

## UPF Tirana, Albania Celebrate the Fifteenth Anniversary of the Founding of UPF

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Tirana, Albania -- Around 130 Ambassadors for Peace from Albania and Kosovo celebrated the 15th anniversary of the founding of UPF.

In the second part of the event they held a national assembly of UPF-Albania and elected new leaders for the next two years.

The participants met at Tirana International Hotel on September 26, 2020, while following strict safety regulations connected to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The event was moderated by Dr. Saemira Pino, a member of the UPF board and a former minister of education and health. Dr. Pino emphasized the important contributions that UPF has made during these years around the world and in Albania.



The chair of the Albanian Peace Council, Hon. Rajmonda Stefa, welcomed the participants and presented a few of the highlights of UPF's journey during the past 15 years.

One of the keynote speakers was H.E. Alfred Moisiu, the former president of Albania (2002-2007), now the chair of the Balkans branch of the International Summit Council for Peace (ISCP), one of the UPF primary associations. In his speech President Moisiu said: "I say with pride that I have been part of the journey of the Universal Peace Federation since 2005, when its founders, Rev. and Mrs. Moon, visited Albania as part of their inauguration tour in 100 countries around the world, and I received them at the government residence in Durrës on October 30, 2005. Rev. Moon impressed me from our first meeting with his far-sighted vision and his special approach to preserving and strengthening family and religious harmony. After completing my term as president, with pleasure I have been part of national, regional and world activities by engaging in high-level conferences and summits, and I say with conviction that the Universal Peace Federation in these 15 years has managed to become an influential factor in the international arena."

The second keynote speaker was H.E. Professor Fatmir Sejdiu, former president of Kosovo (2006-2010). In his address President Sejdiu said: "I believe it is very important to express our appreciation for the great work UPF has done for Albania and Kosovo during these years. I have to say, the work of UPF is extraordinary. I have attended many international events, and they all were great, but we also should be proud of the high-level events we have organized here. I believe that with the capacities that UPF has, with the new generation of leadership coming up, its spirit will continue and surely we will address important issues which are important and will be helpful also to the state institutions."



The third keynote speaker was His Eminence Father Edmond Brahimaj, the world leader of the Bektashi Order, whose headquarters is located in Albania. In his speech on this occasion he said: "It is an honor and privilege for me to address this wonderful audience and convey the support of millions of Bektashis around the world. The events organized by UPF surely will be remembered for a long time, not only for their size, geography and the topics they addressed, but especially for the substance of the messages conveyed for all generations."

The chairman of UPF for Europe, Eurasia and the Middle East, Dr. Katsumi Otsuka, greeted the participants via a video message. Dr. Otsuka said: "I am deeply appreciating your splendid contribution for the development of the UPF foundation in Albania and Kosovo. I want to salute your great work in establishing Local Peace Councils in all 61 municipalities of Albania. I strongly believe that all of you have extremely important roles, not only in the Western Balkans but also in all of Europe. I cannot forget what Mother Moon, the co-founder of UPF, said last year at the Tirana Summit, where she emphasized the role of Albanian Ambassadors for Peace and Albania toward building peace in the region and Europe. Fifteen years have passed since UPF was founded in 2005, and it has been expanding very fast all around the world. I hope that the Albanian and Kosovo UPF chapters will keep playing leading roles as front-runners, holding high the torch of UPF."

Words of appreciation and reflection on the work of UPF during the past 15 years were given by UPF leaders in Albania and Kosovo, including Professor Flamur Shehu, Dr. Niko Veizaj and Mrs. Majlinda Mema as vice chairs of UPF-Albania; Dr. Astrit Memia and Dr. Nora Malaj, deputy chairs of the UPF-Albania National Assembly; and Hon. Hydajet Hyseni, a former MP and the first chair of UPF-Kosovo.

The second part of the event, the national assembly of UPF-Albania, was moderated by Hon. Gaqo Apostoli, the chairman of UPF-Albania, who asked several regional chairs of UPF Peace Councils to report on their experiences and to analyze the work done in the last three years.

At the end of the event, the assembly elected the new leadership of UPF-Albania as follows:

#### **UPF Presiding Council**

Dr. Eva Çipi: chairwoman of UPF-Albania

Professor Flamur Shehu: deputy chairman

Mr. Abdulla Domi: deputy chairman

Mr. Myzaljen Hoxha: deputy chairman

Dr. Nora Malaj: deputy chairwoman

### **UPF National Assembly**

Hon. Rajmonda Stefa: chairwoman of the UPF National Assembly

Dr. Niko Veizaj: deputy chairman

Dr. Astrit Memia: deputy chairman

Mrs. Majlinda Mema: deputy chairwoman

After finishing his mandate as chairman of UPF-Albania for the past four years, Mr. Gaqo Apostoli will serve as coordinator of Albanians' Peace Councils in other countries where there are Albanian communities. In his address Mr. Apostoli said: "The fact that Mother Moon declared our nation as Heavenly Albania during the Tirana Summit 2019 gives us a divine blessing, and I strongly believe it is the merit of all of you who have worked hard with dedication, desire and love, sacrificing for the sake of others without expecting any material gain. For this I thank you from the bottom of my heart. The process of change in leadership will further enhance individual and collective energies, increase the synergy of the UPF management team and bring bigger results."



Dr. Eva Çipi, the newly elected chairwoman of UPF, in her greeting address after being approved, said that the UPF co-founders "are two people who have dedicated their whole life to world peace, and in this journey they had to go through everything, experiencing rejection and persecution by all on one side, and reaching out and educating world leaders on the other side. They have been working for peace, cooperation and conciliation, and what they have achieved is almost a miracle, I would say.

"All of us should feel proud to be Ambassadors for Peace and work together with Mother Moon at this time to advance the mission of peace. I want to thank you all for trusting me to lead UPF during this mandate, and I believe we will work together as a team, as we have done so far under the great leadership of Mr. Apostoli."