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CALL FOR PROPOSALS

International Conference

“Gender and Peace in the Balkans: Charting the Path Forward”

(Sarajevo, 25-27-02.2025.)

Description:

In the context of the global resurgence of militant patriarchal systems and strategies that threaten hard-won rights, freedoms, and maintenance of fragile peace in post-war regions such as the Balkans, it is imperative to critically examine not only the challenges and lessons learned but also to articulate the means and infrastructures for protecting and defending these hard-won rights, freedoms, and peace. Within the UNIGEM (**Universities and Gender Mainstreaming**) project TPO Foundation in partnership with the University Gender Resource Center of the University of Sarajevo, Foundation ZATO and 19 universities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro is organising the International Conference “**Gender and Peace in the Balkans: Charting the Path Forward?**”

The three-day conference will be held in Sarajevo from February 25-27, 2025 and it will have a hybrid format allowing for in-person or online participation (live video streaming).

The conference reexamines the impact of wars in the Balkans through the lens of gender justice, focusing on the ways in which patriarchal structures perpetuated violence and continue to shape post-conflict realities. Thirty years on, feminist voices from the Balkans region and beyond will explore the intersections of gender, nationalism, and peacebuilding, emphasizing women’s agency, activism, and resistance.

Through critical dialogue, the conference will highlight the contributions of feminist movements to transitional justice, healing, and accountability. The conference will also address intersectional approaches to dismantling multiple forms of oppression and discrimination, including those based on gender, sex and sexual orientation, thus amplifying marginalized voices, and building inclusive and equitable futures.

Through panels, and workshops the Conference will challenge male-dominated militant narratives of war and peace, offering feminist frameworks for understanding conflict, reconciliation, and justice. This event is not only a reflection on the past but also a call to action, envisioning feminist futures for the Balkans and beyond.



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Conference abstracts (300 words) can be focused on the following thematic areas:

1. Patriarchy, Power, and War: Feminist Analyses of the Balkan Conflicts

- How patriarchal structures fueled violence and oppression during the wars in the Balkan in the late 20th and early 21st Centuries".
- The intersection of nationalism, militarism, and gendered oppression.
- Feminist critiques of state and international responses to the wars.
- Global rise of new forms of militant patriarchy and strategies undermining achieved equality in the Balkans and beyond.
- Colonial practices in the field of activism and knowledge production within the Balkan region and in relation to its European and global contexts
- Anti-gender movement and its impact on gender equality and peace.

2. Intersectional Feminist Approaches in Post-War Reconstruction

- Addressing multiple layers of oppression (gender, ethnicity, class, and sexuality) in post-war societies.
- Critique of heteronormativity, hegemonic masculinity and the role of LGBTQ+ activists in advocating for inclusive peace.
- Feminist advocacy for survivors: achievements, setbacks, and ongoing struggles.
- Building coalitions across differences: feminist solidarity in diverse communities.
- Stories of resistance: Women's grassroots activism during and after the wars.
- Feminist leadership in negotiating peace and rebuilding communities.
- Disrupting male-dominated peacebuilding spaces: successes and challenges.

3. Feminist Critiques of Transitional Justice and Memory Politics

- Questioning the adequacy of current justice mechanisms for addressing gendered harms.
- Centering survivors' voices in legal and restorative justice processes.
- Feminist visions for reparative justice and accountability.
- Addressing the systemic use of sexual violence as a weapon of war.
- Feminist-led approaches to trauma healing and community support.
- Reclaiming women's voices in historical accounts of the wars in the Balkan in the late 20th and early 21st Centuries".
- Challenging patriarchal war memorialization and its erasure of women's contributions.
- Ecumenical Approaches for Peace-Building
- Feminist art, literature, and oral histories as tools for resistance and reconciliation.



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4. Global Feminist Solidarity, Lessons and next steps

- The Balkans as a case study for feminist peacebuilding on a global scale.
- Feminist strategies for dismantling systems of oppression in war-affected societies.
- Strengthening transnational feminist networks to advocate for gender-just peace.

Conference Program Committee:

Zilka Spahić Šiljak PhD, Jasna Kovačević PhD, Nerzuk Ćurak PhD, Jasmina Husanović PhD, Damir Arsenijević PhD, Gaj Trifković, PhD, Rebeka Anić, PhD, Biljana Kašić, PhD.

Deadlines:

Abstracts (300 words, topic, the goal, key arguments) to be delivered by January 27, 2025. to the following email: koordinator8@tpofond.org

Conference language and format: Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian and English (simultaneous translation with live video streaming).

Logistic: The costs of accommodation, travel and meals for presenters attending in person will be covered by the organizers.