

Southeast Europe Peace Summit and the Family Festival and Peace Blessing

Michael Balcomb with Gani Roshi
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During the weekend of October 26, more than 10,000 people attended a series of national programs held in Tirana, Albania. The two key events, the Southeast Europe Peace Summit and the Family Festival and Peace Blessing, featured inspiring and heartening messages from Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, co-founder of the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (FFWPU), who proclaimed the nation of Albania as a "Heavenly Albania."



The Family Festival and Peace Blessing was the highlight of the weekend, attended by over 1200 Albanian couples representing the 12,000 couples that have received the Marriage Blessing in the past year. Audience members were immersed in the magnificent musical and traditional dance performances, followed by Dr. Moon, who took the stage to perform the Blessing Ceremony for three groups of couples representing each region of Albania.

The Southeast Europe Peace Summit, hosted by the Universal Peace Federation (UPF), featured 400 participants from 46 nations and was attended by 16 current and former heads of state and government. The Summit's organizing committee was co-chaired by Alfred Spiro Moisiu, former president of Albania, and Father Edmond Brahimaj, the world leader of the Bektashi Order, an Islamic Sufi order based in Tirana.



Former President Moisiu first welcomed Dr. Moon and her late husband Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon to Albania in 2005. This time around, Moisiu helped by inviting key political figures. Many religious leaders were also in attendance, coming from nations throughout Europe and the Middle East. The entire proceedings were highlighted in numerous positive articles and reports. Dr. Moon's speech and the Blessing festival were shown on national TV.



"Many people said they were impressed by the timeliness and relevance of the Summit," said Dr. Michael Balcomb, regional chairman of Family Federation Europe and Middle East. "The Balkans has been a troubled part of Europe for a long time. Even today, there are many unresolved tensions and resentments.

Perhaps there are few places in the world more in need of God's healing and grace."

Dr. Moon directly addressed this troubled history in her speech, stating that if "Heavenly Albania" can focus on strengthening its base with strong families and spiritual values, the Balkan Peninsula can become a transforming power for Europe. She nominated Former President Moisiu as Head of the Steering Committee tasked with the follow-up effort, and also offered donations to three local charities.



In addition to the Summit and Blessing, there was a Youth and Students for Peace (YSP) Rally with more than 2000 youth and the launch of this year's Balkan Peace Road project. There were also numerous other programs, including the groundbreaking ceremony for the new headquarters for the region, the Cheon Il Guk Embassy, and a Women's Federation for World Peace (WFWP) Global Women's Peace Network (GWPN) dinner featuring messages from WFWP International President Julia Moon and WFWP International Senior Vice President Sun Jin Moon.

