



News from the Kennedy School

Office of Communications and Public Affairs

Kennedy School Program Offers Proponents of Peace Forum to Share, Learn

By Robert O'Neill

January 9-11, 2007 — As Iraq's first post-Saddam minister of the environment, Dr. Mishkat al-Moumin MPA06 has had to overcome her share of challenges: building a ministry from scratch, defying death threats and surviving attacks on her life, all while helping her country overcome years of environmental abuse. Yet the former Mason fellow and lecturer at Baghdad University College of Law found she still had plenty to learn from the more than two dozen fellow women leaders gathered at the Kennedy School this week for the Women and Security Executive Program.

"I have seen what other women did, I have seen what strategies they used, I started putting myself in their shoes," Dr. al-Moumin said after the final faculty session Thursday, "Women Shaping Society," presented by Amb. Swanee Hunt, founder of the program and director of the [Women and Public Policy Program](#).

The program, now in its seventh year, recognizes the important, but often unrecognized, role women play in reducing conflicts and creating the conditions for sustainable peace.

The 29 participants who attended from Colombia, Iran, Iraq, Liberia, Nepal, Sudan and Uganda are all actively involved in government, civil society, academia and community organization. Formal and informal sessions are designed to allow them to share strategies, discuss policy and sharpen their skills.

Their experiences include advocating for women's rights in Iran, managing a national environmental plan in Colombia, and chairing the observer mission to the Juba peace talks between the government of Uganda and the Lord's Resistance Army.

In the more tranquil environment of the Kennedy School, participants had a chance to present their varied experiences in the program's Inclusive Security classes.

They also attended courses on subjects ranging from policy innovation to negotiation and conflict resolution to organizing for social change. Faculty members involved in the program included Iris Bohnet, professor of public policy and faculty chair of the Women and Public Policy Program (WAPPP); Martha Chen, lecturer in public policy; Swanee Hunt; Elaine Kamarck, lecturer in public policy; Louise Richardson, executive dean of the Radcliffe Institute; and Robert Rothberg, program director of the [School's Program on Intrastate Conflict and Conflict Resolution](#).

Program participants also appeared at a packed Forum on Wednesday to share their unique experiences



Mishkat al-Moumin (MPA06) was one of 20 participants in the Women and Security Executive Program held in the John F. Kennedy Jr. Forum this week.

and answer questions.

Fatemeh Haghightajoo, a parliamentarian in Iran from 2000 to 2004 and currently a WAPPP/Harvard Committee on Human Rights fellow, used her presentation to discuss women's rights in Iran. She praised the conference's focus on leadership skills and the opportunity it afforded women from so many different places to network.

"We can all learn from each other," she said.

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Photos: Martha Stewart