures on women to accompany family members on overseas travels to their home countries, as I mentioned Sergie Atwell who went with her mother-in-law, with no male members, to bogus her to a wedding and didn't return. An affair with a person from a different religion, race or culture, as in the case of Heshu. Separation and child contact issues. Career and lifestyle aspirations breaching the family's moral code and this is probably a growing phenomenon as more and more girls in minority communities want to live a western lifestyle. Social isolation. Previous

incidents of physical abuse and threats of physical abuse. This is something we concentrate on when we talk about near misses, looking at what these previous events are, how can we tap into that information, we have to make contact with the health services, with doctors, with the firebrigade.

### **Barriers in reporting**

Shame associated with disclosure. Social alienation, being stigmatised by the whole family and/or the community. Lack of faith in the system, they might be afraid that the police might not take it seriously. Fear of escalation of violence or being deported, coming back to the importance of awareness among immigration staff and at the home offices what this is all about. Being alone without support and threats, not knowing what will happen next if they report, that is an issue for law enforcement. These are important factors for us. It is all very well that the police are looking into the statistics and it is all very well that we are looking at cases we have been dealing with. But there is a wealth of intelligence, a majority of the information is within the community. I mentioned that Salman has had focus groups, stakeholders' collectives to get that intelligence, to hear it from people within the community, it is very important that we can seek to utilise that to come up with preventive measures. When we seek to engage with a community and combat honour related violence it must be an active process, not a passive one, we cannot just sit back and listen, we must ask questions to find out what we need.

### **What are the challenges for us?**

Some of them are pretty basic. Our challenges are to encourage greater reporting in honour related violence or any form of coercion. Maybe we can choose a third party reporting systems, where they must not come to a police to report, but go to unassociated bodies that can then forward the report to the police. We must improve the quality of investigation into honour related violence or any other signals that are pointing towards forced marriages. We have done this successfully in many other areas of crime, and we introduce a golden standard, a list that we expect to be done in any investigation. Provide the victims with appropriate services that match up to their needs. Introduce a problem solving approach to prevent honour related crimes and killings, and I mentioned earlier the near miss conception that we are working on and we are going to develop that and see how far we can take that in terms on intelligence. Finally in order to build a progress of this conference and the other work that we have been doing over the past few years, we host an international conference in London in March in 2005, when we hope to take forward this issue and that we can look at some preventive measures and some resolutions.

Thank you very much.

## Haideh Daragahi; When the Legal System Does Not Work

I am Haideh Daragahi, and I am the chairperson of a women's organisation here in Sweden, that is called Women's Rights. Apart from helping women who need support we also have a radio two hours a week, through which we have a dialogue with parts of the immigrant community here, who understand Persian, (Iranians, Kurds and Afghans). We also have a telephone time when they can contact us, during the radio program. It is interesting that it is mostly men from the minority communities that do so.

I want to speak about the cases where the law does not function or where the law does not exist, and one welcome change that I've learned about in the course of this conference so far is that it seems that the circumstances are changing for the better within one of the most important countries in Europe, that is Britain. I think the three speakers from the UK that I have listened to over these last two days-- MP Ann Cryer, Lewis Benjamin and Georgina Ashworth in the workshop earlier-- are showing that they are taking the initiative away, even from a country like Sweden, which has always been the most progressive in regard to women's issues.

In relation to this particular issue, i.e. honour related violence, I want to first and foremost, to emphasise the global nature of this category of crime. If we miss the political and the global aspect of this, we have made local efforts which may be helpful here and there, but which can never go far enough. Because a lot of the anti women tendencies among the people that I call European citizens of a non-European origin do not originate here. The minorities I talk about get their inspiration and their intellectual feedback from the most reactionary governments or political reassure groups in the countries where a lot of these minorities come from. When it is not direct financial support, proving which is a police work, it is ideological support activating tendencies that we can assume exist passively. Also going beyond Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East, one can also mention and emphasise the political and global nature of these tendencies. For instance when George Bush puts a ban on American aid to countries or governments with organisations that support abortion it is not only the money these organisations are deprived of; it is a green light for the most reactionary governments in these parts of the world to oppress their women. In Canada right now, in the state of Ontario, an example of this, justified in the name of respect for other cultures. They are considering, and the lady put in charge of the study is very positive towards this reform being adopted, that in legal matters or family disputes concerning the minorities the court should have a consulting body of Islamist lawyers. This means two kinds of laws in Canada for women, one for women from these minorities and one for the white majority. This is scaring a lot of these women. The women's' movement in Canada has also taken a stand, but so far a very weak one. It is worth speculating whether this decision has anything to do with the fact that the state of Ontario is also the state where the previous Iranian President, Rafsamjani, who was also the head of the parliament, has a large part of his investments. There are economic and political dimensions connected to what we are talking about. We cannot afford to be naive about that.

I want to mention some of the points that are very important in dealing with honour related violence and I am mostly using the situation in Sweden, but before that I want to mention an argument used against people like us who are fighting against HRV. They are always telling us that you are playing in the hands of the racists. When you talk about these tendencies you are stigmatising the immigrant communities, this comes even from feminists, why are you washing your dirty clothes in public, why are you telling them about this. I do not recognise this "them" and "us" argument and if there are Swedish feminists who do that that is their problem. What a lot of them, who justify this, are saying is that our culture has a different attitude towards the sexuality of women. What they really mean is that your culture is our

culture 60 years ago. Because in this country, women and enlightened men fought against the concept of, for example, women as exchange objects, the reduction of love to an act of procreation, the control of female sexuality, attitudes and laws have to some extent changed. But we fought and brought about changes in the law only to apply these laws to our first class, white citizens. Our second class citizens we honour by allowing them to exist in circumstances, which we lived under a hundred years ago. This, I think it, is the core of this very refined racism.

I also want to mention some of the examples as to how the law gives double messages in relation to honour related crime and pressures. One of the things the state should prohibit are the traditions and customs that condone HRV, it should also take positive action towards this. For instance, in the European Fortress, do not recognise the suppressed women and homosexuals whose lives are threatened in their countries of origin as legitimate asylum seekers. I do not have time to go into the relation between the attitudes in the communities of citizens with non-European origin, to show how these two things are very closely connected. The stigmatisation of homosexuals is always connected to HRV and attitudes towards women and girls. They do not recognise the right of a woman who is running away because she is no longer a virgin, or who has become pregnant as a result of a relationship outside marriage, to security and life. That physical death or social execution waits for her if she goes back to her country of origin. This is a shame for Europe. The same applies to homosexuals. In a lot of countries homosexuality is forbidden by law, while more often than not the people who pass these laws are themselves closet homosexuals, as was the case in Europe until quite recently.

Another question that our organisation is very much involved in is the question of kidnapping the children and taking the woman hostage. In a lot of cases a European divorce does not apply to the rest of the world, part of the global and universal dimension of this problem. In this respect most of the immigrants, particularly first generation live between two states. A lot of them have their families and relatives back in their country of origin. The wife of a divorced man in Sweden will have to go back to the home country for family reasons. There the laws are different, the man has disagreed to the divorce. So when the woman goes there he can legally put a ban on her leaving the country. Because according to the laws in several countries the husband has to write a permission in order for her to be able to leave the country, he takes the children as pawns. When she goes looking for them, the man puts a ban on her exit. This was one of the cases that we recently dealt with where the woman was not able to come back to Sweden for this reason. This should be negotiated on the level of the government, not organisations like us calling, in this case, the Swedish embassy in Teheran asking them to take a stand. European divorce should apply to the rest of the world and the government should enforce it. So these are the points, one is the question of asylum, one is the question of the universality of divorce.

So far we have spoken a lot about the physical damage as a result of the concept of male honour, but what about the psychological damage? I am going to talk about the connection between the veil and child marriage. No one, not even the Swedish feminist movement, is prepared to go into why certain groups within these minorities insist so much on having the children veiled. The reason for it is that according to dominant interpretation of Islam, little girls are considered to be adults from the age of nine, sexual adults. This means that they have to be covered because they are seen as sex objects from that age onwards.

I think the veil is an insult, not only to women, but also to men, it implies that all men are potential rapists. Allowing this, especially in the case of children, is part of the double message I was talking about. We allow religious schools, we allow the veil, at the same time as we are talking about fighting against honour related violence. So what are we telling these minorities? You can segregate your children if you so decide? Recently an investigative program on the Swedish television, there was a Somali father who had hidden his family, five children, one of them had just reached the age of nine. He hadn't allowed her to go to school, because he wanted to protect her from the evil influences of Swedish society.

The last thing is the question of permit to stay for women who come here as, we called them, 'post-order wives', which might be perceived as an insulting term, but we have no other word for it. These are women who come here as somebody's wife, whom they have not met or met very briefly. The period in Sweden to get a permit in this case is two years. You can get a divorce and a permit to stay in this country even if you have been living with this man only for six months provided that you can show that he has been treating you violently, like having bruises on your body, or having witnesses testifying to the violence. Both of these women do not speak the language, they do not know who to go to, they have no connections in the new country, they have come here as somebody's wife and they are totally dependent on him, economically, socially and in matters of every day life.

Another problem related to this is the fact that if a woman who has been somebody's wife is divorced and goes back to the home country, she has lost all the capital she had, which is her virginity. Not only the stigma of the divorce, but also the fact that she is a touched women and no one will want her. So deporting these women is contributing to honour related violence in these countries. Upon their return the minimum repercussion they risk is social exclusion and stigmatisation

There are many more aspects that we need to raise in regard to the application of or absence of laws in regard to honour related violence.

It is absolutely necessary to increase awareness concerning this and change the laws regarding the above mentioned issues in order to combat honour related violence.

Thank you.

## Panel Debate; Redefining HRV in Europe: Future Perspectives

*Participants: Mehrdad Darvishpour, Haideh Daragahi, Lewis Benjamin, Rana Husseini, Evelyne Accad, Jack Briggs*

*Short contributions by each participant to start the debate*

**Mehrdad Darvishpour:** Yesterday I tried to explain why immigrant girls with low resources have very important effects on their situation. The conflict of the traditions and the modern view. I mean that in fact most of these conflicts, follows the conflict patterns common in Swedish families as well. It is true that some cultural aspects matter and that they can lead to legitimisation of honour related violence, which is not the case in Swedish families, but I mean that if we want to change the situation for immigrant families and girls we have to help to develop their resources. A lot of the immigrant girls have a low class background, if as ethnic minorities they experience discrimination, if as women they are under the patriarchy, as children they are submissive to their parents. We have to help these young girls to increase their resources. First of all, society have to help to change legislation, children's rights have to be at the center, you have to limit parents' power in the family. Secondly, discrimination have very negative effects on equality among immigrant families, and if you want to develop equal patterns in immigrants you have to change the discrimination. What is the difference between my point and the cultural relativistic point? They mean that the majority of the society does not have responsibility for this, another culture does. My point is that the discrimination on behalf of the majority society against the minorities could lead to more patriarchal patterns in immigrant families, they will be more segregated. When you experience discrimination, you can easier legitimise the traditional culture of the country of origin, which is more patriarchal. If they have low social economic background. Change segregation, a better economic situation could help both the parents to get a higher education, better jobs etc which could help them to have more dialogue. A lot of sociological research shows that equality is a very luxurious phenomenon. It is easier for the middle class to adapt. If this is a gender question, which I consider it to be, you have to develop resources for the group of women who are immigrants, low class, and who have very little possibilities. You also have to change the networks, because they are very important. The government need to help women's network societies, which in turn could help these women. More money to women's organisations.

In a lot of national organisations for immigrants there are mainly men, especially at the top of the organisations. These organisations reproduce patriarchal patterns, finally. You have to press them to include more women, and special plans for equality need to be connected to the funding for these organisations.

**Evelyne Accad:** As we have been discussing the past two days, all these things are interconnected and we cannot act upon an issue without working on another. For me it has always been also the relationship between men and women, what kind of relationships are men and women having? I believe this is at the root of everything. Are they relationship based on respect, helping the other person develop, or are they based on possession, jealousy, wanting to dominate etc. We should not forget that when we talk about Europe, there are dominants and dominators everywhere, I think that in this respect the immigrants are the dominated. We should not lose this unequal relationship, just like in all societies, men are the dominants and women are the dominated. If we do not reach a certain equality at all levels, based on equal sharing I think that, would be one of the things that I would like to address. I do not like the notion of punishment. If the laws started to change in the Middle East, what would then happen to the immigrant population here in Europe knowing that in their country of origin it has been changed. What would happen if this fight started there, what kind of

effect would that have here in Europe. These are some of the questions that I would like to raise.

**Lewis Benjamin:** I would like to address at two levels, the strategic and the tactical. We have had a very nice conference, we have all been talking about the same subject in the same way. I'm convinced that here we are preaching to the converted. What we really need to do is to engage the patriarchal figures in the communities we are talking about. We need to talk them about these issues. What I also would like to see is this level elevated to the politicians, get the politicians engaged, getting this issue forward and really wrestling with it, fronting it up and taking people on. At a tactical level, for the police and the Metropolitan Police, we can and we will do encourage a greater reporting of honour related violence and honour based crime and look to introduce similar sorts of reporting methods as we have done with domestic violence and other race related crimes, third party reporting, if someone does not feel comfortable with the police they can report it to somebody else, who then report it to the police. We would like to improve the quality of investigations into domestic violence and honour based crimes. This is a technique we have used in a variety of other crimes, we call it the gold standard. That means that it is properly investigated, we might get family liaison officers, intelligence marrying them up to other crimes. Witness protection schemes available, we have time limits to responses so that we get a response within a proper time frame and we will increase the use of our forensic services and the service given to interviews so that the statements taken are thorough. Providing victims with the support they need. I think the key there is liaisons with non-governmental organisations that can assist us. A problem solving approach, it means two things; analyzing those incidents that are near misses and predict the events that could lead to serious crimes or honour killings. And risk assessment. The last two points, looking forward, our strategy should include working with the communities, stakeholders' groups, we need community involvement to get the intelligence we need to be able to investigate and also prevent these crimes. Last, but most importantly, education. We need to educate the youngsters in these communities of both gender that honour based violence is wrong. We should not indulge in cultural relativism, human rights are a global legitimacy and we should hand that point over and get the politicians to take it on.

**Jack Briggs:** For those of you who were not present here today and haven't heard my presentation should know that I am not an academic, I can only speak about the twelve years experience of myself and my wife. But among the things that I have picked up on while I have been here during these couple of days are some key words that I have been using, that is again education, because I would like to think that if our situation was repeated today, the professional people would be there to help us and we wouldn't have to go through all the years wandering aimlessly around the UK, from guesthouse to guesthouse. When I was at Scotland Yard, and commander Baker used a term that the police are part of the frontline, I think every single person in here is part of that frontline, including the academics, the professionals, the people who sit here today. I think that is the key education for the social services, the welfare officers, the governmental departments. I think the sharing of information and knowledge is absolutely vital. I think that is the key to combating honour related violence.

**Rana Hussein:** In addition to what has been said I just want to say that it is very important not to discriminate the immigrants who are living in the European countries. I have traveled to many European countries and I was in Sweden last month on assignment, I was invited by a newspaper to write a story about Swedish homes and Swedish living style. I went to visit all kinds of people, the rich, the poor and then I went to the immigrants area and I could feel that the level of services they had was very low compared to the rest. They also told me that it is part of the discrimination. They told me that the discrimination regarded everything even collecting the garbage. I could see the streets were dirty, it wasn't like the other places I had visited. If you really want to talk to these immigrants and try to interfere in their lives, I think they need to be treated like the rest. I also think that they need to feel that they are a part of the community, because really, the immigrants I spoke to felt that they were in a different



world. When I went to France, the immigrants were living in certain areas. So, if you really want to address this and really help the women you have to make them feel as part of society, they need to abide to your laws when they come here. This has always been my belief that if anyone goes to another country they should respect the other country and its rules. But in order to respect these rules, they need to feel part of this rule. Another thing I would like to bring up, is that when we talk about these crimes of honour, when we want to address this issue we need to see it from a human rights perspective, rather than sexual freedom or women should be able to go out and have boyfriends. This is not the way to approach it. It is a no-no and if we really want to try to change things it has to come gradually. This is my advice to you.

**Haideh Daragahi:** I just want to comment briefly on some of the points of the speakers. While I agree completely on the fact that young European citizens of non-European origin have no prospects, no chance of living on an equal and dignified existence and have no reason at all to give up this power over their sisters or other females within the community. I also feel that we have to put emphasis on the fact that discrimination is no excuse to crime. It is important to remember that immigrant women are under even greater pressure, but they do not go home and kill their children because this is not culturally sanctified, sanctioned. It is important that we do not justify racist crimes or other crimes that come from the lower classes due to poverty and discrimination. In the same way we cannot justify violence against women and children in immigrant families on basis of the fact that they are socially oppressed. It is also very important to empower the women within the minority groups.

Education is the important factor. The emphasis as far as this issue goes should be on breaking the taboo of female sexuality and homosexuality within the so called immigrant community. We should make a film directed towards immigrant adults translated into all the languages necessary. Make it compulsory for the course for newly arrived. There this film should be shown and discussed. The other suggestion is that the asylum law should be reformed so that we can fight this issue also legally. If a woman has taken the risk of trying to save her own life, her dignity by coming all the way from for example Morocco to Sweden, she should not be returned. We need a reform in the asylum law in favour of women who are threatened by honour related violence, which is turning more and more strict. I also wish that we could have a national committee, like the one in France, to investigate the veiling of children and honour related crimes, in order to see how it functions, how this symbol allows for discrimination within these societies and then we can take a step.

European governments should enforce their own laws of divorce throughout the world and demand that no woman divorced according to the laws of these countries should be kept as somebody's wife against her own will in the countries of origin. These were the suggestions.

**Bam Björling:** Haideh, when stressing the importance of empowering progressive women within the immigrant organisations, what has actually happened in the last year in Sweden when it comes to supporting women's small groups, networks and organisations?

**Haideh Daragahi:** I can tell you what first happened when I came to Sweden. My Swedish is still not very good, because I speak English. I had the chance to go to a lot of official meetings and I was amazed, there was this imam sitting there who was representing the whole minority in Sweden, I don't remember having voted for any of them! When I protested, how did they become our representatives? Where are we in this situation? What I have witnessed is that this situation is changing in Sweden itself, for instance in a lot of different parties there is encouragement for women to come forward, the representative for the women in the social democratic party is a woman of Kurdish origin. What I am saying is that we have to be very careful not to make compromises simply because people are women. It is very important, especially in regard to the issues raised in this conference. As Bam said yesterday, it is quite possible, as in the case of Fadime's mother, that you become part of the dominant and

oppressive system, especially among the older generation of women. These family councils that condemn girls to death are presided over also by elder women.

**Bam Björling:** Some weeks ago you told me that immigrant women disappears in two categories; when we are talking about immigrants we are talking about men and when we are talking about women we are talking about Swedish women.

**Haideh Daragahi:** Exactly, the expectations from women's organisations is that they do the donkey work of taking care of any women that are oppressed, threatened etc and this is the expectation, and it is also cheaper. We have to have at least 10 representatives on salary, we as NGOs with voluntary workers give indefinite time to this kind of issue and we will probably do it better. So it is cheaper to pay a little money to a voluntary organisation and expect the job that really the community and governmental organisations should do. But meanwhile when there is a discussion on important feminist issues, for instance there is a discussion in Sweden of starting a feminist party, suddenly all of us are disqualified. I do not know why because we also have opinions on that. Nobody even thinks in those terms, that is the problem. Let me say something, I hate to make the distinction because I do not believe in the color of the skin as something that is either a privilege or a disadvantage. It is very interesting that no Swedish feminist has risked as much as we have in defending equality throughout history, not just now. This does not apply only to the feminist with darker colour of their skin in Europe. It applies to more than one hundred years of feminist struggle in the countries of origin of these women I am talking about. Many of them risked prison, discrimination and execution.

**Bam Björling:** Mehrdad, I have to ask you, because listening to you, you sound even more Swedish than many of us do, because when you were talking about how to deal with children's rights, small boys, small girls (if we have a gender perspective we should always say girls and boys because if we say children the girls very often disappear) But you said that it is the society that has to take care of this, what exactly do you mean with society?

**Mehrdad Darvishpour:** First a very short comment on human rights. It is good that we talk of the human rights, sexual rights are part of the human rights. Most conflicts are about sexual rights. It is very important to give education also about sexual rights.

Society is the educational system, the state, a lot of organisations etc. We all have a responsibility. In the schools it is very important to have meetings with the immigrant parents. It should be compulsory, there are more possibilities to have a dialogue there on human rights, women's rights, children's rights, sexual rights etc. It is a very important, basic place for dialogue. Even the media has a very important role, if you have a picture of the immigrants as outsiders, as criminals, as patriarchal, you will never be able to have influence to change the situation. There are both traditional and modern groups within the immigrant communities. The modern groups fight for equality, but nobody talks about that. How can we create role models for the immigrant youth if we never talk about the modern immigrants fighting for equality.

**Bam Björling:** Lewis you mentioned something that I think is the focus and one of the aims of this conference. To find new ways to co-operate between governmental systems and civil society and it has really been stressed, in regard to these rather 'new' issues in the sense of being put on the agenda, like trafficking and honour related violence. You mentioned that when you started to work with NGOs it was much easier for the young girls to make contact with you. I just wanted to ask Peter Carlsson, who comes from the regional police here in Stockholm, who told me about their work during the break, could you just give an input on that because that is very interesting, it is a new method for the police to work with?

**Peter Carlsson, the Stockholm County Criminal Investigation Department:** Today we are working with several separate cases and every single case has to be dealt with differently and

involves different questions, in order to make agreements with the social welfare, the NGOs and so on. We want to have a kind of mobile emergency action team. We always work together and we know each other's responsibilities, we know each other's competence and we do not have to build new relationships for every single case.

**Bam Björling:** You also mentioned another thing that I think is crucial here and that is when the girl go to any kind of governmental system, it is very important to report, but if you go to an NGO, you do not have to report in regard to the parents etc, so you solve a lot of problems that way. We have to build new constellations in regard to this issue, this has become very obvious.

Does anyone in the panel want to comment briefly before we let in the audience?

**Mehrdad Darvishpour:** It is very important that we change our attitudes in regard to immigrants. We have to work with immigrants, not for immigrants. This will give us a better chance of improving the situation. Not to victimise them.

**Muna Dahl, Sesamhuset Project:** I have three things I would like to comment on. I think that they are very dangerous points. Mehrdad, you said that they were generation conflicts and the second thing was that you wanted less power to the parents in regard to their children, because they are immigrants. The third one was concerning segregation. These three things I think are very dangerous points of view because I do not believe that honour related violence is a generation conflict. I do not think that any Swedish parent here would like to have less power over their children. If we want everybody to have the same rights, this should include the power of the parents as well. I'm not for the fact that immigrants should live in their own communities, but I do not think that segregation is behind honour related violence. This is not relevant for this issue. I have been working with immigrants for years and I'm sorry that someone who is working with this issue still believe in that.

**Hedvig Ekerwald, Uppsala University:** I think that integration matters and is very important. I think that honour related violence is coming from a culture abroad, it is not created in Sweden, but the level of expression of violence will be higher if people are pressed into a corner, and without integration they are pressed into a corner, so it matters with integration. I wonder how many of you know of the Nordic collective suicide? That the father takes the gun and shoots his children and his wife and then himself. This happened a lot when I was young in Norrland and this is part of our Swedish culture and when I tell people it is not so well known and it happens very much, it does, and I would like to take statistics on murder in Sweden. Today there are ninety people murdered every year in Sweden, of these 60 are men and 30 are women. Of those 30 women, because they are mostly murdered by men, 16 are murdered by a man close to them. In the 60's, before non-European immigrants came to Sweden, the number of women murdered every year was between 18 and 20. So there was a higher number of women killed before the non-European citizens came here. And I think that is something that we should at least be aware of. So I think honour related violence is very important and it can only be fought with the knowledge what it means from within, but it should be related to integration as well, and a self-criticism from the part of us, who are of European origin.

**Nicklas Kelemen, Dialogue Project, Save the Children:** Just to conclude what Muna was saying. I think we should consider a simple fact, the UN is counting approximately 5000 cases of honour killings a year in the world, I think we can add another zero to this and we do not count the forced suicides and other forms of honour related violence. But I would say that probably more than 99% of these cases are not happening in Sweden. I would like to join Muna's arguments. We should not blame this on segregation or not segregation, I am sure that if we have no segregation, it would help some, but this is not the main issue. It has nothing to do with where you live. In Pakistan we have a total of 1200 cases, we cannot blame that they are immigrant in their own country. We should not put the blame on something else.

**Bam Björling:** Yesterday we had a workshop on social inclusion and integration and we had a very intensive discussion on these matters and also about what framework for things to happen or not to happen can increase or decrease the possibility for honour related violence. In the group, I think most of us agreed on that there is never one factor that causes this. Integration was one of the factors given as a reason behind honour related violence.

**Mehrdad Darvishpour:** I think one of the things that came up yesterday was that there is a multifactor explanation to this. I think part of this is a gender question, part of it is a class question, part of it an ethnical question and part of it a generation question. I tried to show what the effects these different aspects have on honour related violence. Of course in many of the countries of origin there is a stronger patriarchal culture, which effects the occurrence of honour related violence. The question is how people with this background who come here can continue to live with the same cultural patterns. Segregation facilitates reproduction of traditional values.

In regard to decreasing parents' power over their children, just over 30 years ago, society did not have responsibility for the children. It was a private matter for the family. Beating of children was very common, today we it is forbidden by law. Parents cannot use corporal punishment as a way to socialise their children, what happened? The parents' power was reduced. I think in order to change the situation we are focusing on, we have to give children more power.

**Haideh Daragahi:** I just wanted to make a point in regard to integration, I completely agree that exclusion pushes minorities towards more conventional patterns of behavior, but we also have to remember that integration is a two-sided thing. The biggest hurdle towards integration as far as the minorities and the mentality of the minorities is concerned and by no means to generalise it (I come from one of these groups myself) is the attitude towards the laws in Sweden in regard to female sexuality, homosexuality and children's rights. For a lot of these people, the fact that they can not do what they want with their children according to the law, is a hurdle. The moment you raise these issues, you hear, we have religious freedom here. How is it by the way that you do not live by the laws of the old testament when it comes to the majority community. When it comes to the minority communities we suddenly remember religious freedom and religious rights, it is very interesting. We can try to avoid discussing the question of honour related violence in two ways; one is we can generalise it so much that it includes all forms of violence against women.. The other one is that we privatise, individualise it so much that it is not perceived as a group problem. We say that yes, Fadime's father killed his daughter, it was an isolated crime, he should be punished with the maximum penalty in the law. They are both wrong. He acted upon patterns that are culturally sanctioned. We cannot forget that, otherwise we have missed the point.

**Salman Asif, Metropolitan Police Service:** Dear panel and members of the audience. I just wanted to draw your attention briefly to a small point, which is an important point that calls for a different seminar at a different conference sometime, but I do want all of you to think about it and leave you to with this question mark in your mind. This conference specifically of course is about honour related domestic violence and that is what we have been discussing. But people like myself are becoming increasingly aware and alarmed by honour related terrorist violence against women as well, which is above and beyond the threshold of a house or the confines of the house and I can give you a small global example of targeted killing of women's rights lawyers in Algeria, by the insurgents and dissidents and that was also on the basis of honour. These women are bringing shame to their community and to their religion. Not to long ago it was the first time I had been to Gaza, what I noticed was the Fatah fraction actually had a small brigade actually called the morality brigade and the morality brigade had killed over three hundred women, totally unreported, and it was not until last year when these killings were reported by Amnesty International. These women were killed on the allegation and instigation of being collaborators and having breached the honour code. So here we see, that the honour related violence goes beyond the confinements of the house and it acquires a

kind of national significance and these women was said to be obstacles to the national freedom struggle, of course one's heart goes out to the ones that suffer, but perhaps this was one question mark that I want to leave all of you to think about. Last but not least with one of my focus groups, the Afghans, this lady who was having problems with her daughter, and after lengthy discussions with her she said, "brother I forgive my daughter, that is ok. I understand her position now, but will my neighbour forgive her, who is also an Afghan. He will spit at my face and say that you have no shame, you are a shameless woman, but I am a man of honour, so I am going to kill her because she is bringing bad name to the entire community". We have communities upon communities in Europe. I'm not fear mongering, or creating some sort of hysteria, because there is no need for that. But I do think that we need to understand the extent and the enormity of the issue that we are discussing..That was all I wanted to say, thank you.

**Bam Björling:** If we continue to look at the future perspective, what else is necessary to bring in, in order to really work efficiently, to find strategies, to take the crucial actions that are needed. If anyone has something to add here please share that with us.

**Patricia Gerrits, Ministry of Justice, the Netherlands:** First of all I have one suggestion. I think it is important that the different perspectives are interconnected, because what we saw happening just now is that we have to realise very well that there is a question mark behind the realisation, for example, is something intergenerational, what are the factors: I think this gentleman is right, you see some conflicts between fathers and daughters within families, and it has a link in my point of view with honour related violence. The question we have to answer then is how far do we go in order to emancipate youngster and we have to realise that if we decide that we are to emancipate youngsters, there is a risk Mr. Benjamin has to focus on. Because then we have a moment of risk if a girl is emancipated in for example a Turkish family, the Turkish fathers want their girls to be educated because they want to be proud of them, the girl does not only want to go to the school, but also to the disco and there the risk is emerging. We have to realise that very well.

Second, you were talking about integration, we have to realise that it is not even two sided, you cannot talk about an integration process, there are many processes and we have to see the individual basis for that. Practically, I am glad that today more than yesterday the role of the communities have been addressed and I hope that you find some conclusion today on that matter and I think that one important thing is to set goals on that matter and try to reach them.

**Georgina Ashworth, Change, UK:** I prepared the UK report. I think it would be useful if there was a comparison made on the reports that were provided for this conference and a synthesis made on the common features and the differences as well as providing them to all participants. The contribution that have come from the speakers and others it would add to the body of knowledge given that we are trying to tackle this problem on a European basis. It is useful to use the information that has already been collected.

**Hans Knutagård, (RFSL) the Swedish Federation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Rights:** I come from Malmö, in the south of Sweden, and I work with gays' human rights. I think we have to look for democracy, one person, one vote, and human rights. Because when it comes to murder a murder is a murder, regardless. If we think that there are excuses, like for example a gay person who makes a sexual advance on another man, and that makes him so furious, so he kills that man, or a man who perceived his honour is soiled because of some action by his sister. When we allow excuses, regardless if they are sexual, religious cultural, whatever, then we open up for honour related violence or killings. It must be the same for one person, just like one person one vote and to do that you have to have education. To live in a democracy, you have to be educated to learn that actions have consequences, so you have a readiness to act in a democratic way, that means that every person is respected for what he/she is and that person can live according to his or her view. This is why we are trying to include homosexuals, because sometimes we make the

distinction of the 'other kind'. I read a book by Naomi Klein on race and sex and she says , why are mixed races classified as black and bisexuals classified as homosexuals? Why are immigrant who have a Swedish father and an mother from a different background classified as immigrants? I mean we have to think about these categories that we take as normative based on being white heterosexual in a certain area. Why are not the mixed races white, why are not the bisexuals, heterosexuals? Why are the ones with mixed parents, Swedish?

**Mildred Hedberg, (ROKS) the National Organisation for Women's Shelters and Young Women's Shelters in Sweden:** I represent the women's shelters here in Sweden. I totally agree with you on education and training because in Sweden we have more than 150 shelters for women and they are very different, it depends on whether the municipality gives money to them. In the bigger cities they have a lot of money, but I come from Luleå in the north of Sweden and we have lots of money as well, but if you go to smaller villages in our county, they have no money. They just work on a voluntary basis and also the knowledge of this huge problem is low, so education and training is important, but also as was mentioned earlier to give money to the women's organisations. Otherwise we cannot go on to help these women. I do not think it is good, that we build big houses where these women can go, it would be much better that we can take care of women all over the country. Today we transport women from the north to the south and vice versa to hide them, there is a huge network working to protect these women. We have tried to appeal to our government about this problem and tried to get funding, and we can only hope that they listen.

**Bam Björling:** At the so called 'Fadime'-conference two years ago, a suggestion came up that we handed over to the Board of Integration. It was a very simple proposal and it was to have a gender perspective when allocating funding to the immigrant organisations because the women get nothing and there were some small criteria that was about gender. But they said it was impossible, of course it is not impossible, you just have to take a decision.

**Rebwar Davodi, National Agency for School Improvement:** I must say that education is very important as you are all saying, but there is a problem in the educational system, it takes time. As Haideh said, some years ago I suggested a mobile educational package for people who just arrived in Sweden to give them education on the history of Sweden, about the women's emancipation etc. But it never came through. What I think we should have had here is a workshop where each of us would write a problem, that right now is a problem and we should try to give an answer to that through all the resources the participants of this conference have. This way we would have a picture of the practical problems faced and practical solutions to those problems. That way we would probably have more concrete understanding of the problems we are facing.

**Bam Björling:** Lewis, is this the way you work with your focus groups? How do you work with these groups?

**Lewis Benjamin:** We are going to engage with the communities and we are going to use the focus groups in gathering information on the near misses in order to develop preventive measures. Salman here, has actually started that work already...

**Salman Asif:** It is a three segmented process really, we started off with looking at partners, and the partners generally are the women's groups, shelters, organisations and associations that are already doing some absolutely marvellous work and have done it for many years. We took advantage of their presence and engaged them in dialogue with us. That was the first segment. The second one was to engage communities in terms of individuals in a dialogue. We looked at the faith groups, and of course there was a big problem with the faith groups it was a double edged thing. There were a number of women's groups who said they do not engage with the faith groups, we have had conferences inviting these faith leaders. Their views are so rigid, and so fixed and they hijack the whole idea, so what is the use of talking to them. There were other women's groups who said they do not engage with men, men are bad.

So, one of the challenges before us was that the community has to be changed and the change has to be brought to the minds and the thinking of the people, you cannot sit yourself in a cocoon, you have to reach out and you have to engage people. They will be very critical and they will accuse you of the kind of things that Haideh said that she was being accused of. But you will have to engage in whatever way, you cannot sit in your little office and say that well these are the people we want to talk to, these are the people of the community we do not want to talk to. You have to talk to all kinds of people, however being very careful not to give representation of the wider community in the hands of an individual and you do not treat them as if they are the sole representative of the community, which has been happening in the past. The third stage, was setting up voluntary groups across the UK, now these are people from the grassroots, people who are the final recipients of the services, the people who are the final, if you like, victims or potential victims of the kind of atrocities or coercion that we are talking about. All these groups are voluntary and they are coordinated by myself. It is a teamwork. The process of the methodology is that we have to set an agenda, we meet, we talk about various policies and strategies. Many of our activities are also filmed, recorded. I should have brought some of the clips here and shown them to you, but that is an excuse for another meeting at some stage somewhere. That is the methodology and the idea is to ultimately put together a stakeholders' collective. It is important to have stakeholders from the community, a voice of dissent should come from within the community.

**Tuva-Stina Lindén, Lillholmsskolan:** Honour related violence is a much broader question than the killing, the killings are after all very few. But we have to remember, that the girls living in these conditions are many, they are in their thousands in Sweden. It is very important to remember this. I am a teacher myself and I work in the south of Stockholm, where 90% of our students have immigrant background and I can tell you that in Sweden, for example the only person who has lifted the issue of the veil is you, Haideh. This is a very difficult question and it is very hard to talk about. I am very sad that France is not represented here today, because I would have liked to have that discussion. I can tell you that the situation in Sweden is really going to be one school for Muslim girls etc. The last ten years it has rapidly gone down in the ages. When you talk about how in Saudi Arabia there were a lot of girls who were burned to death in a fire, because the firemen couldn't help them because they were wrongly dressed. We will soon have accidents where the only ones who drown are the Muslim girls because they cannot swim and we allow this to happen in Sweden today. We have to broaden the question a bit, beginning much earlier. I have a hard time listening to you, because in Finland where I grew up I also saw the suicides mentioned earlier, but no one was sitting the next day saying 'well, they deserved it'. That is the big difference. You should not even have mentioned what you said earlier. We should also include those questions which includes children at a much earlier stage, to really see what the connection is. Another suggestion in regard to this is one very critical thing, when the girls are going to start studying on their own, many families want their daughters to get a good education, but are not allowing her to live alone.

**Bam Björling:** This is a good way for concluding the discussion, there is an urgent need to broaden up the discussion, the decisions, the activities and the research in regard to HRV. Not only to focus on murder and violence, but also include the everyday oppression that many girls and even boys face in Sweden and all other countries in Europe. The way to broaden up the framework is to find good partnership between different actors in society; what can and should governments do, what can and should civil society do. A third way to extend the frameworks, described earlier by for example Haideh Daragahi, and possibilities is to include women from immigrant groups and networks and use their know-how, knowledge and commitment etc instead of inventing the wheel over and over again.

The fourth extension of the frameworks for mitigation and prevention of HRV is to use a global context in our work in Europe. There is long experience and deep knowledge about the problem and ways to deal with it that we can learn from. And of course civil society organisations, researchers and governments from different parts of the world should share methods to combat this transnational issue.





## Reports from Workshop Block I



## Workshop I: Status of HRV in Europe

*Presenters: Fundacion Mujeres, Spain*

*Terres des Femmes, Germany*

*Change, UK.*

*Institute of Equality, Greece*

*Kvinnoforum, Sweden.*

*Moderator: Haideh Daragahi: Association for Women's Rights, Sweden*

*Rapporteur: Cheryl Toman, Assistant Professor, Case Western Reserve University, USA*

*This workshop profiled five European countries—Spain, Germany, the United Kingdom, Greece and Sweden—and the status of HRV in these nations as seen through the research and experience of various women's rights groups and NGOs.*

The representatives from both Germany and Spain were disappointed in the lack of attention that the general public in their countries has given to HRV.

In Spain, Fundacion Mujeres has been collecting information on HRV and they recently held a two-day meeting in Madrid where Roma and Moroccan women's organizations were invited, but these groups refused, stating that HRV was not a problem in their communities. Fundacion Mujeres indicated that it was difficult to work in the field when the community leaders were not behind the project. Also, it was stated that families affected by HRV often do not see education as a way to a better life, but rather as a gateway out of their culture, which is obviously viewed negatively by the community.

Some positive things occurring in Spain however include the establishment of a constitutional clause banning Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), and the conviction of the author of the book "Women in Islam" in which it is described in great detail how to punish a woman who has exhibited so-called immoral behavior.

Within the German organization, Terre des Femmes, it has been observed that neither native Germans nor immigrants want to speak about HRV, although in the last two years, Turkish women have been more vocal, which has led to the Terre des Femmes campaign against forced marriage.

Terre des Femmes is currently building a network against HRV that involves various organisations and the police, which have all shown great concern for the problem. Terre des Femmes reports that politicians and migrant organisations should show more interest.

Terre des Femmes would like to introduce the term 'Family Honour Related Violence' instead of merely 'Honour Related Violence' to show that it is collective wounds that lead to such crimes and not just individual wounds. The organisation cited changes to be made for the youth welfare office in Germany since the quality of help depends on the experience, training and the understanding of the problem on the part of social workers and teachers.

The organisation Change in the United Kingdom stated that more women in parliament have increased awareness about HRV in the UK. However, certain problems of note include suicide and self-harm on the part of HRV victims in the Asian community and the fact that only 40 out of 400 centres against violence in the UK are dedicated to HRV.

In Greece, the Institute of Equality cites the problem of the Greek government tolerating Sharia family law and thus practices such as polygamy, one-sided divorce and women given

limited child custody, which are all overlooked in Greece. Domestic violence and rape within marriage are also not recognized under Greek law.

In Sweden, Kvinnoforum has defined HRV to include the following:

- FGM
- Forced marriage
- Early marriage
- Threat of violence, violence, and harassment
- Honour crimes
- Self-harm and suicide

Thus, these crimes are enforced in the Swedish courts as HRV and as criminal. HRV murders are therefore treated no differently than other murders; cultural difference is not legal justification for such crimes.

## Workshop II: Parameters of Psychosocial Support: Best Practice

*Presenters: Corinna Ter-Nedden, Dipl. Psych, Papatya, Germany,  
Azam Qarai and Valenka Vidal-Molina, Women's network, Sweden  
Sevil Bremer, Dipl. Psychologist/Psycho therapist, Save the Children, Sweden.  
Moderator: Dr. Alexia Panayiotou, Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies, Cyprus  
Rapporteur: Anna Frenning, Programme Officer, Save the Children, Sweden*

### **Corinna Ter-Nedden,**

Corinna told us about their work that started in 1986. They have a women's shelter in Berlin, for women that are escaping from honour-related violence. 60 % of the girls have Turkish background – the rest come from various countries, such as Ghana, Lebanon, Algeria, Pakistan and so on. Since 1997 they are also working on a European level.

It is important to understand that every girl is an individual, and you need to find individual solutions. Girls contact Papatya when they want to leave their families, because of threats, violence, forced marriages etc. They are offered to stay in the shelter for six weeks. Some stay only a few hours, others stay several months, because of problems with finding suitable solutions for housing and so on.

The two most important lessons Papatya has learned over the years are:  
Never overestimate the families' willingness to change, and never underestimate the girls' longing for their families.

Families promise that everything will be different, that the girl can move back home. After having lost a girl when the family went on holiday to Turkey, Papatya never made that mistake again.

The next mistake was to underestimate the longing that the girls had for their families. Girls who said they hated their families and never wanted to see them again were found hanging around their old neighbourhoods, trying to catch a glimpse of their mother at the balcony.

The method is to both stimulate and limit contact between the girls and their families. They encourage the girls to call their families if it is possible, or if not, to have mail contact. This is a way of reducing the girls' longing, not idealising the families, thinking all will be well – as they often do after a while in safety.

The girls have to realise that if they choose to leave the family they are facing a total loss of their old life. They might need a new identity, a new home, new friends, new schools or jobs – the whole network.

Papatya makes a risk assessment with every girl. The girls are the experts on their situation, but they sometimes have an unrealistic fantasy of their father's power. Papatya is very careful with anonymity, in order to make the girls feel safe. The other girls in the shelter help. Fear and the problematic circumstances can create symptoms that look a lot like mental illness, but that disappears when the girls are safe.

### **Sevil Bremer**

Sevil works as a psychotherapist in the Centre for Children and Adolescents in Crises at Save the Children. The first condition that has to be fulfilled when you work with therapy is a safe environment. This is never the situation for the girls that come to the clinic – so the treatment has to adjust to that.

In the clinical work Save the Children's Centre meet girls that have left their families and live in shelters or have a new identity. They talk a lot about traditions, loneliness, anger, shame, difficulties in trusting – to give some examples. If it is possible Save the Children can also work with families – but only if the girl wants it and it can be done safely. Sometimes they work with girls and their boyfriends or other persons in the network.

But the psychotherapists also work with e-mail contact with girls. The mails are often written around midnight. Many girls write long letters, and they stay in contact with the therapists this way for quite some time. With some of the girls more than 20 letters are exchanged in each direction. It is consultations that are taken very seriously, and the psychotherapists handle each letter.

Sevil gave two examples – one from the clinical work – a girl that had been living away from her family for five years, and still was longing very much for her family. Another example from the e-mail contacts – a girl that had argued heavily with her father. After Sevil had answered her letter by asking about her safety the girl explained that there were enough people that could help if things became dangerous. But “what I need is someone that can convince me to go on with my life.”

Sevil also explained that as long as the girls were angry they were in a way OK. The problems got worse when the anger disappeared, because after that comes often depression.

Things that were discussed in the workshop:

- “Faith and practice – religion”. Many therapists, not all, have problems with treating girls who refer to religion in therapies.
- “We have to go to the top dogs”, was suggested by one participant. We should address the Pope and the highest Imams, and try to get them to make clear statements against Honour Violence. That would make a great difference.
- “Some people are so afraid of being a racist, that it stands in the way of the work”, said another participant. She also said that they sometimes had more problems with Culture relativists than with the families.
- Other subjects for discussion was “How do you make risk assessments?”, and “How do you work with families?”

## Workshop III: The Role of the School and Educational Institutions: Best Practice

*Presenters: Hanna Cinthio, Bris (Children's Rights in Society), Sweden*

*Karolina Vrethem, Kvinnoforum, Sweden.*

*Moderator: Cecilia Palmgren, Kvinnoforum, Sweden.*

*Rapporteur: Elisabeth Nidsjö, Psychologist, RFSL Rådgivningen Skåne, Sweden*

### *Alima*

Hanna Cinthio, Bris (Children's Rights in Society), Malmö. Report from the project named "Alima". A 3-year project aimed to support and strengthen girls:

Three levels:

- Politically
- Structurally
- Method and Education

Producing support material, for instance questions for staff in schools to use when they see a girl. It is important to have the girl "with you" in the process.

The project also works with the girls individually and in groups.

### *Several Cultures One Life*

Karolina Vrethem, Kvinnoforum, Stockholm. Report from the project named "Several Cultures, One Life":

Limited Life Space → Oppression → Threat of violence → Violence

Early intervention (before oppression, threat of violence and violence) to broaden the perspective, to give space for empowerment and work with everybody in schools.

Human Rights:

- The right to life
- The right to decide over your own future
- The right to education and work
- Equal power and freedom between genders
- Equality of tasks and responsibilities between genders

Aims of the project:

- Bringing issues up for discussion to change attitudes and form strategies:
  - among pupils
  - among staff
  - among parents
- Raising awareness that honour based violence concerns everybody.

Staff in schools needs to be familiarised with the issue to make it less complicated and to form their own standpoint.

Why work with issues regarding HRV in schools?:

- Schools are a meeting place for all the girls and their families
- Schools are an arena for social change

- Schools are an actor of social inclusion and integration
- Schools are a link to and between pupils and parents
- Schools are an educator in a broader sense



## Reports from Workshop Block II



## Workshop I: How is HRV a European problem

*Presenters: Terre des Femmes, Germany  
Fundacion Mujeres, Spain  
TransAct, Netherlands  
Bulgarian Gender Research Foundation, Bulgaria*

*Moderator: Cheryl Toman, Assistant Professor, USA*

*Rapporteur: Cheryl Toman, Assistant Professor, USA*

*Four women's organisations in the Netherlands, Greece, Bulgaria, and Spain were profiled in this workshop and the presentations are summarized below:*

### **Transact, The Netherlands**

Hilde Bakker reminds us that men's honor and women's virginity were two values that were very highly appraised in European families in the not-so-distant past and that changes in such attitudes have occurred only because of improved socio-economic conditions, the emancipation of women, and a lessening of the importance of religion.

Bakker found that many immigrant communities strongly adhere to their traditions in their new country and sometimes do so even more fiercely than those still in the homeland for fear of losing their identity. Second and third generations often do not know the traditional base of honour (having never actually lived in their country of origin) and thus think that certain behaviors are religious-based.

Since immigrants were thought to be temporary residents, many countries did not make laws regarding problems in the immigrant community and thus the community makes its own laws; in the event that the immigrant will return to his or her country, he or she must be viewed as "honourable" upon return. Sometimes community members aid in HRV crimes to show solidarity within their community. Transact generally agrees with Dutch government policy on the need to emancipate and integrate immigrant women into the new home country.

### **Terre des Femmes, Germany**

Stephanie Wolfram noted that the Turks number 2 million in Germany and thus are commonly thought to be representative of the immigrant experience. Germans in general do not like speaking about HRV for fear of being labeled as 'racist' or seen as creating new prejudices that do not already exist. Particular risk groups in Germany include Greeks, Southern Italians, Kosovars?, Moroccans, and Chinese women.

The potential for eliminating HRV is directly linked to resident status, since immigrants who are not officially registered cannot be monitored for such things as school attendance. Such a problem is evident in the Roma community in particular. NGOs in Germany are currently seeking to sensitize the general public and politicians on HRV.

### **Bulgarian Gender Research Foundation**

Iliana Stoycheva claims that HRV is a relatively new concept in Bulgaria. Although it is a hidden phenomenon, HRV is at the center of several human rights violations. Particular groups at risk in Bulgaria include:

Roma—5.6% of the population

Turks—9.4% of the population  
Refugees and migrants—7% of the population  
Deeply patriarchal groups native to Bulgaria

In 2004, Bulgaria instituted a National Plan for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion. Also, state agencies for Child Protection and another for Refugees also deal with the problem of HRV indirectly.

Stoycheva stated a need for training of the legal community in such areas and that response is needed from schools, social services, police, and additional NGOs. There are also an insufficient number of shelters in the country.

Some of the particular problems in Bulgaria include FGM, the prohibiting of girls from attending school and seeking medical care (especially gynecological), forced veiling, forced marriage, and bride sell.

### **Fundacion Mujeres, Spain**

Mercedes San Vicente stated that HRV is not perceived as a problem by the general public in Spain and is seen as a problem pertaining to the Senegalese, Gambian, and Moroccan communities in particular.

The Catholic Church has intervened in Spanish politics in an adverse way, resulting in favoring Catholic doctrine as synonymous with human rights, which has affected women negatively in some respects.

San Vicente also spoke of the arrest of the author of the book *Women in Islam*, which described in detail how to punish women for their behaviors. The book has been confiscated by the Spanish government.

## Workshop II: Strategies to Combat HRV in Europe

*Presenters: Evelyne Accad, Beirut based human rights activist, writer, poet and musician  
Rana Hussein, Jordan based award winning journalist, campaigner for human rights  
Ann Cryer, Member of Parliament, UK*

*Moderator: Hanna Cinthio, Mecca, Sweden*

*Rapporteur: Dr Salman Asif, UK*

The workshop commenced with disclaimers from each one of the presenters regarding their expert experience and knowledge of the theme of the workshop. Ms Evelyne Accad and Ms Rana Hussein pointed out from the onset that it was not their forte to talk on the subject as they were not based in Europe and were unaware of the European situation.

Ms Ann Cryer, also said that the subject given to her was beyond the remit of her study. She however, took the opportunity to highlight problems faced by ethnic minority women in her constituency. Ms Cryer emphasised the plight of young brides who, she said, were brought over from distant homelands by families settled in her constituency to be married to second-generation British born Asian males. Ms Cryer, said the brides were often treated with "utter inhumanity" and were exploited as slave labour. These women, she said, were kept in virtual confinement and forbidden to develop any social interaction of their own outside the four walls of their in-laws' households. These brides, Ms Cryer said, were routinely subjected to physical and mental violence.

The second category, of women suffering in her constituency, Ms Cryer pointed out, were the second generation (British born) Asian females either being coerced into forced marriages or subjected to considerable family/community pressure verging on emotional censoriousness and isolation if they dared foster relationships outside their own community or religion. "These girls are often forcefully whisked away from the UK, for forced marriages," Ms Cryer said.

The third topic of concern, Ms Cryer, said was importing of faith leaders, Imams from other countries who brought with them their own interpretation of faith and had little or no knowledge of the host country, its ethos and values and were oblivious of any insight into problems faced by young people in the UK who followed their faith. Ms Cryer called upon the British Government to restrict the minimum age of marriage for girls from such ethnic backgrounds, where Forced Marriage was a probability, to 21 years. She also called for the British Home Office to make it mandatory for every immigrant woman to learn to read and write English once she was in the UK. In the end she called for a total ban of importing Imams from other countries as it was counter-productive and they were acting as catalysts of imposing patriarchal values.

Responding to these views, Ms Rana Hussein said Ms Cryer was being "a bit harsh" in banning getting Imams from foreign lands. She said Ms Cryer was equally wrong in advocating restricting the marriageable age of immigrant community women to 21 years. Ms Hussein also disagreed with Ms Cryer regarding her insistence that each immigrant woman must learn to read and write in English in order to qualify her legitimate stay in the UK. "To solve these problems we will have to look carefully at these cultures. Insofar, as Imams are concerned they do need to be equipped with adequate and relevant contemporary knowledge as well as scholarship in their faith. "I disagree with the notion of banning those women from entering into the UK who don't speak or read English, as many of these women belong to

communities that have been forced out from their homelands against their own free will," Ms Hussein maintained.

"You can't prevent people from coming to your country just because they don't speak English. What will you do with refugees and those who don't have learning skills," she argued.

Ms Evelyne Accad informed that on her return to Lebanon she will continue to pursue her vision for reconstructing the country and its social veneer that was devastated during the civil war and had resulted in creating a climate of high degrees of cruelty against women. She said, she was particularly concerned about the women's prison in Lebanon where women were kept in sub-humane and humiliating conditions. "They are confined in tiny cells reminiscent of dungeons, where there is no light or running water. They are often chained in these cells and left to their own fate," she added. Ms Accad said, there was an urgent and dire need for establishing women's shelters in Lebanon, as there were very few such facilities for women needing them.

## Workshop III: The Role of Social Inclusion and Integration in Mitigating HRV

*Presenters: Natalie Dimitrova, Leader of Direction, Roma Public Council – Kupate, Bulgaria  
Bam Björling, Chair Woman, Kvinnoforum, Sweden  
Mehrddad Darvishpour, , researcher in Sociology of Iranian origin, known debater, Stockholm University, Sweden  
Sihem Habchi, Vice-President, Ni Putes, Ni Soumises, France*

*Moderator: Karolina Vrethem, Project Manager, Kvinnoforum, Sweden*

*Rapporteur: Elena Dingu-Kyrklund, Researcher, CEIFO, Sweden*

### **Natalie Dimitrova**

According to the NGO database, the Roma population in Bulgaria amounts to 800 100 persons, i.e. about 5.6 percent of the population. The Roma are divided into several sub-groups depending on their historical background, way of living, traditions, occupations, etc. Their lifestyle differs from that of the majority population. Most of them live in “ghettos” usually situated in the outskirts of the big cities, and have a very low living standard. Those who live in smaller towns enjoy comparatively better living conditions. There is no data about the number of already integrated Roma, who live amidst the majority and have a different lifestyle.

There are many problems related to the integration of the Roma community, who live according to inherited patterns reflecting their cultural and historical heritage and habits, not recognizing social problems such as HRV or domestic violence as crimes. Most of the community members including women also consider these issues as a matter of culture, not allowing anybody to confront them. Forced marriages are still part of the Roma way of life, and women issues are only dealt with within cultural boundaries, making it difficult for the women raised with all those norms to change their attitude to these phenomena. Violence against women and domestic violence are looked upon as related to cultural conservative attitudes.

There are a number of Roma women NGOs in Bulgaria working on women’s issues, but none of them specifically on HRV or domestic violence. The youth program R.O.M.I. (Roma Public Youth Initiatives), a section of Roma Public Council “Kupate” organization, is the only one taking interest in gender equality and protection of the basic human rights of Roma women in Bulgaria, now including the “Gender Equality” strategy as a new direction in its activity, meant to build the base for a future systemic work on domestic violence.

An anonymous survey we carried out showed that about 90 percent of the Roma girls and women are victims of home violence, while very few men suffer from this phenomenon, basically connected with emotional violence. Home violence is not considered a crime among the Roma community. A low living standard, a lack of education and qualifications and marginalization still negatively affect the community within itself and within the society. The attitude towards Roma enhances the conservative tendencies in the community’s way of living, developing deeper social negatives, equally dangerous to both the Bulgarian society and Roma. The integration of the Roma community is vital for overcoming the problem of HRV. Normative standards, equally observed by the entire society are a natural, normal prerequisite for all members of the society. Physical and psychological acknowledgement of being global citizens is required. Bulgaria wants to join the EU, organisation that ought to take care of the Roma integration using a gender perspective.

### **Bam Björling**

Bam Björling's approach is presenting a sociological theoretical model of integration. The role of terminology should be more observed. There is dependence among the structure of the migration and integration system and the words used to describe it. Sometimes we are unaware of the system and the values contained inside it. We have a tendency to always assume that people want to be integrated – but some want to return.

There are four possible outcomes, considering several levels integrated in a framework model. The model indicates proportionality between feeling welcome and being prone to integration, or not.

	Not invited	Invited
Avoid integration	- -	- +
Wants integration	+ -	+ +

It is time to be questioning: What do we actually mean with *exclusion* vs. *inclusion*?

We may as well be dealing with a false integration, or false inclusion, for fear of not being considered sufficiently welcoming, or acceptant. It is to a large extent related to one's own perceptions and habitual reactions in various moments of social interaction.

An illustrative example can be the following (true) story:

I've been working with a management group successfully for quite a while, we had been working together for eight years. One of the participants was a black lady, an old colleague and friend of mine. It just happened that we were seven persons in the room, and by mistake I had just put sex coffee cups on the table. No one else reacted except for this lady, who immediately said: "Why haven't you brought a cup for me?" We were good enough friends for me to reply to her inappropriate reaction with: "Because you're a nigger, of course\*." I'm positive that my friend understood perfectly what I actually meant.

To achieve integration, requirements should be imposed [not only on immigrants, but] also on the Swedish society, integrating other ways of reasoning, also on differences. Social inclusion requires a broadening of our framework as well, a broader two-way path.

### **Mehrdad Darvishpour**

First, to comment on Bam Björling's presentation; what is ethnicity? There are over 300 definitions of the term: ethnicity. That in itself indicates that the term is as such a construction, not easy to define. In the same way, when we try to explain ethnic HRV, we have a static picture of ethnicity. Research shows that involuntary migrants have more difficulties to "integrate". We can for instance try to compare Iranians and Turks that came to Sweden. Many Turks moved in as voluntary labour force, yet they have not been willing to integrate. Iranians on the other hand arrived as asylum-seekers, not invited, yet they have been more willing to integrate. Modern, highly educated, secular, fighting against fundamentalism, these Iranians moving to Sweden – a Western country of secularised values – felt that they were coming to a new home country. Western oriented, they shared the morality values vs. traditional ones, and the equality values vs. patriarchal ones. They are however often habitually considered "Iranian" as the opposite of all they stand for.

There is a global conflict affecting different countries. There are cultural differences related to ethnic identity. If we again compare the two groups mentioned above, Turks were low

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\*In original (Swedish): "för att du är en svartskalle!" (svartskalle – litt."black head", approx. comparable to "nigger" – with all comparable connotations; here of course meant ironically).



educated and traditional, with no motivation to integrate. For them, the traditional values remained the most important.

As to HRV, the question is why power conflict intensifies more in immigrant families? It is easier for Swedish men to adapt to new situations, even easier to divorce! Others may react differently, more violent, to situations they find difficult to handle. Thus, immigrants coming from Iran, Chile, etc., show a higher divorce rate than others. This is mostly related to certain gender and power relationship, not only related to immigrant categories. That is why it is important to also consider these specific differences, beyond simple ethnic categorisations, and take into consideration differences that may occur between various immigrant groups.

### **Sihem Habchi**

There is a different context of segregation and problematic integration in various countries. Through presenting the organisation *Ni putes ni soumises*, this is aimed to be explaining the French context (different from that of other parts of Europe – such as Italy, Portugal, Spain, Etc.). This organisation was born in the segregated areas hosting immigrant populations of Arabic origin, coming from the Maghreb countries in North Africa, such as Morocco, practically closed segregated areas constituting themselves in local ghettos. The problem starting with housing projects where immigrants were put, and by creating this physical separation, this resulted in building a wall very hard to break.

Algerians for instance came from the country side. The first problem in this case was thus coming from a non-town, from an environment different altogether from the local one. Putting all these people together, just having unemployment in common, the status of women and their background proved to be very problematic and discriminating in its effects.

Since 1990, many of those confined to their ghetto raised their voice to get equal treatment in the Democratic state of France. They were asking the French to recognize their citizenship participation, e.g. through organisations such as SOS – racism. But they got no response.

More and more gangs were formed, not similar to those in the US, but scary. Women became their first victims! No one even talked about women!

*Ni putes ni soumises* is asking for women's rights and their protection against violence. The only way to genuinely try to live together is through the school, by achieving a social mix, which is as important as to mix people coming from different social areas and learn to live together.

There is otherwise a clear discrimination of persons born in Algeria for instance, whose situation is difficult in France. They are growing up in the ghetto, with the clear idea that they are discriminated, but not doing anything. They only take to a dangerous response: domestic violence, racist discourse, even anti-Semitic "response", a "cultural response" such as: wife beating, rape, etc. But we can change that! Victimisation relies? also on [accepting the role as] "victim for ever", not acting, not doing anything to change their situation.

How to give them real tools to fight discrimination? The answer is: citizen participation, which is empowering to fight discrimination. Otherwise, one can decide to be against the French law, applying own "ghetto" laws instead. The only way out of this situation is to give the real tools to girls and boys, the know-how to use citizenship rights, participatory rights, to just be considered equal citizens of the Democracy of France. Multiculturalism favoured men. Now, we are attempting to change perspective, to focus on women's and children's rights.

The main issue is: How to handle conflicting "normative" values, where patriarchal, "ethnic" and religious values are opposing modern societal values. Redefining "multiculturalism" as a phenomenon, form and content, is a prerequisite. HRV needs to be defined and handled in an

appropriate way, and that is by empowering those discriminated and treating them as equal citizens, not allowing a differential rule based on discriminatory ethnic grounds, but integrating the ethnic element as an equal partner with rights and duties sharing the same society.

*Some of the comments following after the four presentations in the extended dialogue with the public and as response to the various points of view expressed from the other participants:*

Mehrdad Darvishpour remarked that discrimination could legitimate HRV, or criminal “cultures”. It’s a conflict between tradition and modern culture. Many are critical to the present situation. How to understand that in one of the “most equal countries” occur lots of HRV?

With different culture is meant different ethnic background, relating culture to ethnicity and to culture-related values. Segregation and discrimination can thus give legitimacy to HRV. Discrimination makes people go back. The relationship to segregation shows that this is ultimately a class, not an ethnic question.

Bam Björling underlines that there is always a multi-factorial explanation to such phenomena. It is very important to understand and internalize the signal system: what message terms include?

HRV – after Fadime’s death it became “allowed to use the term HRV”. The question is: should we? Earlier, the discourse was: we don’t use that kind of language or terminology in Sweden. The use of the words is also an attempt to reflect what that does do to us, and our surroundings. Whenever we discuss about “victims” with immigrant organizations, the answer is invariably: “but we first have to solve, to deal with integration”, etc. But this is a specific issue that needs to be specifically allowed, discussed. It cannot wait!

As a complementary comment, Mehrdad Darvishpour refers to the relationship within immigrant families, where a number of elements should be particularly observed: gender, power relationships, family-related issues, etc.

## Reports from Workshop Block III



## Workshop I: Issues on Criminalization and Police

*Presenters: Ms Kickis Åhré Älgamo, Detective Inspector, National Criminal Investigation Department, Sweden*

*Lewis Benjamin, Detective Chief Superintendent, Metropolitan Police Service/New Scotland Yard, UK*

*Marina Walz Hildenbrand, Legal Expert, Germany*

*Moderator: Dr Salman Asif, UK*

*Rapporteur: Dr Salman Asif, UK*

### **Lewis Benjamin**

In his opening address said seeking the involvement of the community in combating HRV must be an active process, not a passive one. "The nature of Honour related violence within diverse communities is not often explicit, and some communities for historical reasons do not find it easy to engage in a dialogue with some of the groups involved in the partnerships," he said.

He said it was imperative that police developed creative and flexible ways to break down any barriers that may exist locally, and to encourage full and active engagement in the work by members of local communities. Lewis Benjamin also pointed out Dr Asif's initiative of setting up Focus Groups and Stakeholders Collective. Highlighting the role of the collective, he pointed out that the notion of the collective is that of an independent body working with Metropolitan Police Service to provide a sounding board for policing issues, advice and access to hard to access communities, and facilitation of HRV – and related issues – awareness training.

"Regular police 'surgeries' may be held in conjunction with local councillors, offering a forum for confidential advice and information," he added. "The issue of HRV has to be argued in the light of the International Declaration of Human Rights rather than cultural relativism," he said.

### **Kickis Åhré Älgamo**

Ms Kickis Åhré Älgamo, highlighted the importance of timely and calculated affirmative intervention by the authorities that can save lives of potential victims of Honour Killings. She shared an incident where affirmative action on behalf of herself and her department saved a life that could have been lost to honour killing. Reciting the instance about a young Kurdish girl under threat of becoming a potential victim of honour killings on account of her independent choices in life, Ms Åhré Älgamo said she intervened to remind the girl of her own vulnerability under the circumstances and advised her against going to the Middle East for a family holiday, as it may have given a perfect opportunity to her family members, determined to eliminate her in order to prevent their family honour from being further soiled by her actions.

After becoming aware of the potential danger of being smuggled to Kurdistan from Syria, where her family insisted she accompanied them to, the girl took the life saving decision of refusing to go on the holiday. A similar plan, however, was hatched by the family members, adamant to take the girl away from Sweden some time later when they insisted that the girl accompanied them to Russia on a family holiday.

Ms Åhré Älgamo seized the moment to remind the girl that it was possible that she may well be smuggled to Kurdistan from Russia to be subjected to some form of HRV. The girl was also rightly reminded of the history of HRV in her family, that further acted as a deterrent and as a point of reference for the girl to take a decision that would safeguard her life rather than

steering her towards an uncertain situation. Through such thoughtful intervention a tragedy was prevented from happening, stated Ms Áhré Älgamo.

**Marina Walz-Hildenbrand**

In her presentation, Ms Walz-Hildenbrand highlighted a number of initiatives that the German government had undertaken in order to prevent the occurrence of HRV. She said the government had strengthened the police with greater resources for timely intervention.

## Workshop II: A European Plan of Action

*Presenter: Sherin A. Saadallah, Kvinnoforum, Sweden*

*Moderator: Rahel Volz, Terre des femmes, Germany*

*Rapporteur: Sherin A. Saadallah, Kvinnoforum, Sweden*

The Daphne Programme 2003 project ‘Shehrazad: Combating Violence in the Name of Honour’ had as an objective the production of a common European plan of action to combat honour related Violence (HRV).

The draft document for this workshop was prepared by the five partners; Kvinnoforum (Sweden), Terre des femmes (Germany), Fundacion Mujeres (Spain), Institute of Equality (Greece) and Change (UK) on the basis of network meetings and workgroup meetings held with relevant actors in respective country.

The draft plan of action prepared within the project acted as the basic document for discussions within the workshop. Terre Des Femmes, Rahel Volz, moderated the workshop, while the presenter of the draft Agenda for Action and discussant was Sherin Saadallah, the Project Manager, Kvinnoforum.

The discussions were reflective of a need to include all European countries’ concerns with regard to the incidence of HRV. A need to enhance European commitment and obligations in the area of mitigating violence against women were reconfirmed within the Permeable of the Agenda for Action. The Second part of the Agenda for action was dedicated to the guidelines for action. European co-operation and co-ordination were regarded as intrinsic with the ethos of the Agenda.

Amendments and changes suggested and adopted reflected the different levels for working with HRV at a European level, integrating both a formal governmental framework, and a very important civil society, informal framework and advocacy.

The workshop adopted the final draft for the Agenda for Action, hereafter called:

### THE STOCKHOLM DECLARATION TO COMBAT HONOUR RELATED VIOLENCE IN EUROPE EUROPEAN AGENDA FOR ACTION

Was to be presented to the Plenary in its final plenary session. The Stockholm Declaration was read paragraph by paragraph to the plenary session. Additional minor changes were introduced, and a discussion ensued about the need to cite the priority of women’s rights of cultural rights.

The plenary reached consensus on the final format of the Stockholm Declaration, adopted during the Conference afternoon plenary session, on 8th October 2004.

## Workshop III: Preventive Best Practices

*Presenters: Eduardo Grutsky, Elektra, Sweden*

*Banaz Rashid, Socialworker, Eskilstuna Municipality/Youth section, Sweden*

*Diana Madsen, Researcher, The Danish Research Centre on Gender Equality, Denmark*

*Moderator: Cecilia Palmgren, Head of Intercultural Department, Kvinnoforum, Sweden*

*Rapporteur: Lina Laurent, The Girls' House, Finland*

Eduardo Grutsky talked about the Swedish project Elektra, which focuses on working against honour related violence, HRV, in Sweden. The project started in 2001 and at the beginning it focused mainly on girls. Elektra has a website ([www.elektra.nu](http://www.elektra.nu)) in seven languages and it is designed both for girls and professionals. The website gives general information on concepts like honour, freedom and sexuality and it has a list of links to places where to find professional help in the case of HRV. After working over three years only with girls, Elektra noted the need to start focusing on boys too. The aim is to “influence the boys, who control the girls, their sisters and relatives”. The project “Sharaf Hjältar” “Heroes of Honour” started in 2004 and it aims at engaging boys and young men in questioning the “honour culture”. The boys have, for example, made a theatre play that they play in schools and a future goal is that these boys later on could lead discussion groups in schools.

Banaz Rashid presented the project Isabel, a center of activities in Eskilstuna, Sweden. The activities were brought into practice in 1997 and the target group is girls of foreign background aged 10–20 years. The center carries out courses and activities in schools and it also acts as a link between the girls, the society and different authorities. Rashid stressed the importance of good and intensive co-operation between the school and the center. The school is often seen as a neutral area, a “free zone” and therefore it is a good place to carry out activities in, especially with girls of foreign background. Issues that Isabel deals with are basic information about the Swedish society, democracy, equality, HRV, limits and gender roles.

Diana Madsen, from the Danish Centre on Gender and Equality in Roskilde, presented the report “Forced Marriages in a European Perspective, Report on Best Practices”. The advantages in adopting a European perspective are many, said Madsen. For example, transnational problems demands transnational solutions, we can learn from the experiences of others and input from other countries stimulates a knowledge based debate. Madsen pointed out that one needs to be aware of the difficulties in defining best practices.

According to the report, there are two strategies on how to deal with forced marriages

- 1) Protecting the individual's rights from a human rights perspective. This orientation is critical towards mediation.
- 2) The family oriented approach focuses on the family as a whole. This orientation is positive towards mediation.

Some of the best practises reported are:

- Establishing of international co-operation with the countries of origin. For example, Britain co-operates with different authorities in Pakistan and Bangladesh.
- Development of guidelines for professionals as the police and social workers.
- Instructions for the use of mediation. For example Britain is more sceptical towards mediation than Norway. Critics say that mediation is a cheap solution that is not used in other cases of violence.



- A package for schools with information on HRV. This package includes i.e. material for training teachers, material for training students and posters.

Finally, Madsen discussed the Danish Plan of Action against forced, quasi-forced and arranged marriages. She also mentioned the law that prevents family reunion before the age of 24. The law was designed to prevent forced marriages and it was introduced with several other laws that restrict migration.

The discussion that followed mostly included more specific questions about the issues presented. One problem with the Danish report is that it is only available in Danish. Sharing best practises is essential in the work against HRV and therefore it would be good if one could share knowledge with as many people as possible.



## **Future Steps in the European Collaboration to Mitigate and Prevent HRV**



## Mona Sahlin: Future Steps in the European Collaboration to Mitigate and Prevent HRV

*I would like to thank Kvinnoforum for taking the initiative to arrange this conference on how to counteract honour related violence. My thanks goes both to Kvinnoforum and to its partners in this process and event; the Mannerheim Child Foundation in Helsinki, Finland and the Transact in Utrecht, the Netherlands. The conference helps us to get a much needed and better understanding of how patriarchal structures and values threatens both the integrity and the very lives of individuals.*

We must all reinforce our efforts to combat male violence at large. According to the World Health Organisation, male violence represents 95 % of all violence in the society. And we know from the chief economist of the World Bank, that male violence is extremely costly for societies at large as in the US for instance the costs are estimated to be equivalent to 3% of the countrys GDP.

More than anything, male violence has an extreme price in terms of being a matter of life and death, sufferings, humiliation and violation of rights and dignity.

A priority for Sweden has always been to combat all forms of violence and to speak openly about the violence, be it domestic violence, trafficking, prostitution – which also is a form of male violence – or violence in the name of honour.

Male violence against women exists in all societies. It is deeply rooted in norms, created to degrade women as human beings and to control and exploit their sexuality. We must never forget that male violence is a question about power and control over women.

While Sweden for long has had reason to address domestic violence and trafficking, the issue of violence in the name of honour has come up as a more new concern, not only as part of an international agenda but also as such violence, including murder, occurs also in our own country. This violence also has victims; and these victims have names. For me they are Sara, Pela and Fadime. Three young women killed in the name of honour. They have many sisters. Too many. Here in Sweden and all around the world.

Crucial for combating this violence is the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women, both as individuals and as members of societies.

Committed work of the civil society has always been instrumental to place gender equality high on the political agenda. That work is indispensable and highly appreciated. However, governments have the main responsibility in this regard. Governments all across the globe must thus take action to protect individuals in accordance with and let me quote – the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights: All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. All are equal before the law and are entitled without discrimination to equal protection of the law.

Sweden was also the first country to ratify CEDAW, the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, which in article 5 spells out that states shall take appropriate measures to modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women, with a view to achieving the elimination of prejudices and customary and other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles for women and men.

For more than a century, Sweden has taken firm action compared to many other countries to enhance equal rights in a broad range of domains, including equal right to inheritance,

education, political participation, sexual and reproductive rights, paid work etc. To this end, new legislation has been agreed upon, law enforcement measures have been strengthened and budgetary allocations have been made. But we must do more!

Evidently, many of the gains in terms of enhanced rights for women in Sweden were achieved only after long struggle from organisations and networks in civil society. In fact, most of the achievements would not have come about without considerable courage and persistence from individuals and groups such as those represented here at this very conference.

Full respect for women's rights are a crucial part of the context of combating patriarchal violence, including violence in the name of honour.

In so doing we must also remember that Sara, Pela and Fadime do not only have sisters. They also have brothers. Brothers who are raised to – and forced to – support the male structures. Brothers who also become victims of prevalent structures. This conference has addressed these aspects in a new and brave way.

I am proud to say that even if much remains to be done in Sweden in terms of securing women's rights, we have come far compared to many other countries something which is also confirmed in UN studies and statistics. As you know, only a couple of decades ago, reproductive and sexual health and rights were still denied for women and girls in Sweden but not to men and boys. Thus even in the beginning of the 20th century women of all ages were condemned and socially excluded when they violated the prevalent strict rules of female behaviour and challenged male superiority.

On December 7-8, The Swedish Government arranges an international conference to combat patriarchal violence, with focus on violence in the name of honour. Some 200 participants have been invited from a number of countries, including those in the EU, as well as representatives of the UN and other international organisations as well as civil society and the research community. The overall aim is to define more effective ways of combating the violence.

The conference in Stockholm should be seen in the context of our firm action to promote human rights, to combat violence as a means for conflict resolution and to counteract all forms of violence against women.

Addressing these issues is part of the Platform of Action from the UN Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing 1995, which clearly indicates that violence against women violates and nullifies women's enjoyment of human rights.

The problem with violence in the name of honour is not that it involves large numbers of victims compared to for instance the domestic violence that we have experienced for generations. The major problem is that patriarchal structures and male superiority are openly used as a reason and an excuse for violence against women. And that the violence, even including murder, is deliberate, calculated and applauded action by certain groups who consider that they have the right to put themselves above the law to press forth their values.

It is also a violence, which hits groups of women who often are invisible and who have very little access to society at large. We must see these women, and admit that violence in the name of honour exists everywhere, in all countries. Evidently, it is a major governmental responsibility to openly and clearly combat such action and to defend the law.

In this broad context, again: the efforts of Kvinnoforum and all of you who attend this conference are crucial for increasing our knowledge, promoting networking and more than anything: for identifying more effective action to firmly combat honour related violence and all forms of violence against women.

We thus need to help empower women, with a number of instruments such as political commitments, law enforcement, revision of public spending etc. More than anything else, empowerment requires a change in attitudes as regards to rights and capabilities of women and men.

I thank you.





## Cultural Event of the Conference



## Introducing Jeroo Roy and her paintings on Honour Related Violence

By Dr. Salman Asif

There's an old Persian maxim that says; it is not wise for a perfume seller to go on counting the qualities of his fragrance before the buyer, as its scent speaks for itself.

Ladies and gentlemen! perhaps it won't be too wise of me too, to count qualities of Jeroo's works before your perceptive selves, for these works speak for themselves. I shall, therefore only endeavour to share my personal feelings about them.

Just try and stand before any of these works, displayed just outside the auditorium for a few fleeting moments, allowing yourself to touch them by your senses and they will touch your hearts, minds and souls back — whispering in your ears, unfolding the tragic, telling tales of centuries of brutalities meted out to generations of women. In doing so, these images create a bridge; a bridge that transports us from our own comfortable, secured stations to the disturbing, conscience jolting heart of the darkness — a darkness that lurks deep behind the colourful veils and masks of our multicultural societies.

Here you see the crimson red; the colour of roses, of joy and happy tidings becoming the colour of blood; young dainty hands of hopeful shy brides drenched in their own blood that hides the henna patterns.

These works are also poignant reminders of the enormity of challenge before all of us — and indeed the enormity of Jeroo's heart. The heart of the artist that absorbs this infinite pain, experiences it and then releases it back on the canvas.

When I asked Jeroo recently, what made her choose this subject? Her response was instant and direct, "It's the subject that chose me, Salman, not I who chose the subject."

So, when all the scholarly papers will have been read, all the worthy speeches will have been made, all the words of wisdom will have been spoken, all the ideas will have been exhausted; you are left with these images — Jeroo's images — that leave an indelible mark left incised on your hearts and minds.

Most significantly, despite reflecting the barbarity of HRV, these images induce hope. Together, they exude a collective symphony of faith in future. The message is loud and clear: Crime against women is universal but NOT INEVITABLE. It is in our hands to stop it.

## The presentation of the project "Women's Lives, Artists' Views" , by KWAHK

By Ahmad Eskandari, representative of KWAHK

*The project of Women's Lives, Artists' Views* was born in March 2002 during a visit by Olivier Touron, a photojournalist, in Iraqi Kurdistan. Olivier, representing the French organisation La Pluie d'Oiseaux met a group of women activists who expressed their desire to work on a joint project about the lives of women in Kurdistan. This project is focusing on the experience of Kurdish women. It was initiated by La Pluie d'Oiseaux (Raining of Birds), and developed and carried out with two Kurdish women organisations: the Women Cultural and Information Centre (WCIC) based in Sulaimaniya and the Kurdish Women Action against Honour Killing (KWAHK) in London.

The aim of the project is to shed light upon and raise awareness about the realities faced by women in Iraqi Kurdistan. It seeks to offer an opportunity to Kurdish women from different backgrounds to make their experiences known and their voices heard. This is pursued by combining the narration of individual stories with artistic interpretations of these testimonies, in an ensemble echoing the call for a better world. This is part of a process aimed at breaching isolation and establishing a dialog between Kurdish women and the world beyond their immediate locality.

The women were chosen from different socio-economic and cultural backgrounds, from different parts of Kurdistan and they were interviewed. During interviews they would tell their story and draw a picture of a bird, the symbol of freedom. Then each woman was photographed with her drawing. Later the story, the symbolic bird and their picture were given to a woman artist to make a painting. As a whole, there are 38 paintings representing 38 lives deeply marked by pain, suffering and an extraordinary struggle for freedom and justice.

*Who are these women?*

They are between 7 and 74 years old. They carry in themselves the suffering of the Kurdish people: imprisonment, physical and psychological torture, deportation, life in concentration camps, chemical bombardment, exodus and genocide.

Although they are mainly victims of the dictatorial baathist regime under Saddam Hussein, these women are also victims of the patriarchal system. Their bodies, spirits and lives are appropriated by the male members of their families and community, who subject them to another form of violence, no less terrible than the violence of the State. However, these women are not only victims, they also intervene to resist. They are writers, women military officers, musicians, working mothers and so on. Each wages combat against injustice and repression, to make way for a better life.

# THE STOCKHOLM DECLARATION

## TO COMBAT HONOUR RELATED VIOLENCE IN EUROPE

### EUROPEAN AGENDA FOR ACTION

*Adopted within the framework of the Conference "Honour Related Violence within a Global Perspective: Mitigation and Prevention in Europe", Stockholm, 7-8 October 2004*

**Reconfirming** the European Union Member States obligations to respect, promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms as stated in the Charter of the United Nations; the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, the Convention Against Torture, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the Hague Convention on Child Abduction;

**Bearing in mind** the important guidelines for action set out by International instruments, including: the Vienna Declaration and Plan of Action, the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, the International Conference on Population and Development Plan of Action, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the United Nations Resolution 55/66 on "Working towards the elimination of crimes against women committed in the name of honour", 57<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly Report by the secretary-general, and further follow-up resolutions and reports;

**Reaffirming** the obligation of Member States to European principles for Human Rights laid down The Treaty on the European Union in,

*Article (2)* to 'strengthen the protection of the rights and interests of the nationals of its member states' and 'to maintain and develop the Union as an area of freedom, security and justice'.

*Article 6 (1)* stating that the Union is founded on the principles of liberty, democracy, and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law, principles which are common to the Member States.

*Article (13)* stating that the 'Community ... may take appropriate action to combat discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation;

**Welcomes** the extensive efforts carried out by the European Union and its programs to mainstream gender equality protect human rights and fundamental freedoms in general and efforts to address violence against women including honour related violence and crimes in particular;

**Encourages** the coordination of such efforts carried out by the European Union and its programs, and efforts carried out by Member states, European civil society and non-governmental organizations to raise awareness, prevent, and mitigate the incidence of honour related violence and crimes;

***Calls upon the European Union and Member States:***

- (a) To implement obligations and principles specified under international and European Covenants for human rights and specific international and European commitments outlined in the Preamble of this Declaration.
- (b) To work actively in preventing and mitigating honour related violence and crime, at the European level and within Member States, through the constant engagement of institutions, civil society, non-governmental organizations, and key agents of change, and the coordination of such efforts through the European Union mechanisms and support. To further intensify efforts on integration, social inclusion as a means to prevent honour related violence and crimes, address patriarchal structures, and novel forms of honour related violence resulting due to sexual orientation.
- (c) To approach and intensify efforts to address honour related violence and crimes from a multi-sectoral framework integrating measures and interventions within the legal, political, educational, social, health, and police sectors. The coordination of such efforts should be at Member State level, at regional European level, including the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe.
- (d) To address and intensify efforts to understand the causes of honour related violence and crime, with special attention to their pattern of incidence and its consequences in Europe, involving a wide range of actors in forwarding such efforts such as academia, the media, Civil Society Organizations, Non-governmental organisations, community leaders, faith-based organisations.
- (e) To work towards raising awareness and disseminating information about the causes and the practice of honour related violence and crimes, especially to key formal and informal actors involved in addressing the phenomenon such as the police, prosecutors and judicial staff, social workers, educational staff, health workers, activists, Civil Society Organizations, and Non-governmental organisations.
- (f) To strengthen the short and long term support and rehabilitation mechanisms within Members States to victims of honour based violence and crimes including social, health, legal, educational support and adequate Safe housing, shelters, support lines, counseling services and information campaigns.
- (g) To establish mechanisms for victims to seek appropriate help and support, while working within the areas of strategy and policy, at Member State level, to allow for institutional and legal frameworks that would facilitate such a process, coordinating between Member States at European Union Level.
- (h) To coordinate the work and cooperation of European Police through the intensified efforts of EUROPOL and other European institutions, in the area of combating honour related violence and crimes, including the extension of Law and legal mechanisms to protect European citizens in danger of honour related violence in third countries, and to prosecute perpetrators who take refuge or carry out crimes in third countries.
- (i) To ensure that Member States use grounds of gender persecution in awarding asylum, and ensuring that women human rights should prevail in areas of conflict over cultural rights, while *emphasizing equality between men and women*.
- (j) To address honour related violence and crime in Europe as a European problem perpetuated by civil actors within European societies, and develop effective strategies, policies and mechanisms to combat the phenomenon, while avoiding cultural relativism and stereotyping, and ensuring the supremacy of European Law, European and International Covenants on Human Rights and fundamental freedoms.

# Conference Program







*European Conference Invitation*

**Honour Related Violence  
within a Global Perspective:  
Mitigation and Prevention in Europe**

*Stockholm  
7-8 October, 2004*



## The Problem Addressed by the Conference

Honour Related Violence (HRV) has come to manifest itself more clearly in Europe during the last decade. It includes honour killings, forced marriages, early marriages, and honour-based violence of predominantly males against females. The European Union (EU) has set gender equality as one of its primary goals. Many girls and women today all over Europe are subjected to discrimination and violence within their families and community settings. However, the recognition and the level of awareness about honour related violence vary within the European countries.

## The Aim of the Conference

The overall aim is to increase, facilitate and accelerate the exchange of knowledge, experience and policies in the work to prevent the occurrence of honour related violence in Europe. We aim to create multi-sectoral networks to combat the abuse of human rights of mainly girls and women and share experience and knowledge from good practice and theory. The final goal of the conference is to establish policy recommendations, and a European plan of action.

## The Organization of the Conference

The conference is a two-day event, covering the different aspects of HRV in Europe. The conference include the participation of a number of renowned key note speakers, experts, and activists specialised in the area of HRV. Plenary sessions, thematic workshops, panel debates and spontaneously organised gatherings will constitute the core of the conference agenda. The focus will shift from the informal level of narratives about HRV to more formal discussions about policies and strategies for European action. A more detailed agenda is attached. A report of the conference will be published and disseminated to all participants.

The conference is part of the two ongoing EU projects:

- *Prevention of Honour Related Violence in Europe*
- *Shehrazad - Combating Violence in the Name of Honour.*

The conference is organised by Kvinnoforum, with support from the EU Commission (Daphne Programme 2003 and the Community Action Programme to Combat Social Exclusion / Transnational Exchange Programme).

## The Organization of the Workshops

Each block of workshops will consist of three different thematic workshops to choose from. Each thematic workshop will have two, or more, short presentations in terms of introduction and as a tool to lead the discussion. In addition to this each workshop will have a moderator and a rapporteur will be selected to report to the concluding plenary. The workshops will be an open discussions forum for the different themes presented. The workshops will be held in three workshop rooms; Hörnan, Thule and Freja.

## Prospective Keynote Speakers and Presenters:

**Anita Gradin**, H.E. Ambassador and former EU commissioner, Sweden • **Evelyne Accad**, academic and author, Lebanon • **Ann Cryer**, MP, UK • **Rana Hussein**, journalist, Jordan • **Dilsa Demirbag-Sten**, debater, Sweden • **Lewis Benjamin**, Metropolitan Police Service, UK • **Nazand Begikhani**, KWAHK, UK • **Kickis Åhré Älgamo**, National Criminal Investigation Department, Sweden • **Corinna Ter-Nedden**, Papatya, Germany • **Elisabeth Fritz**, lawyer, Sweden • **Eduardo Grutsky**, Elektra, Sweden • **Sihem Habchi**, Ni putes ni soumises, France • **Mehrdad Darvishpour**, Stockholm University, Sweden • **Haideh Daragahi**, Association for Women's Rights, Sweden • **Sherin A. Saadallah**, Kvinnoforum, Sweden • **Sevil Bremer**, Save the Children, Sweden • **Valenka Vidal-Molina**, Azam Qarai, Women's Network, Sweden • **Banaz Rashid**, Municipality of Eskilstuna, Sweden • **Bam Björling**, Kvinnoforum, Sweden • **Karolina Vrethem**, Kvinnoforum, Sweden • **Marina Walz-Hildenbrand**, lawyer, Germany • **Natalie Dimitrova**, Roma Public Council - Kupate, Bulgaria • **Jack Briggs**, UK • **Sara Mohammad**, Never Forget Pela and Fadime, Sweden • **Diana Madsen**, CeLi, Denmark • **Hanna Cinthio**, Mecca, Sweden



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## The Workshop Themes

### Block I

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#### **Status of Honour Related Violence in Europe**

This workshop is dedicated to the presentation of the National Status reports from five European countries (Sweden, Spain, UK, Germany and Greece) commissioned by the EU within the framework of the Daphne Programme 2003 project '*Shehrazad: Combating Violence in the Name of Honour*'. The national status reports shall present a general overview of the status of HRV in participating countries, and compare findings.

#### **Honour Related Violence: Parameters of Psychological Support: Best Practice**

This workshop focuses on exchanging good practice when it comes to sheltered housing, other forms of housing, psychological support and rehabilitation. There will be three short presentations aimed at providing a basis for discussion.

#### **The Role of the Schools and Educational Institutions: Best Practice**

The school setting is in many ways one of the fundamental platforms for addressing issues related to HRV. It is also the first point of contact for many girls and boys seeking support for this problem. It is therefore important that the school is aware of how to approach this complex issue in the right way. The focus of this workshop is to discuss and exchange best practice both when it comes to support and prevention.

### Block II

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#### **How is Honour Related Violence a European Problem?**

Discussing the particular nature of HRV in European setting. Can HRV be defined as a pan-European problem? The presentations and questions raised will help to identify the unique character of HRV in Europe, as compared with other parts of the world e.g. the Middle East. What are the common patterns, and what are the differences? The discussion will allow for a deeper understanding of the complex nature of HRV in Europe today.

#### **Strategies to Combat Honour Related Violence in Europe**

Recognising HRV as a European problem shall be the departing point for initiating a discussion on what strategies are possible to combat and mitigate the phenomenon of HRV. European and Middle East specialists will bring their expertise and experience in order to enhance a transparent discussion about solutions, and exchange best practice.

#### **Role of Social Inclusion and Integration in Mitigating Honour Related Violence**

It is important to highlight the complex interaction between integration and segregation when it comes to HRV. By stressing this interaction policy-makers and practitioners will be better able to address the HRV problem through preventive measures. The discussion will focus on best practice to address HRV in relation to integration and social inclusion.

### Block III

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#### **Honour Related Violence: Issues of Criminalization and the Police**

In order to more efficiently combat HRV crime it is important to identify the signals that may trigger intervention at an early stage. The workshops will also look at the tools and know-how necessary to investigate HRV crimes. The focus for discussion will be the complexity surrounding crimes in the name of honour and best practice for police and legal system.

#### **A European Plan of Action**

The Daphne Programme 2003 project '*Shehrazad: Combating Violence in the Name of Honour*' will draw up a common European plan of action to combat and prevent HRV. The draft plan of action prepared within the project acts as the basic document to be discussed to initiate comments and constructive amendments before its subsequent declaration at the concluding plenary session of the conference.

#### **Preventive Best Practice**

To be able to address the issue of HRV in the long-term there is a great need to focus on preventive measures. This workshop focuses on a discussion concerning criteria for best practice and the exchange of knowledge, experience and examples of good practice.



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## Program

### Thursday, 7<sup>th</sup> October

**8:15-8:30 Registration**

**9:00 Opening and welcome: Bam Björling**

**9:05 Keynote speaker H.E. Ambassador Anita Gradin**

**9:15 Plenary I: HRV, Patriarchy and Human Rights**

- HRV and Patriarchy: Evelyne Accad
- HRV and Human Rights: Rana Hussein
- HRV and the EU: Ann Cryer

**10:30 Coffee Break**

**11:00 Workshop Block I:**

**Hörnan** -Status of HRV in Europe

- Presenters: Spain (Fundacion Mujeres), Germany (Terre des Femmes), UK (Change), Greece (Institute of Equality), Sweden (Kvinnoforum)
- Moderator: Haideh Daragahi: Association for Women's Rights

**Thule** -HRV: Parameters of Psychosocial Support: Best Practice

- Presenters: Corinna Ter-Nedden: Papatya, Azam Qarai, Valenka Vidal-Molina, Women's Network, Sevil Bremer, Save the Children
- Moderator: Alexia Panayiotou, Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies

**Freja** -The role of the School and Educational Institutions: Best Practice

- Presenters: Hanna Cinthio, Karolina Vrethem
- Moderator: Cecilia Palmgren, Kvinnoforum

**12:30 Lunch Break**

**13:45 Living with the Threat of HRV: Jack Briggs**

**14:15 Plenary II: HRV in a European context**

- HRV and Tradition: Mehrdad Darvishpour
- HRV and Integration: Dilsa Demirbag-Sten
- European Based Advocacy: Nazand Begikhani, Sihem Habchi

**15:30 Coffe Break**

**16:00 Workshop Block II:**

**Freja** -How is HRV a European Problem?

- Presenters: Terres des Femmes, Fundacion Mujeres, TransAct, Bulgarian Gender Research Foundation
- Moderator: Cheryl Toman, Assistant Professor

**Hörnan** -Strategies to Combat HRV in Europe

- Presenters: Evelyne Accad, Rana Hussein, Ann Cryer
- Moderator: Hanna Cinthio, Mecca

**Thule** -Role of Social Inclusion and Integration in Mitigating HRV

- Presenters: Mehrdad Darvishpour, Sihem Habchi, Bam Björling, Natalie Dimitrova
- Moderator: Karolina Vrethem, Kvinnoforum

**17:30 Conclusion**

**18:00-19:30 Reception and Cultural Event**



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## Program

### Friday, 8<sup>th</sup> October

8:30 Registration

9:00 Opening: Anita Gradin

9:05 Cries for Help: Letters from Threatened Girls  
read by Sara Mohammed, Never Forget Pela and Fadime Association

9:15 Plenary III: HRV, Legal Aspects and Advocacy  
-HRV and Legal aspects: Elisabeth Fritz  
-Prevention, Advocacy and Cooperation  
within the European Police: Lewis Benjamin  
-When the Legal System doesn't Work: Haideh Daragahi

10:30 Coffee Break

11:00 Workshop Block III:

**Freja** -HRV: Issues on Criminalization and Police  
Presenters: Kickis Áhré Álgamo, Lewis Benjamin, Marina Walz-Hildenbrand  
Moderator: Salman Asif, NSY, UK

**Thule** -A European Plan of Action  
Presenters: Sherin A. Saadallah  
Moderator: Rahel Volz, Terre des Femmes

**Hörnan** -Preventive Best Practice  
Presenters: Eduardo Grutsky, Banaz Rashid, Diana Madsen  
Moderator: Cecilia Palmgren, Kvinnoforum

12:30 Lunch Break

13:45 Panel Debate:

#### Redefining HRV in Europe: Future Perspectives

Participants: Evelyne Accad, Rana Hussein, Jack Briggs, Mehrdad Darvishpour,  
Lewis Benjamin  
Moderator: Bam Björling, Kvinnoforum

15:30 Coffee Break

16:00 Summing up of the Conference Findings moderated by Anita Gradin:

- Workshop rapporteurs report
- Adoption of a Plan of Action for Europe: the Stockholm Declaration

17:00 Future Steps in the European Collaboration to Mitigate and Prevent HRV

The Swedish Minister of Integration, Mona Sahlin, will indicate ways and means forward regarding the issue at stake and provide a link to the Swedish government's international conference on honour related violence in December.

17:15-17:30 Conclusion

A special thanks to Skandia,  
for letting us use their venue for our conference!



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# Key Note Speakers



## **Evelyne Accad**

Evelyne Accad, born and raised in Beirut, Lebanon, has a B.A. from Anderson College in English Literature (1967), an M.A. in French from Ball State University (1968) and a Ph.D. in Comparative Literature from Indiana University (1973). She is Professor at the University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana since 1974 in French, Comparative Literature, African Studies, Women Studies, Middle-East Studies, and the Honors Program. In 1978, 1984 and 2002, she taught at the Beirut University College (now LAU), and in the spring 1991, at Northwestern University.

She is a very productive author of many books and publications on the subject of women and the Middle East.

Other activities include writing and composing songs - the music and the lyrics - and performing at various concerts in the U.S. and abroad.



## **Nazand Begikhani**

Nazand Begikhani is from Iraqi Kurdistan and live in exile since 1987. She is graduated from the Sorbonne University with a PH. D on the representation of Kurdish women in European literatures.

Both as researcher and activist, she has been involved actively in gender issues and honour-based violence for the last twelve years.

Together with a group of Kurdish women, she founded in March 2000, the network-based organisation Kurdish Women Action against Honour Killings (KWAHK), that aims to raise awareness about crimes against women inside Kurdish communities in the name of honour.

Nazand has also worked as an expert report writer for a number of organisations and law firms, providing reports on human rights situation faced by Kurdish women. She sits on the board of the Metropolitan's special task force to tackle honour crimes in the UK. On November 2003, she participated in the expert meeting on violence in the name of honour organised by the Swedish Ministry for Democracy and Integration issues.

She is currently working for Amnesty International on a gender-based violence project in Iraq.

## **Lewis Benjamin**

Lewis Benjamin is a Detective Chief Superintendent who heads the Specialist Crime Intelligence Bureau at New Scotland Yard. Lewis is a career detective with extensive experience of murder investigations including Honour related homicide (Pal Dhal 1999). His expertise includes criminal intelligence, counter terrorism, the investigation of robbery and serial sex offences.

Prior to joining the Police service, Lewis successfully pursued an academic career as a research fellow studying cell biology at Swansea University.

He is married to Jayne, and they have two daughters, Amelia aged 11 and Jessica aged 9.

## **Ann Cryer**

Ann Cryer has been the Labour Member of Parliament for Keighley, UK since 1997 (a seat formerly held by her late husband, Bob Cryer). Her son, John, is also the Member of Parliament for Honchurch. The first mother and son MPs in the House of Commons!

Ann was the first MP to raise the issue of forced marriages in the House of Commons and has been a tireless campaigner for the rights of women. Appointed as Rapporteur on Crimes of Honour by the Council of Europe in 2002, Ann's report has been adopted by all the member states. Recently, Ann has campaigned for the introduction in UK law of a specific criminal offence of aiding, abetting and coercing someone into a forced marriage and has advocated changes in UK immigration law along the lines adopted by the Danish Government.

Amidst her Parliamentary duties, Ann is a mother and grandmother of 6.



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### **Haideh Daragahi**

Haideh Daragahi was born and raised in Iran. She got a Ph.D. in English literature in England in the late 70's and then returned to Iran to teach English at the University of Teheran. She was also an activist in the movement against the Shah and an active opponent of oppression of women such as forced marriage and honour killings.

She came to Sweden as a political refugee in 1984 and is now a Swedish citizen. She is an active debater and currently the chair person for the organisation Women's Rights Association, which deals with issues concerning the situation of immigrant women in Sweden.



### **Mehrdad Darvishpour**

Mehrdad Darvishpour, born and raised in Iran, came to Sweden as a political refugee 20 years ago. Mehrdad has a Ph.D. in Sociology. He is working at Stockholm University as a senior teacher and researcher. His dissertation in 2003, focused on immigrant women breaking the pattern.

He is a well-known debater, active in the women's movement as well as the anti-racist and anti-war movement. He has published many articles on the subject and appeared on numerous TV and radio shows as an advocate of these issues.



### **Dilsa Demirbag-Sten**

Dilsa Demirbag-Sten is a well-known activist and debater in the Swedish society. She has participated among other things in the Swedish Government's department committee on integration of immigrants. She writes articles and columns for two of Sweden's major newspapers, Dagens Nyheter and Expressen. She focuses on issues of integration with a gender perspective.

Dilsa feels passionate about making visible the immigrant women's situation in Sweden and has been an active debater regarding honour related violence. She received the Ax:son Johnson award for her fight for gender equality. Dilsa Demirbag-Sten is married and is the mother of two children.



### **Elisabeth Fritz**

Ms. Elisabeth Fritz is a well renowned criminal lawyer that is specialised in serious crime of violence. She is one of the few lawyers in Sweden that is an expert on honour crimes and has represented many immigrant girls and women in criminal court cases. Elisabeth represented the sister of Pela, one of the most well known cases of honour killings in Sweden. Elisabeth has through her work and dedication has led to improvement and increased visibility of the situation of immigrant girls and women that are effected by honour related violence. Elisabeth has received several awards for her work and also been elected "The Career Woman of The Year". Elisabeth has also established a Foundation for women and children that are victims of exposed to violence. Elisabeth Fritz has a Middle Eastern origin but was born and raised in Sweden. She is married and is the mother of two children.





### **Sihem Habchi**

Sihem Habchi is the vice-presidente of the movement Ni putes ni soumises "Neither whores, nor submissives".

Sihem Habchi was shocked by the death of Sohanne (18-year old), burnt alive in November 2002 in a Paris suburb. Sihem joined the movement Ni Putes Ni Soumises during the march against ghettos and for equality in march 2003. Since then, Sihem became the vice-president of the movement and has campaigned tirelessly for sexual equality and against violence and discrimination.

As a passionate advocate of prevention, Sihem has helped to launch "le guide du Respect" (the guide to Respect), which will educate teenagers about honour crimes, as well as running grass roots community awareness and victim support programmes across France.



### **Rana Hussein**

Rana's background combines journalism for the leading English language daily in Jordan, The Jordan Times, and consultancies and advocacy for women's rights and in the Middle East and Jordan with domestic NGOs and international organizations.

As a journalist she focused on social issues with a special emphasis on violence against women, as well as honour crimes. As a result of her work the Government of Jordan responded by introducing legal changes that suggest tougher punishments for perpetrators of such crimes.

She has earned four international awards for reporting such crimes: The 1995 MEDNEWS prize award for best article "Murder in the name of honour," the Reebok Human Rights Award in 1998, the Human Right's Watch Award in 2000 for being part of the National Jordanian Committee to Eliminate so-called Crimes of Honour and the Ida B. Wells award in 2003 for Bravery in Journalism. The international recognition pushed a group of young Jordanians to contact her wanting to organize grass-root movements to fight this phenomenon.



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Kvinnoforum/Foundation of Women 's Forum

Karlbergsvägen 77 113 35 Stockholm  
TEL +46 (0)8 56 22 88 00 FAX +46 (0)8 56 22 88 20  
[www.kvinnoforum.se](http://www.kvinnoforum.se) [info@kvinnoforum.se](mailto:info@kvinnoforum.se)



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