



Kosovo Women's Network

Serving, Protecting and Promoting the Rights of Women and Girls

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Kosovo Women's Network Stands with President Jahjaga

6 Feb. 2018

The Kosovo Women's Network (KWN) stands proudly with President Atifete Jahjaga, amid news that she may be called to appear before court in response to a defamation lawsuit on Feb. 14.

President Jahjaga stood up for Shyhrete Berisha, a woman who nearly lost her home when her in-laws tried to take her property from her. Now the family is suing President Jahjaga with regard to a speech she made in defense of Mrs. Berisha's right to keep her property.

This lawsuit is merely an attempt to draw attention away from this family's inhumane treatment of Mrs. Berisha, after they made her go through the court to seek implementation of her undeniable right to property.

We believe that President Jahjaga is being unjustly sued for standing up for Mrs. Berisha's rights and for the rights of all women to own property. We trust that the court will find this suit unreasonable and that justice will prevail.

More broadly, we consider this an attempt to silence those who speak out against injustice and take a stand against violations of women's rights. The very idea that vocally defending women's rights would be considered defamation against a family is enshrouded in a traditional culture of patriarchy, which protects the interests of those in positions of power, primarily men, while obscuring or taking away women's rights. Such unwarranted allegations serve to undermine the work and freedom of speech of Women's Human Rights Defenders like President Jahjaga, in order to safeguard the status quo and existing power relations.

President Jahjaga has taken a stand, time and time again, for women's rights. She has stood with survivors of sexual violence, perpetrated during the war in Kosovo, leading efforts to recognize them, to honor them, and to treat them justly. She has stood up against injustices perpetrated against women like Mrs. Berisha, who risk losing their property due to traditional patriarchal norms that treat "family rights" as more important than the rights of women. More than a year after leaving the presidency, President Jahjaga continues to stand up for the rights of Kosovo citizens, particularly women.

And this is why now, we must all stand with her, in solidarity.

The Kosovo Women's Network is a network of 126 diverse women's rights organizations throughout Kosovo that seeks to protect, promote and support the rights of women and girls.