

## Albanian's launch the International Association of Parliamentarians for Peace

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Tirana, Albania -- Approximately 140 people attended the Albanian inauguration of the International Association of Parliamentarians for Peace (IAPP).

The event took place on November 25, 2017, at the Tirana International Hotel and Conference Center.

Preparations for the national inauguration began right after the Balkan-level IAPP inauguration, which was held in Pristina, Kosovo, on September 23 and 24.

Our goal was to have at least 30 current and former members of Parliament present. Therefore, we worked hard, together with UPF-Albania Chair Hon. Gaqo Apostoli, a former MP, to make sure MPs took seriously our invitation and attended the event.



Because November 28 and 29 are national holidays in Albania and most members of Parliament and other VIPs travel with their families, we had to double our efforts.

Finally, 30 current and former MPs were among the 140 who attended and signed the IAPP resolution. Among the participants were H.E. Alfred Moisiu, a former president of Albania; Professor Dr. Vasilika Hysi, the deputy speaker of Parliament; two former deputy prime ministers; seven current members of Parliament; 11 former government ministers, and other high-level VIPs.

The session was moderated by UPF-Albania Chair Hon. Gaqo Apostoli. Congratulatory addresses were given by President Moisiu, the honorary chair of IAPP for Europe; Mrs. Erna Hennicot-Schoepges, the former president the Parliament of Luxembourg (1989-1995); and Dr. Katsumi Otsuka, the president of Universal Peace Federation for Europe, Eurasia and the Middle East.

Five eminent speakers presented papers on the theme of the event, "Parliamentarian Communication and Cooperation with Civil Society." The first speaker was Professor Dr. Vasilika Hysi, the deputy speaker of Parliament, followed by Professor Dr. Shezai Rrokaj, a member of Parliament and chair of the Albanian Peace Council.

The next speaker was Associate Professor Dr. Grida Duma, a member of Parliament, followed by Mr. Hydajet Hyseni, many times a member of Kosovo's Assembly (Parliament) and the first chair of UPF-Kosovo; and Mrs. Mesila Doda, a former member of Parliament. The final speaker of the session was Rev. Jack Corley, the regional president of Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (FFWPU), an affiliated organization, who talked about the vision and mission of IAPP and its goals and objectives.

At the end of the session eight high-level VIPs were appointed as Ambassadors for Peace:

Professor Dr. Paskal Milo, a former minister of foreign affairs and for many years a member of Parliament,

Associate Professor Dr. Grida Duma, a current member of Parliament

Agron Duka, a member of Parliament

Mesila Doda, a former member of Parliament

Shefqet Muci, a former government minister

Albina Deda, a former member of Parliament

Diana Culi, a former member of Parliament

Suzana Jahollari, a prefect of Tirana.



At the end of the session all the MPs and VIPs signed the IAPP resolution, which was displayed in a big board.

On the afternoon of the same day, November 25, UPF-Albania held the Assembly of the Albanian Peace Council. We do it every two years, at which time we also elect the new leaders for the next two years. After organizing assemblies of Local Peace Councils in 10 cities and also electing the leadership of Local Peace Councils, we gathered to analyze UPF-Albania's work over the past two years and also plan the goals for the next two years.

The assembly was moderated by Albanian Peace Council Chair Professor Dr. Shezai Rrokaj. Congratulatory remarks were given by Mr. Jacques Marion, the regional vice president of UPF for Europe, and Hon. Hatixhe Hoxha, the chair of UPF-Kosovo.

During the past two years, UPF-Albania organized 64 activities and appointed 230 Ambassadors for Peace. Short presentations were given by the coordinator of the Albanian Peace Council, Mr. Ali Lacey; the vice chairs of the Presiding Council of UPF-Albania, Mr. Flamur Shehu and Mrs. Majlinda Mema; and the vice chair of the Albanian Peace Council, Mr. Astrit Memia. Also, Mr. Gani Rroshi, the secretary general of UPF-Albania, gave an overview of the many activities organized during the past two years.



Then Mr. Apostoli introduced all the elected chairs of the local peace councils, each of whom gave a short message.

At the end, the new leaders of UPF-Albania were elected. The Presiding Council of UPF will be led by Mr. Gaqo Apostoli as chair and by Mrs. Majlinda Mema, Mr. Flamur Shehu and Dr. Niko Veizaj as vice chairs. On the other hand, the leaders of the National Assembly will be Mrs. Rajmonda Stefa as chair and Mr. Niko Faber, Mr. Astrit Memia and Mrs. Nora Malaj as vice chairs.

Professor Dr. Shezai Rrokaj, who was the chair of the Albanian Peace Council, will serve as the honorary chair of IAPP-Albania.

We are very grateful for the great work of the previous leaders of UPF and wish great success to the new leaders.