

## **Edita Tahiri handed to UN the petition calling for justice to women raped during the war in Kosovo**

New York, March 15, 2019

Former Minister of Dialogue Edita Tahiri, currently in the position of the Chairperson of the Regional Women's Lobby for Southeast Europe, met at the UN headquarters with the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General on the topic of the victims of sexual violence during the conflict, Pramila Patten. The meeting was also attended by UN Women Director for Europe and Central Asia, Alia Al-Yassir. At this meeting, Edita Tahiri spoke about the issue of women victims of sexual violence during the recent wars in the Balkans, in Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia, expressing concern that the international justice is delayed when it comes to these women who suffered a barbaric tragedy during aggressive wars by Serbia. She pointed out that the tragedy is the sexual violence itself that the victims had suffered during the war, while the second biggest tragedy is that this issue remained in oblivion, even with the tendency to remain completely hidden based on the fact that the UN and global study centers do not mention it at all or they mention it very little about fact that during the wars in the Balkans, women were massively raped, whereas, the perpetrators of these acts remained unpunished to this day.

Speaking about the issue of raped women in Kosovo, Edita Tahiri emphasized that there are over 20,000 Albanian women raped by Serbian occupation forces, and it is regrettable that despite the UN conventions, resolutions and other instruments, this tragedy has remained without being treated by international justice. She demands that international justice is soon deployed for this category of women who suffered the worst during the war, and on this occasion handed the Petition of Kosovo citizens addressed to UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres, with which Kosovo demands international justice for women raped during the Kosovo war in 1998-1999. Tahiri mentioned, that this petition was signed in 2014 by more than 110,000 Kosovo citizens among whom more men than women, which has put down the taboo of the non-acceptance of this tragedy that stroked Kosovo Albanian people along with the genocide that the entire Albanian population suffered. She said the sooner the justice is in place for these women and the sooner the Serbian war criminals receive the deserved punishment, the victims will be more satisfied and will have their dignity back whereas the peace will be more stable. She also handed the explanation letter to UN Secretary General Antoni Guterres, in support of the petition, stating that despite some letters sent to the previous Secretary General there was no readiness to receive the petition. She expressed the satisfaction that this petition was finally delivered thanking Mrs. Patten for the meeting and the acceptance of the petition (in its electronic version) and the letter to Secretary Guterres on her behalf and in the name of Kosovo Women's Steering Board for Petition.

She also submitted the Letter from the Regional Lobby of Women of South Eastern Europe (RWLSEE) to Secretary General Guterres where international justice is sought for women raped during the wars in Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia.

Please be informed that the Women's Steering Board for Petition is led by Edita Tahiri and is composed of members Luljeta Vuniqi, Suzana Novoberdali, Eliza Hoxha, Teuta Sahatçiu, Arjeta Rexhaj, Vlora Çitaku, Edona Hajrullahu, Veprora Shehu, Luljeta Selimi, Mimoza Kusari-Lila, Donika Kada-Bujupi. This Board supported by the Kosovo government at the central and local level managed to organize the petition that was signed massively and Kosovo wide. On this occasion, we thank all Kosovo authorities, the donors and media that made the realization of this historic mission possible in support of women victims of sexual violence during the war in Kosovo.