



Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty
invites you to a briefing by

Zalpa Bersanova

Ethnographer, Journalist

Values Stronger than War: Islam and the Struggle for Meaning in Chechnya Today

Friday, July 30, 2004

9:00AM-10:30AM

in Conference Room A (4th Floor) at

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty

1201 Connecticut Ave NW

[entrance on Rhode Island Ave NW, next to St. Matthew's Cathedral]

How have the two Russo-Chechen wars of the last decade affected the way values have changed over time in Chechen society? According to ethnographer Zalpa Bersanova, certain values have changed, while others, unexpectedly, have remained the same or intensified. Bersanova, in the U.S. to conduct research on the Chechen diaspora, will discuss the results of her research into the role of Islam and traditional Chechen values in contemporary Chechnya.

Zalpa Bersanova began her work as a Chechen ethnographer in 1991, while working at the Sociological Laboratory of the Chechen-Ingush Humanitarian Research Institute. She continued to carry out her research at Moscow State University from 1993-1996, while working on her doctorate. In 2002, she received a grant from the MacArthur Foundation to extend her research on contemporary Chechen values to the diaspora. She has conducted research on the diaspora in France, and in addition to the United States, will interview the Chechen diaspora in Turkey. Bersanova continues to conduct field work in Chechnya, in spite of the dangers involved.

Bersanova's dissertation, defended in 1999, focused on the role played by indigenous Islam and ethics in consolidating Chechen identity. Her current field work examines the extent to which violent conflict has destroyed the fabric of Chechen society. Her research intersects with a variety of disciplines, from ethnography to sociology and political science.

Please RSVP by Thursday, July 29 by email to <dc-response@rferl.org>, by telephone to Melody Jones at (202) 457-6949, or by fax to (202) 457-6992.