



PRISHTINA / BELGRADE
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**WOMEN'S PEACE ACTIVISTS FROM KOSOVA AND SERBIA AGREE ON
INDEPENDENCE FOR KOSOVA**

**Coalition Demands Women's Involvement in All Decision-making, as per UN Resolution
1325**

Last week marked a historical moment for sustainable peace in Kosovo, Serbia and the region. The Women's Peace Coalition, comprised of the Kosovo Women's Network and the Women in Black Network Serbia, held a three-day conference on "Women, Peace and Security" in Struga, Macedonia to bring visibility to the work of activists of the women's peace movement in creating a stable and just peace in the region.

At the conference - parallel to the official negotiations between representatives from Belgrade and Prishtina about the final status of Kosovo, 60 Kosovar and Serbian women's peace activists in a joint statement concluded that peace in the region is not possible without the active participation of women. The Women's Peace Coalition supports the independence and territorial integrity of Kosovo as a civil state with a functional legal system and demands that:

1. The needs of all citizens – women and men - form the basis for peace and security
2. The relevant institutions adopt a concept of human security, especially security with a gender perspective, following UN Security Council Resolution 1325
3. Women are included in all decision-making processes on all levels

In opposition to official politics that brings divisions and conflict, the Women's Peace Coalition continues to build trust, women's solidarity and mutual support towards the creation of a lasting and just peace in the region. The one year action plan of the Coalition aims to:

- o Increase dialogue between women of all ethnic groups from Serbia and Kosovo, through encounters and discussions about security for vulnerable groups, Kosovo's final political status, and women's necessary involvement in all decision-making;
- o Increase networking and joint activities between women-led organizations with similar political missions in Serbia in Kosovo;
- o Support strengthening women's human rights, particularly reproductive rights.

The agreements reached among the participants show how the negotiations of the final status of Kosova lost opportunities by ignoring to involve women's peace activists in its process.

In addition to the planned activities the Women in Black Network Serbia representatives apologized for the crimes and terror committed by the Serbian regime against the Kosovo Albanian population in their name. This had a chain reaction that led to an apology made by Women in Black Network Serbia on Radio Television Kosova. Activists noted the importance of official apologies in the healing process as a necessary prerequisite for sustainable peace.

Two prior Women's Peace Coalition meetings in Prishtina and Belgrade, respectively, have resulted in joint public statements. The first addressed the failure of political decision-makers in Serbia and Kosovo to involve women as equal partners in political and social developments, especially regarding negotiation talks concerning the final political status of Kosovo . The second statement sought to inform the discussions of Kosovar and Serbian negotiation teams and international decision-makers on the "preservation and protection of cultural heritage," as part of the negotiation process (23 May 2006).

Women in Black Network Serbia and the Kosova Women's Network, supported by UNIFEM, launched the Women's Peace Coalition as an independent citizens' initiative founded on women's solidarity that crosses national, ethnic, and religious borders, barriers, and divisions . on the following principles:

- The Women's Peace Coalition strives towards just and sustainable peace and works for the inclusion of women in peace building processes as equal partners, stressing the fact that women are *not* victims, but survivors of war and dynamic actors in peace movements.
- The Women's Peace Coalition advocates strongly for the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security and the advancement of women's political, economic and social position, while opposing country-specific tendencies and regressive processes detrimental to its goals.
- The Women's Peace Coalition works with and includes all allies relevant to its cause, whilst maintaining its autonomy. To achieve this it forms alliances with those who accept its principles.

The Women's Peace Coalition participants in the conference were:

The Kosovo Women's Network - Women from Prishtina, Gjakova, Prizren, Drenas, Rahoveci, Lipjani, Podujeve, Prilluzhje, Vushtrri and Peje

The Women in Black Network Serbia - Women from Velika Plana, Leskovac, Vranje, Pirot, Vlasotince, Zaječar, Kraljevo, Kruševac, Vrbas, Belgrade and Novi Pazar

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