

# Global Women's Peace Network Banquet and Awards Ceremony

South East Europe Peace Summit, Tirana, Albania

Gani Rroshi - October 27, 2019



WFWPI has worked very closely with UPF to prepare for the South East Europe Summit. In most nations WFWP and UPF leaders discussed within their organizations -and together, with a strong solidarity for months. As a reflection of this harmony, beyond contributing to providing many women speakers to the sessions, WFWP was invited to be the MC / facilitator of both the Opening Banquet (Carolyn Handschin) and the Closing Session (Marilyn Angelucci) of the Summit.

A very heartfelt appreciation to WFWP Albania and their President, Kasia Minolari, who managed to bring many very influential guests from Albania, with Vice President, Marjetta Roshi and other WFWP members. Also appreciation goes to Ejona Mirka for her important delegation from Kosovo. Brigitte Wada, WFWP President in France, joined the UPF preparatory team weeks before the event, investing many hours and missing almost all of the actual events because she was so needed behind the scenes. Marcia de Abreu, WFWPI- Europe Secretary General, similarly, assisted in the coordination of our European team to ensure all would go smoothly. So many more could be mentioned.

## **WFWPI BANQUET & AWARDS CEREMONY:**

WFWP held a Global Women's Peace Network Banquet and Awards Ceremony on Saturday night for our most influential and close women leaders who came to attend the Summit. Finally, there were so many women guests that it was difficult to keep our list below 140, including around 75 -80 guests. This included former First Lady, 15 parliamentarians, former government ministers, Pres. Moisu's daughters and many other prominent women leaders from the Balkans, Europe, Middle East and Eurasia. There were around 15 men who also attended.



Suzana Rexhepi, WFP Albania and Mitty Tohma, WFP UK President, co-hosted the event, guiding the audience throughout the evening. The program included welcoming remarks from WFWPI Europe President, Carolyn Handschin who told the story of a venerable Buddhist monk from France in Europe who sat next to her at lunch during the UPF Summit last year in Korea. He leaned over, so seriously, as if he had been waiting to say this, and announced, “if WFP can lead the way among women’s organizations to show the model of how to protect the sanctity of men’s “true honour” during this era of women’s rise to leadership, this new time of enlightenment can proceed more quickly”.



Our WFWPI President, Julia Moon was next to deliver welcome remarks. Beautiful as always, she introduced her self to the room full of guests and many WFWP chapter presidents who were so happy to meet her in her new role. She described her profound appreciation of the founding vision for WFWP and of the great sacrifices of our devoted sisters in missions around the world.

Introduced by Julia as, “like the Sunshine”, Sun jin Moon, new Senior Vice President for WFWPI came to stage to deliver the main address. It was deep and broad, painting a detailed picture of the worlds needs, and the love and capacities of women needed to respond. Of course, she spoke her mother, Dr. Hak Jah Moon, Founding President of WFWPI and in tears, about the strengths and sacrifices being called for at this time.



It was a beautiful event, which was highlighted with the Global Women's Peace Leadership Award Ceremony, bestowing "Women of Excellence" Certificates and a grant from WFPW Europe for two outstanding women; Former First Lady of Albania, Dr Liri Berisha and Human Rights defender, Dr. Feride Rushiti. The atmosphere created by focusing on their life work and their righteousness was remarkable. Dr. Berisha is well known for founding and currently directing multiplied institutions that diagnose and care for children with autism and their families. On a visit, a team visited there and saw how she chose the location and designed the buildings with so much attention to detail. Additionally, the caring she personally gives to the young patients and their worried parents really gives the impression that she is like the mother of the institution. She spoke in tears in her remarks upon receiving the award.



The second recipient, also a medical doctor, gynaecologist, who served at the time of the war in Kosovo in the early 1990's. She realized that medical attention would never be enough to heal the thousands of women victims of torture and rape. Creating an NGO to provide a safe place for listening, counselling, treatment and lobbying to the government for support for the needs, she has been recognized around the world. Her legal reforms are being imitated in other post war countries. But most amazing is clearly the heart of their investment. She too spoke in tears, describing the victims they are helping who have sometimes held their experiences inside their hearts for 20 years, never speaking to anyone. The former President of Kosovo, HE Fatmir Sejdiu, heard about the dinner meeting and came to greet us informally, thanking WFPW for honouring his compatriot, Dr. Rushiti.

A renowned Albanian opera singer, who was at first reluctant, changed her mind and waltzed through the tables serenading us during dinner. The evening closed with the young Czech FFWPU National President, Eva Kacirkova, who performed two beautiful classics on the violin. It was very difficult to say good night as our WFWPI international guests were being pulled into countless conversations and photographs- until one caring gentleman, Insup Park, husband of Sun jin Moon, suggested we might want to say good night!