



TV

UNITED NATIONS NATIONS UNIES

UN IN ACTION

Release Date: October 2009

Programme No. 1204

Length: 5'24"

Languages: English, French, Spanish, Russian

SOSAN'S STORY: DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN AFGHANISTAN

VIDEO

ARMED TALIBAN IN STREETS /
WOMEN CLOAKED IN ABAYAS

WOMEN AT SHELTER

SOSAN ON CAMERA

SOSAN AND HER KIDS AT THE
SHELTER

AUDIO

NARRATION

Eight years after the fall of the Taliban, targeted violence against women in Afghanistan is back at an alarming level. Women of all ages are enduring brutal physical and sexual abuse in their own homes. (14")

SOSAN: (Dari) **F**

"He tried to kill me with electric shock. My brother is his brother-in-law and they are all in this together." (7")

NARRATION

A few lucky ones find their way to one of only six shelters in the country. Sosan, who at age 35 has seven children, is one of them. Sosan's husband and his family tried to kill her more than once because they suspected that she was having an affair. (15")

The United Nations says, over 87 per cent of all Afghan women suffer from domestic abuse, making Afghanistan one of the most dangerous

places in the world to be a woman. (10)

SOSAN ON CAMERA

SOSAN: (Dari) **F**

“They injected me with poison and I had such a reaction that my hands were numb and I nearly died. There are police reports of all of this. They brought the mullah to say prayers for my passing away and they even obtained my death certificate.” (14”)

EX-HUSBAND WITH SOSAN IN
MEDIATION ROOM

NARRATION

Sosan’s ex-husband admits that he, his brother and their 15-year old son tried to electrocute her. (6.5”)

EX-HUSBAND ON CAMERA

HUSBAND: (Dari) **M**

“...I tortured her...with my son.” (3”)

SOSAN WITH KIDS AT THE
SHELTER

NARRATION

Sosan escaped with her three youngest children and came to the shelter. (4”)

WENNY AT HER DESK

Wenny Kusuma from the UN Development Fund for Women, UNIFEM, in Afghanistan. (5”)

WENNY ON CAMERA

WENNY KUSUMA: (English) **F**

“What we see in the last year especially is a rise in the return of public acceptance of violence against women to the degree where it was under the Taliban.” (11.5”)

WOMAN SPEAKS TO MAN IN

NARRATION

What is different now is that women and their

SHELTER

families are starting to speak out about domestic violence. (6.5”)

SOSAN ON CAMERA

SOSAN: (Dari) **F**
“Even though my husband divorced me, my brothers were going to kill me for being divorced. For soiling their name and their honour. If this place weren’t here, where would we have gone?”
(12”)

SURAYA IN HER OFFICE

NARRATION
Suraya Pakzad, the Executive Director of the Voice of Women Organization, recognized the need for a safe haven in her home town of Herat a few years ago. (9.5”)

SURAYA ON CAMERA

SURAYA: (English) **F**
“Girls and women run away from domestic violence, run away from forced and child marriages and come to the shelter.” (7”)

SOSAN IN SEWING, WEAVING AND READING CLASS

NARRATION
Hers is one of six UNIFEM-supported shelters in Afghanistan. Here, women like Sosan learn skills such as sewing and weaving. They are also given the opportunity to learn to read and write.
(15”)

SOSAN WITH EX-HUSBAND IN MEDIATION

Now Sosan is divorced but she says her husband owes her money. Sosan bought the land they lived on from her own father with the money she earned working as a seamstress.
(10”)

WOMEN WORK AT SHELTER

Kusuma says it's a sign of progress that even a few shelters for battered women have opened in recent years. But it still takes a lot of courage to run one. (9")

PEOPLE LEAVE MOSQUE

Shelters like this one are criticized as anti-Islamic because disputes in the traditional Afghan society are mediated within the family, with the help of tribal elders. It is taboo for women to seek justice outside. (12.5")

CLOAKED WOMEN IN STREETS

As much as the shelter wants women to return to their parents or male members of their families, Sosan won't consider going back. (7.5")

Since living without a man is not acceptable in the Afghan society, it has been suggested that Sosan should reconcile and live together with her oldest son, the same son who took part in the attempt to kill her. (12")

SOSAN'S SON LEAVES WITH FATHER, TRYES TO PULL AWAY

Because Sosan refuses to return to her son or her husband, she is losing custody of her 7-year-old boy. He is forced to go live with his father...as mandated by Afghan tradition. (11.5")

SOSAN SOBS

SOSAN: (Dari) **F**
"His father is cruel, violent and unloving. So he kept crying – 'God help me, I won't go and live with my father.'" (11")

S
OSAN RECEIVES MONEY

NARRATION
As a result of the shelter's mediation, Sosan

HERAT MARKET

received the equivalent of ten thousand US dollars for the disputed land. But since her father disowned her, and with no other family member to live with, she can't use the money to rent a house and live with her two young daughters. (19")

SOSAN LEAVES WITH DAUGHTERS

Since filming this story, Sosan has married another man, but her leaving the shelter comes at a terrible price. She was forced to give up her daughters. They now live with her ex-husband. (12)

UN LOGO

This report was prepared by Sasa Gorisek for the United Nations.