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PRESS RELEASE**OSCE Office in Tajikistan helps train police officers in supporting victims of domestic violence**

HOJA OBI GARM, Tajikistan, 16 June 2010 - An OSCE-supported week-long training course for 20 law enforcement officials on working with domestic violence victims is being held this week in northern Tajikistan.

The officers, from the cities of Dushanbe, Kurgan Tube, Kulyab and Khujand, have been selected to be part of specialized units that are being established to work with victims of domestic violence following a decision in March 2010 by the Interior Ministry. The course, supported by the OSCE Office in Tajikistan, marks the first time Interior Ministry employees receive specialized training to work with domestic violence victims.

The aim of the units is to improve the investigation and prosecution of perpetrators of domestic violence, and to better help victims by referring them to the relevant official bodies and community services.

"The skills gained by the specialized officers during this course supported by the OSCE Office will help them to support victims of domestic violence and protect human rights at home," said Ambassador Ivar Vikki, the Head of the OSCE Office in Tajikistan.

Gen. Tahir Normatov, Head of the Interior Ministry's Organizational and Inspection Department, added:

"Domestic violence is a global problem, and an acute problem in our country. Under the State Programme on Gender equality, an order was issued for the establishment of specialised domestic violence units that will be trained this week. We intend to introduce this course into the Interior Ministry Police Academy curriculum."

The training course, led by two law enforcement officers from Turkey and the United States with the support of a gender expert from the OSCE Office, addresses topics such as democratic and gender-sensitive policing, the social and cultural aspects of domestic violence and gender-based abuse. The course also emphasizes the need for co-operation with civil society and crisis centres.

Participants will also take part in role-play exercises to learn how to interview, treat and protect victims.

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