



# Kosova Women's Network

*Serving, Protecting and Promoting the Rights of Women and Girls*

## “Women Speak Out for Peace” Globally

Women can and have played an important role in peacebuilding the world-over, including in Kosovo and South East Europe. However their role is seldom acknowledged publicly. Rather, media often display women only as passive victims. The Global Network of Women Peace-builders (GNWP), of which the Kosova Women's Network (KWN) is a member, is seeking to change this homogenizing portrayal of women through their Global Media Campaign “Women Speak Out for Peace.” Organized to commemorate the International Day of Peace, 21 September, the campaign from 15 to 21 Sep. aims to shift the dominant media coverage of women as victims, to that of agents of change, peace-builders and decision-makers. The campaign brings together women and men, girls and boys in speaking up for peace and human rights. Further, everyone is invited and encouraged to share information and stories regarding the role that women played in peacebuilding via mainstream and social media.

In Kosovo, women have played a substantial role in contributing to peace and security since UNSCR 1325 was adopted in 2000, and before. Here are some ways in which women in Kosovo have contributed to peace:

- When women were left out of negotiations between Kosovo and Serbia, KWN and the Women in Black Network in Serbia formed the Women's Peace Coalition, which sent several letters on issues being discussed during negotiations, towards making women's voices heard in this process.
- The first public apology ever made with regard to the decades of oppression and crimes committed by the Government of Serbia against Kosovars was made by Women in Black activists during a Women's Peace Coalition meeting in Struga, Macedonia in 2006. This apology, covered by Kosovo's mainstream media, was of particular importance to citizens in Kosovo, towards healing and peace processes.
- The Women's Peace Coalition also was important for (re)building relations among women in Kosovo and Serbia, sharing stories from the period of war, and beginning a healing process.
- KWN supported the creation of the Regional Women's Lobby for Peace, Security and Justice in South East Europe, which has brought together women from politics and civil society throughout the region in advocating on issues of shared concern, towards furthering peace and women's security.
- Activists from KWN have spoken to and trained hundreds of NATO/KFOR troops on the special approach needed in working with women who suffered war-time violence, towards furthering a gender perspective within peace-keepers' work.
- Peace is not only the absence of war; after war women continue to face many forms of violence, including trafficking for sexual exploitation, domestic violence and sexual harassment in the streets and at work. KWN and its members have contributed to peace in post-war Kosovo by advocating for an improved legal framework and institutional mechanisms for protecting women from GBV.
- KWN itself, as an interethnic network of 86 diverse women-led organizations, continually provides a space for peace-building among women of various ethnicities via joint initiatives towards the shared aim of furthering women's rights in Kosovo.

For more information, please read KWN's *1325 Fact and Fables*, a collection of stories about the implementation of UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security in Kosovo, available on KWN's website.

UN Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820 on Women, Peace and Security acknowledge women's role in peacebuilding processes and call for women's greater participation in these processes.

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[www.womensnetwork.org](http://www.womensnetwork.org) • Hajdar Dushi St. C-2 II/8, 10000  
Prishtina, Kosovo • +381 (0) 38 245 850 •  
[info@womensnetwork.org](mailto:info@womensnetwork.org)