



A Heavenly Weekend in Tirana

Tirana, Albania, October 25 - 28, 2019

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On behalf of all our hardworking families in Heavenly Europe and the Middle East, it gives us great joy to report the victory of the Southeast Europe Peace Summit and National Blessing just concluded in Tirana, Albania. True Mother's presence at the Opening Plenary of the Summit and the National Blessing Ceremony, leading to her happy proclamation of Albania as "Shin or Heavenly Albania", were of course at the very heart of the event.

More than 10,000 people attended the series of programs. The UPF Summit featured 400 participants from 46 nations, and was attended by 16 current and former heads of state and government. We are grateful for the patronage of Mr. Edi Rama, the Prime Minister of Albania, whose support helped enormously with matters of state protocol and security. Senior Minister Elisa warmly welcomed True Mother to Albania by presenting her with flowers at the steps of her plane, and also delivered the Prime Minister's greetings at the Opening Plenary.

In addition to the UPF Summit, there was a YSP Rally of 2000 Youth, the launch of this year's Balkan Peace Road project, and numerous other programs including the Groundbreaking Ceremony of the new Headquarters for the Region, the Cheon Il Guk Embassy. WFWP held a Global Women's Peace Network dinner where both WFWP President Julia Moon and Vice President Sun Jin Moon were featured.

In addition to 70 current and former parliamentarians and government ministers, we were pleased to have the support of many religious leaders. The Heads of the Islamic community and the Bektashi Sufi Order attended both the Opening Plenary and the Summits' IAPD session. The Secretary General of the Interreligious Council of Albania was also present, together with religious leaders from European and Middle East nations

and Sheikh Mansour Diouf from Senegal, a key figure in the victory of the first Africa Summit in Dakar.

15 major organizations were official partners to the Summit, including several universities and a number of national media organizations. The entire proceedings were broadcast nationwide with over 200 articles and reports, all of them supportive. True Mother's speech and the Blessing were carried live on national TV.

The Summit's organizing committee was co-chaired by H.E. Alfred Moisiu, former president of Albania (2002-2007) and Father Edmond Brahimaj, the world leader of the Bekashi Order. President Moisiu, who first welcomed True Parents to Albania in 2005, was our pillar of strength. As a leader most respected in Albania for his tireless dedication and for taking a stand above party politics, he helped open doors to invite key partners, such as the Podgorica Club founded by former President Vujanovic of Montenegro, and high level participants including the two current heads of state from Kosovo and North Macedonia.

Another important participant was Ambassador Christopher Hill from the United States, who served as US Ambassador in the Balkans during the 1990's. As the main American diplomat in Albania at the end of the Communist era, he is very fondly remembered by Albanian officials and people in general. His presence drew much attention from the media.

Many people said they were impressed by the timeliness and relevance of the Summit. The Balkans has been a troubled part of Europe for a long time. World War 1 started here, and just 20 years ago the last war fought in Europe raged across the territory. 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.

True Mother directly addressed this troubled history in her speech saying that peninsulas like her native Korea and the Balkans are the crossroads of powerful civilizations and often must pass through troubles. Albania and Balkan nations need not lament too much their latest rejection from the EU, she said.

As “Shin Albania”, if the country can focus on strengthening its base with strong families and spiritual values, together with its neighbor nations they will become a transforming power for Europe. “Albania was considered last in Europe after her long history of suffering,” she said, “but time has come for the last to become the first!”

The National Blessing event was the high point of the whole weekend, attended by over 1200 Albanian couples representing the 12000 couples that have been blessed in the past year. Each region of Albania and each of the 61 Peace Councils in the country were present. Young people performed traditional dances, well known singers warmed up the audience, until True Mother came on stage and gave the Blessings to three groups of representative couples representing each region of Albania.

Mrs. Monika Kryemahdi, wife of Albanian President Ilir Mehta, stayed from beginning to end with her teenage daughter. In her congratulatory remarks, she said it was the loveliest event

ever held in the Congress Hall. She also offered a gift of a beautiful traditional Albanian costume to True Mother on behalf of the Albanian people.

True Mother spoke about the importance of creating a strong Heavenly Albania based on family values. She nominated President Moisiu as Head of the Steering Committee tasked with the follow up effort, and also offered donations to three local charities.

In her final remarks at the Victory Celebration, True Mother explained that a restored nation, like Shin Albania, should still be compared to a new born child, needing constant care and attention. “The Kingdom of God cannot come in one day,” she said, “but, nevertheless, this marks the first day of Heavenly Albania. This nation must now live for the sake of others until all the surrounding nations are brought into the realm of God’s parental love!”



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