

4th Session for the Forum on Minority Issues
Centre for Multicultural Education on Item V

Participants of the Minority Forum, please allow me to express my gratitude for the opportunity provided to me by the MRG to participate at this minority forum and voice out the challenges that minority women are facing now in Kyrgyzstan. I am Geldora Hamidova a member of ethnic Uzbek minority from Southern Kyrgyzstan and I speak on behalf of the Centre For Multicultural Education. My statement has a 3-fold purpose. The first, is to update you on the recent developments in Kyrgyzstan detailing the situation of minority women. The second is to describe on how the recent violence and inter-ethnic conflict affected minority women in the effective participation of public and economic lives. The third purpose is to represent the recommendations to improve the current situation. Madam Chairperson, the instalment on interim president Rosa Otumbaeva was a beneficial development for our country. The woman who was brave enough to rule the country in the difficult times. The government has supported the participation of women in public life especially in economic, social and cultural spheres such as the appointment of a women General Prosecutor. Moreover, a positive note is the collaboration and the involvement of women in non-governmental sector. However, there are some areas for improvement. Although, a sense of order is slowly returning to Kyrgyzstan many people still fear the re-occurrence of ethnic hostilities. The central government control over the country is very weak and criminal gangs continue to operate with [literal hindrance] from the law enforcement agencies. Human rights activist were complains about the rising discrimination in regards to minority women. In particular, security concerns among the ethnic population of Uzbeks including fear of gender based violence continue. According to Amnesty International credible reports of rape and other crimes of sexual violence committed during the inter-ethnic conflict during 2010 have not been effectively investigated. Women organisation report that girls are reluctant to report these attacks given the profound cultural stigma attached to sexual violence in their traditional communities and the trauma they suffered as a result. Abduction, kidnapping of women ethnic Uzbeks and display of physical violence against them poses a difficult problem. According to mentality and culture of Uzbeks people it is a disgrace for the family to publicise the facts of rape. As such sexual and gender-based violence remains under-reported and largely unacknowledged by authorities. This inter-linking factors destroy the confidence which is fragile anyway as minority women try to reach out into their homes and their daughters back to studies and work. Many have also left to Russia because they feel humiliated and mistreated in their home-land. The violence in Southern Kyrgyzstan and its aftermath has seen a sharp deterioration in the situation of ethnic Uzbek population especially women. In addition to cases of violence many lose employment, decreased opportunities to take part in education cultural and public life.

There is a lack of security of minority women businesses women involved in making daily earnings in markets are being harassed, discriminated and physically assaulted on a daily basis. The government [time is up].