Columbia University, Harriman Institute

Date: 22 April, 18:15
Title: Women, Peace & Security: A Kosovo/Serbia Case Study in Women's Activism across Borders
Speaker: Igballe Rogova, Executive Director, Kosova Women’s Network

Summary
When Igballe ("Igo") Rogova first heard that Serbian women protested regularly against the human rights abuses perpetrated by the Slobodan Milosevic-led regime against Kosovo Albanians, she had to see for herself. She travelled to Belgrade, where she soon found herself protesting every week together with Women in Black Serbia against Milosevic’s repressive policies. After the war, Igo co-founded the Kosovo Women’s Network, which quickly became a loud advocate for women’s participation in post-conflict, peace building processes. She drew from relationships established during the 1990s with Women in Black Network Serbia to found the Women’s Peace Coalition. When international and local authorities failed to involve women in peace negotiations between Kosovo and Serbia, the Coalition voiced women’s views through press releases and joint letters delivered to ranking officials. Igo also co-founded the Regional Women’s Lobby for Peace, Security and Justice in South East Europe (RWL), which brought together prominent women leaders from the region to promote a peaceful solution for Kosovo. The Lobby served as a space where women politicians and civil society leaders could make statements that contradicted the official views of their national governments. Igo will speak at Columbia University’s Harriman Institute about the struggle to ensure women’s voices were heard during and after the conflict in Kosovo.

IGBALLE ROGOVA
Igballe Rogova ("Igo") is a leading figure in the women’s rights movement and an internationally renowned women’s rights advocate. In 1989 she co-founded and later directed the first women’s organization in Kosova, Motrat Qiriazi, which educated thousands of rural women while fostering community development from a gender perspective. In 1999 she co-founded and continues to serve as the Executive Director of the Kosova Women’s Network, a multi-ethnic network of 100 women’s organizations undertaking joint advocacy initiatives to support, protect, and promote the rights and interests of women and girls throughout Kosova. She has mentored thousands of Kosovar women, as well as representatives of international organizations and institutions serving in Kosova. An architect and facilitator of Kosovar women’s multi-layered struggle to ensure women’s full political participation in the decision-making process, Igo knows that viable and fruitful post-conflict reconciliation and reconstruction must be built both around women and in partnership with women. She was a recipient of the Women of the Year Award from the International Network of Women’s Organizations and the Lydia Sklevicky Prize for innovative work with women’s groups awarded by Mamacash, The Netherlands/Open Society Foundation, Croatia/Global Fund for Women, U.S.A.