

**Discussion Group #3:**

**Addressing the Needs of Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power  
Within the Peacebuilding Context: Focus on Vulnerable Groups  
(i.e. Women, Indigenous Peoples, Children)**

Resource Person: *Prof. Yvon Dandurand, Criminology, UCFV,*  
Facilitator: *Jay Jones, Criminology Student, UCFV*  
Rapporteur: *Monique Trépanier, ICCLR&CJP*

Participants in the workshop were welcomed by Jay Jones, facilitator for the workshop. Professor Yvon Dandurand, resource person for the workshop, then initiated a discussion of issues surrounding peacebuilding and victims of crime and abuse of power, by describing who tends to be the victims in post-conflict situations, as well as by noting how problematic the term "peacebuilding" can be in concrete situations. When we talk of peacebuilding, there sometimes is an assumption that the task consist in re-building what used to exist, but this is rarely the case, as situations can rarely return to what they used to be. Professor Dandurand also briefly addressed the issue of victim compensation by giving participants an overview of previous means to achieve this objective. Examples such as tribunals in Argentina and Chile, truth commissions, and reconciliation committees, in South-Africa, were given. A general discussion followed.

- The issue of "trust" was first brought forward. It was noted that trust is an important element affecting a victim's healing process. It was observed that distrust in police figures or in people in positions of authority is a barrier to the healing process, as well as to the restoration of public order. The fact that crimes such as sexual assault have been committed not only by perpetrators of violence in some conflicts, but also at times by peacekeepers, has consequently led to victims being deprived of a sense of security or assurances that they will not be further victimized. The involvement of female peacekeepers in Canadian peacekeeping initiatives was strongly urged as a means of addressing the concerns of women victims who would be more reluctant to deal with male peacekeepers. The distrust of victims vis-à-vis United Nations (UN) initiatives was also noted in relation to the victims of crime in the former Yugoslavia and in Rwanda. These victims of war crimes have expressed grave disappointment in the international community for its failure to co-operate with the UN International Tribunals by refusing to pursue indicted war criminals. It was further mentioned that victims can often reconcile themselves and get on with their lives, but that this is only applicable insofar as they are not forced to tolerate additional violence. There was general agreement with all of these statements.