

ALBANIAN PEACE COUNCIL ADVOCATES PEACEFUL SOLUTIONS TO REMAINING ISSUE OF SECOND WORLD WAR

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After holding a successful event in Presheva, in May, the Albanian Peace Council, a structure of UPF Albania and Kosova, organized another one at the Academy of Science in Tirana on “The cultural and historical inheritance of tchami ethnic group and perspectives of the peaceful solution of its cause”. This year also marks the 70-th anniversary of the displacement of the Albanian Muslim population from their lands and homes in Western Greece.

Albanian ambassadors for peace from all Albania and surrounding countries were invited for this occasion. But the participation of Mr. Niko Stylo, who is one of the few tchami people of Greece identifying himself as Albanian and has raised his voice for the human rights of this ethnic minority in Greece, was a special case.

The program was divided into two sessions with a dozen of speakers from Albania and abroad. The moderator of the first session was Mr. Bajram Ibraj, chairman of UPF Albania Presiding Council who presented the program and the speakers and described briefly the mission and the path of Albanian Peace Council. A video presentation of UPF International followed.

The opening speech was given by Mrs. Lyn Young Moon, vicepresident of FFWPU International who was visiting Albania at that time. Recalling her painful experience of leaving her hometown in North Korea 55 years ago she called for forgiveness and overcoming the resentment of the past based on One Family Under God.



Some history

The history and culture of Chamuria region, known by Greeks as Thesprotia, was studied and explored since ancient times and were subject of many books in Greek and/or Albanian language. Unfortunately the end of the Second World War marked a terrible event in history when at its end, 20 thousand Albanians, mainly of muslim faith were expelled from their homes in Paramithia, Filates, Igumenitsa, Preveza, Margariti etc. After the end of communism the Albanians of cham origine were organized for the first time under the Patriotic Association Chamëria, in 1991 and in 2009 they participated in general elections represented by the Party for Justice, Integration and Unity which nowadays has five members in the parliament of Albania.

She underlined that thanks to Father Moon's teachings she could forgive the north korean leaders who killed her father and brought so much suffering in her family.

She was followed by Mr. Arben Malaj, chairman of Albanian Peace Council who praised the chami people for their skills and virtues and later expressed his hope that “The black shadows of golden dawns cannot question the European future of Greece and cannot feed racist or extremist feelings to the general public or other countries”. Next Mr. Shpëtim Idrizi, chairman of PJIU who eloquently explained the pain and resentment that the descendents of the displaced chams still harbour in their heart towards the Greek terrorist bands and

groups during Second World War and before. "There can be no fair peace without justice. There is no true peace when people of Cham origin are not allowed to cross the border and there is still a war law between Greece and Albania. Also Mr. Idrizi said that we are ready to forgive if the aggressors will repent for their past deed.

Dr. Saemira Pino, vice chair of UPF Presiding Council and herself a descendant of Cham family. The second speaker was Mr. Niko Stylo, a dedicated researcher who presented some very interesting findings through studying old scriptures and icons from different museums in Europe. Especially he insists on some similarities between Etruscan and Albanian language.



Then it was Mr. R. Mustafa, the head of Presheva municipality that hosted the previous event who took the pulpit for his message. He paralleled the events in Western Greece to that of the Albanians in Southern Serbia at the end of WWII that were displaced towards Kosovo and other more populated areas with Albanians. "We are not here to declare war to Serbia or Greece but we want to tell the truth and enlighten history so that the world and Europe can know and make it clear (to Serbia) that it cannot enter the EU with systematic discrimination of the Albanians."

Also Mr. Jonuz Musliu, one of the signatories of the Albanian Peace Council and head of Communal Council of Bujanoc (Southern Serbia) gave a congratulatory message. After him Mr. Ardian Tana, the chairman of Chameria Association gave a historical briefing of the efforts of these group of Albanians to demand reparations for the injustices done 70 years ago.

The second session begun with a shortened version of a documentary movie entitled "The Dream of Chameria" with script by Enver Kushi, one of the speakers of the session. This part was moderated by

His speech title was "Thesproti: the oldest home of Pelasgian civilization" and he presented it in the old Albanian dialect of Ionaina district.

The next speaker was a well-known researcher and geographer of Chamuria region, prof. Selman Sheme; also one of the initiators and organizers of this event. He spoke on "The Eastern crisis and the annexation of Chameria from the Greeks". He explained the process of annexation of this territory inhabited by Albanians during the 19th Century.

Another respected historian from Tirana State University, Ms. Fatmira Rama, brought historical facts to enlighten the period between the two World Wars in Chameria region that influenced on the position of the Albanian Muslims there and established the preconditions for their displacement. She mentioned especially the terrible side-effects of the Agreement between Turkey and Greece on the exchange of populations during 1923.

Mr. Enver Kushi brought to the attention of the audience a golden era of Albanian-Greek relations when Greece was led by Mr. Theodor Pangallos, former president and prime minister 1925-1926. He quoted

some of Mr. Pangalos declarations on the press that serve as a model for today's leaders on handling this issue.

Dr. Lisien Bashkurti, chairman of Albanian Diplomatic Academy and a researcher of international relations introduced ways of approaching the Cham issue by the Albanian authorities especially through international mediation. His theses were highly appreciated by the audience. The conference was greeted by Mr. Hydajet Hyseni, a well-known politician and activist of human rights, who came from Kosova to support it.

The order of speakers was concluded with Mr. Ali Laçej, co-coordinator of APC who spoke on "The identity of Chameria on the focus of integration". In conclusion he said: "The solution of Cham Issue absolutely demands implementation of EU integration policies and it can only be successfully addressed by turning reciprocal hatred and despise into understanding and love, through practicing diversity as richness for those who exchange it. The solution will never come if we curse each-other, nor thinking that one side will eradicate the other. We pray to God this will never happen!"

Furthermore, even though he could not come, former president Meidani sent his message that was delivered to all participants. The message was entitled "The Cham Issue cannot be held hostage of the integration process". In this message he added that "To solve this complicated issue good will people from both sides are needed, that can break their taboos in service to peace and reconciliation, avoiding nationalistic poisoning in reciprocal relations, even less on the minds and hearts of young generations that are well-civilized..."

Reported by **Sokol Rexhepi**

He proposed that in the actual circumstances the most probable and satisfying solution of this issue for both Albanians and Greeks would be the verification and acknowledgement of the Albanians' properties in Greece and its gradual compensation. "This option minimizes discontent and impairs conflict among the two communities. As such it is within the framework of universal peace principles which the Universal Peace Federation Albania is promoting and is upholding.

As usual we reserved the end of the event for appointing new ambassadors for peace, this time mainly from this ethnic group like Mr. Shpëtim Idrizi, Dr. Merita Hysa, prof. Fatmira Rama, Mr. Niko Stylo, Mr. Enver Kushi, Mr. Ardian Tana etc.

The event was reported from main TV stations on their news edition. A few days later Mr. Ali Laçej, coordinator of Albanian Peace Council was invited on a talk show to explain in detail about APC along with the chair of ChPA Mr. Ardian Tana.

