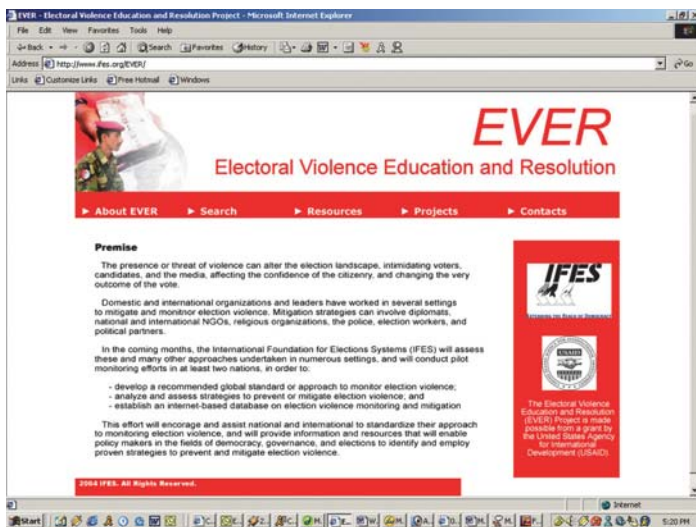


**GLOBAL**  
**IFES CREATES GLOBAL DATABASE ON ELECTORAL VIOLENCE**

To understand the noticeable trend of violence and intimidation surrounding some elections and to diagnose how election observation can be a more effective tool in election conflict prevention, IFES launched the Electoral Violence and Education Reconciliation (EVER) Project in August 2003, sponsored by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). IFES will develop a methodology and ultimately a training tool kit for civil society organizations to effectively moderate and monitor electoral conflict in partnership with election management bodies, political parties and security forces. At the same time, IFES will establish and maintain a global database of electoral incidents to which these organizations will contribute source material.



EVER website

While the research component of the EVER Project will cover dozens of elections in regions with a history of violence and intimidation, a particular focus will be on upcoming parliamentary and presidential elections in the Philippines. The EVER Project team leader plans to visit several civil society organizations in Manila and the Mindanao region of the Philippines in early March 2004 and returning for the May 16 elections.

**INDIA**  
**WOMEN'S LEGAL RIGHTS INITIATIVE LAUNCHED**

Despite years of government, non-governmental organizations (NGO) and donor initiatives aimed at empowering and uplifting women, the socio-economic conditions for a majority of women in India have not improved over the last decade. In fact, research shows that the status of women has deteriorated in some areas.

To stem this tide, IFES and Global Rights (International Human Rights Law Group) have launched the Women's Legal

Rights Initiative (WLRI) in India, funded by USAID. This project will pursue legal reform and judicial access to women in India. There are two major components of this project: expanding the knowledge of and dialogue on gender rights violations as well as the societal and legal response, and increasing availability of legal assistance through NGOs and community groups. WLRI will have programs on research, advocacy, legal aid and legal literacy at the national level and in two target states - Karnataka and Rajasthan. The project will work through and with Indian civil society organizations and research institutions.



Photo: www.GeddyImages.com

A participatory priority setting process at the national and state levels have begun which will identify research, advocacy and programming gaps in promoting women's access to justice. Other WLRI activities that have been launched include - expanding women's guidance and counseling centers in Rajasthan and a pilot project on anti-Violence Against Women (VAW) messages targeted at men in target villages in Karnataka and Rajasthan.

IFES and Global Rights will be funding NGOs in the states of Karnataka and Rajasthan. Other aspects of the project include working with the media and the preparation of annual reports on the status of women's rights in each state.

**Kosovo**  
**KOSOVAR ELECTION COMMISSION SETS EXAMPLE OF INCLUSION**

Election workers in post-conflict settings often act like medical doctors during an emergency. A triage approach takes hold, as attention is focused on the most obvious election pre-conditions: establishing accurate voter lists, accrediting political parties and writing equitable and fair election rules for the parties in conflict. Often neglected are disenfranchised groups, such as citizens with disabilities.

This was not the case, surprisingly, in Kosovo. Elections in Kosovo have contained a viable current of activity to spotlight the rights of voters with disabilities and to increase their participation in nearly every step of the process.

The appointment of Halit Ferizi, of the disability NGO Handikos, as an alternate member of the very first Central Election Commission contributed greatly. In the first months after his appointment, the OSCE Office of Elections and IFES'



Halit Ferizi

disability advisor worked with Mr. Ferizi to design concrete steps to make sure that disabled citizens were included in the first elections in 2000. Civic education campaigns encouraged disabled citizens to register and vote, including residents of a psychiatric institute. Ramps were built at over 90 polling stations. A mobile voting scheme was designed to reach homebound and hospitalized voters. In subsequent elections in 2002 these efforts were deepened

and a new ballot guide was tested in the city of Pez/Peja to allow blind voters to vote independently and in secret.

For the upcoming 2004 elections, the OSCE is expected to continue its focus on disability rights and elections, and the Kosovar disability groups are expected to take a more active role in the political process by making known their priorities for government action.

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