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Securitization and Democracy in Eurasia

Transformation and Development
in the OSCE Region

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inability to cultivate lands (Twum et al., 2019). The Kura-Araks river, whose basin is an important source of water in the wider region, is one of many cross-border natural resources that have remained affected by the conflict dynamics (ibid.). As access to resources is a matter of concern for many women from Armenian and Azerbaijani communities, joint management of resources might constitute another platform for cross-border cooperation.

The presence of mines too can limit the access to supply of resources as well as access to arable lands for many women. Indeed, the issue of mines is gendered: although men and boys are the main victims in mine explosions, women are affected by the presence of mines in different ways. Women's freedom of movement is further restricted and their economic insecurity, due to the impossibility of accessing mined lands, increases. The presence of mines hampers agricultural and farming activity and access to essential resources for women. In addition, in patriarchal societies, female victims of mines have less access to medical assistance and are more exposed to stigmatization from the community than men are. Evidence from humanitarian de-mining projects show that women involved in de-mining activities might report additional areas for prioritization with respect to men, enhancing the effectiveness of humanitarian mine action programmes (UNMAS, 2019). As of today, Nagorno-Karabakh is one of the most mined areas in the world (Mine Action Review, 2020). After the latest war, the number of mines has further increased to a level that is currently unknown. Although de-mining activity lends itself to cross-national confidence-building intervention, the governments of Armenia and Azerbaijan are treating the issue on an individual basis. Apart from the handover of maps from Yerevan to Baku in change for the release of some Prisoners of War (POWs), the two governments have not developed any kind of joint action to speed up the de-mining process, not even in the form of exchange of information and good practices (Herszenhorn, 2021). Thus, de-mining activities in Nagorno-Karabakh can be an occasion to involve civil society at large, including women (Clifford, 2018). According to a study from the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies of Geneva conducted in Lebanon and Colombia, women who participated in de-mining activities felt empowered and acquired decision-making power not only within the respective communities but also within the household (Ehlert et al., 2015).

Another peacebuilding and gender-sensitive potential action would be to combat the proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALWs) as part and parcel of the patriarchal traditions of militarism. SALW proliferation, and the glorification of gun possession, corroborates the glorification of violent masculinities that justify a range of violent practices that are considered signs of manhood and pride within the community (Farr et al., 2010). Even after the cessation of violence, SALWs circulate due to diversion from the state stockpile to non-state actors. High numbers of SALWs possessed by members of a community, which tend to increase in proximity to a conflict, are associated with copious episodes of domestic violence and an increase in human trafficking of vulnerable persons, especially in the sex trade (Frey, 2018). Combatting the proliferation of SALWs is usually considered to be a male prerogative while the influential role of women in this issue is undervalued. However, in small-town in Uganda, women were involved in advocacy programmes