

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF WOMEN POLICE



WomenPolice

February-April 2020

GET READY FOR INDONESIA 2020

58TH IAWP CONFERENCE IS SET
FOR SEPTEMBER IN YOGYAKARTA



**ARE YOU FIT
FOR DUTY?**

PRACTICING FUNCTIONAL FITNESS
CAN REDUCE INJURIES WHILE ON DUTY

PLUS STORIES FROM THE UKRAINE, CANADA, UNITED STATES AND MORE!

Al-Beli Afifa, left, Superintendent of Police in the Dept. of Peace Operations, participates in a meeting on peacekeeping by Special Envoy Angelina Jolie at the United Nations Operations and Crisis Centre.



REGION 2: NORTHEAST, USA

Building Community Trust Happens One Step at a Time

Creating stronger bonds starts with understanding how people view police officers. By Al-Beli Afifa, Superintendent of Police, Police Division, OROLSI, Dept. of Peace Operations, United Nations, New York, USA

POLICE ARE THE MOST VISIBLE PART OF THE criminal justice branches. To build stronger ties with the community it serves, law enforcement must focus on what shapes the public's views of the police department.

To gain people's trust, law enforcement must reach out to the community. As part of a law enforcement agency, I see several ways to connect our communities; for example, the Dhaka Metropolitan Police hosts a series of events to spur community gathering and

relationship-building. These include:

- Creating a community and beat policing system to establish friendly relations between the police and public to help remove fear of police and reduce crime
- Distributing flowers, water, batasha (dry sweets) and chocolates to people visiting Ramna Park, an area park in one of the communities we serve, and presenting displays from SWAT, Crime Scene, K-9, etc. to show the area is safe
- Distributing blankets to the street people and the poor during winter

Although these are great programs and have been well received by the community officials and residents, they are rarely seen or discussed in the news, social media outlets or even by the community. Yet negative and unfortunate incidents that involve law enforcement use of force are highlighted by media outlets for weeks on end.

Regardless of the outcries of police misconduct and demands of injustice,

law enforcement must continue reaching out to their communities to build trust and form partnerships, avoiding establishing an "us vs. them" mentality. Public expectations associated with procedural justice include some principles:

1. Law enforcement should explain their situation to the public they deal with
2. Law enforcement makes decisions based on consistent legal principles, not opinion
3. The public must be treated with dignity, politeness and respect
People are likely to react favorably to law enforcement when they believe officers are sincere, caring and doing what is the best for the people.

Minnesota Leads by Example

I had the opportunity to get in touch with the Minnesota Police Department (MPD) in the U.S. as part of my Hubert H. Humphrey Fellowship Program. Minnesota is fortunate to have professional law enforcement agencies that work to build community partnerships and trust. A June 2015 survey by the Minnesota Police and Peace Officers Association showed that 90% of the surveyed population approved of the way Minnesota law enforcement agencies were doing their job. By contrast, a Gallup poll from June of 2015 revealed that only 52% of the national population have confidence in their law enforcement agencies.

I believe Minnesota's high approval rating has a direct correlation with how law enforcement and the public in general get along. They did not achieve this in a day; they have initiatives such as Coffee with a Cop, a national program designed to encourage casual conversation between cops and the community. On given dates, members of the MPD meet at a coffee shop for questions and conversation with the community, similar to our Uthan Baithak, which was introduced by the Dhaka Metropolitan policing a few years ago and allows us to reach out to the community more closely. The deputy commissioner and additional



Superintendent of Police Al-Beli Afifa

deputy commissioner, along with other senior officers, the officer in charge and other inspectors of the police station, participate this Baithak to develop public's trust and build partnerships.

To ensure procedural justice, it is important to do little things that are likely to have big impact on individuals in our communities. For example, one day a colleague was interrogating an arrested suspect. During interrogation, he learned that the individual who had been arrested needed some belongings and medication from his home. The suspect was also a freedom fighter. My colleague arranged to get the medication from his home and also asked more questions, thanking him for his contribution during our liberation war. Later, the man told our deputy commissioner that my colleague "approached me and my freedom fighter status with diligence and treated me with respect that was lacking the night of my arrest."

This is a great representation of the little things that matter in law enforcement. These personal interactions with people on some of their worst days can have a huge impact in building trust and relationships in the community. However, work will always need to be done to build trust and partnerships. Sometimes law enforcement agencies will need to look at their standards for success and evaluate whether some sorts of organizational transformation need to take place.

Building and improving community ties and trust will always be a constant mission so that law enforcement reflects and upholds the desires of the people. If law enforcement continues striving and demanding to stay legitimate, upholding procedural justice principles, then trust within our communities and partnerships will bring about stronger, safer cities. 🇳🇵