

K-MDRI & MDRI Victorious in Shaping Kosovo's New Constitution to Protect the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Washington, DC – May 7, 2008

Kosovo Mental Disability Rights Initiative (K-MDRI) and **Mental Disability Rights International (MDRI)** have succeeded in changing language in the newly drafted Kosovo constitution to fully protect persons with disabilities. Our efforts will assure that there is no separation of persons with physical, mental and other disabilities from the rest of the society and that persons will not be subjected to segregation or unwarranted detention because of a disability – giving all citizens the right to liberty and security.

Prior to our demands for change, Kosovo's draft constitution included a clause that would have allowed for the "deprivation of liberty" solely based on disability. According to **Laurie Ahern**, Chief Operating Officer for MDRI, "this is a huge victory in preventing the future arbitrary detention of people with mental disabilities in Kosovo." MDRI and K-MDRI have been working tirelessly since 2002 to change government policies leading to the closing of Shtime Special Institute, where hundreds of persons have been illegally detained for years, and to build support for a community integration system for person with disabilities.

The proposed constitution will soon be presented to the Assembly of Kosovo for approval. To read more about Kosovo's Constitution, please click here.

<http://www.kushtetutakosoves.info/?cid=2,1>

Please visit MDRI's new website to read more about our work, view our media gallery, and find out how what you can do to help!