



YIHR KS

NEWSLETTER

Dear readers, friends, and supporters,

As we reach the mid-point of 2025, we take a moment to reflect on the powerful momentum that has shaped our work over the past months. At YIHR Kosovo, we have continued to stand at the intersection of memory, justice, and youth engagement, defending civic space, challenging exclusion, and amplifying the voices too often left unheard. From mobilizing civil society to demand institutional accountability, to commemorating the missing and fighting for gender equality, our commitment has remained clear: to build a society rooted in truth, dignity, and human rights.

Together with communities, educators, artists, human rights defenders, and young people across Kosovo and the region, we have co-created spaces for dialogue, resistance, and transformation, through workshops, street actions, public commemorations, regional conferences, art and storytelling, and inclusive education.

As we continue this journey through 2025, we remain deeply grateful for your continued support, trust, and solidarity. The road ahead demands courage and care and we are ready to keep walking it, with you.

The YIHR KS Team

Children of War Museum launching

This year marked a deeply emotional and historic moment for YIHR KS: the opening of the Children of War Museum, a unique and alternative space of remembrance dedicated to the often-silenced experiences of children affected by the war in Kosovo.

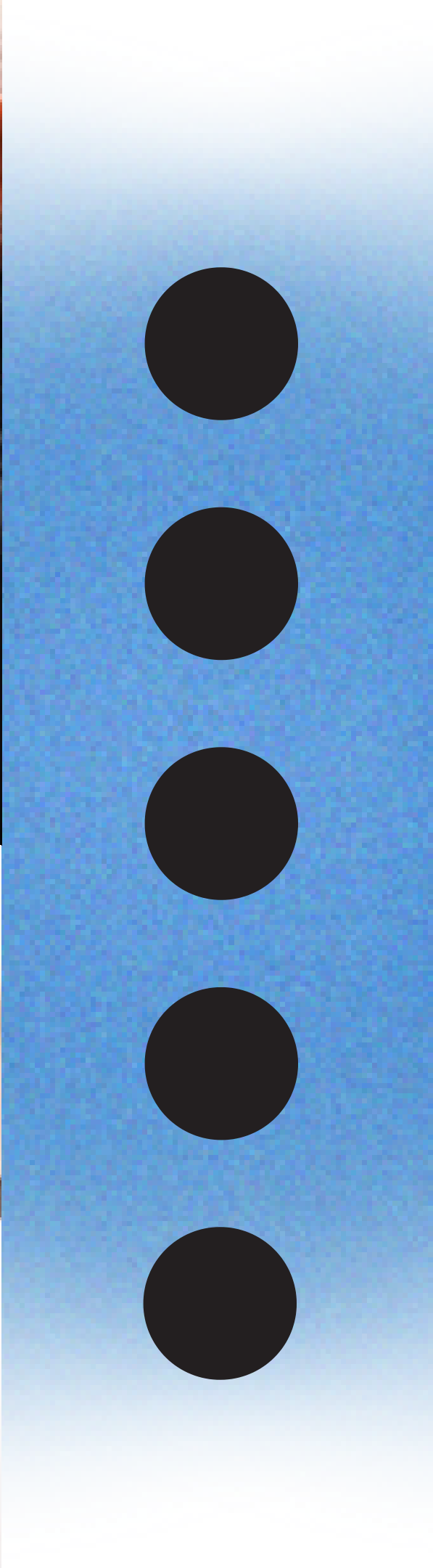
After five years of tireless dedication, we inaugurated the museum with its first exhibition, Play Interrupted. This poignant exhibition takes visitors on a journey through the disrupted lives of children during the war, portraying their memories of fear, escape, hiding, and moments of play amidst chaos. Through personal objects, testimonies, and artistic expression, it honors the resilience of those who lived through unimaginable circumstances.

The Children of War Museum is not only a tribute to the past, it is a call to acknowledge and recognize all stories, regardless of ethnicity or background, and to ensure that they are never forgotten. At YIHR KS, we believe that sharing these testimonies is essential for building a more just and empathetic future. By giving space to marginalized memories, the museum seeks to break the silence, challenge forgetfulness, and promote reflection, justice, and reconciliation.

We are grateful to all those who joined us at the opening, especially artist Petrit Halilaj and poet Ervina Halili, whose contributions enriched the experience. Thank you to our community and partners who made this milestone possible.

The museum is now open to the public, and we look forward to welcoming all those who wish to learn, reflect, and remember.





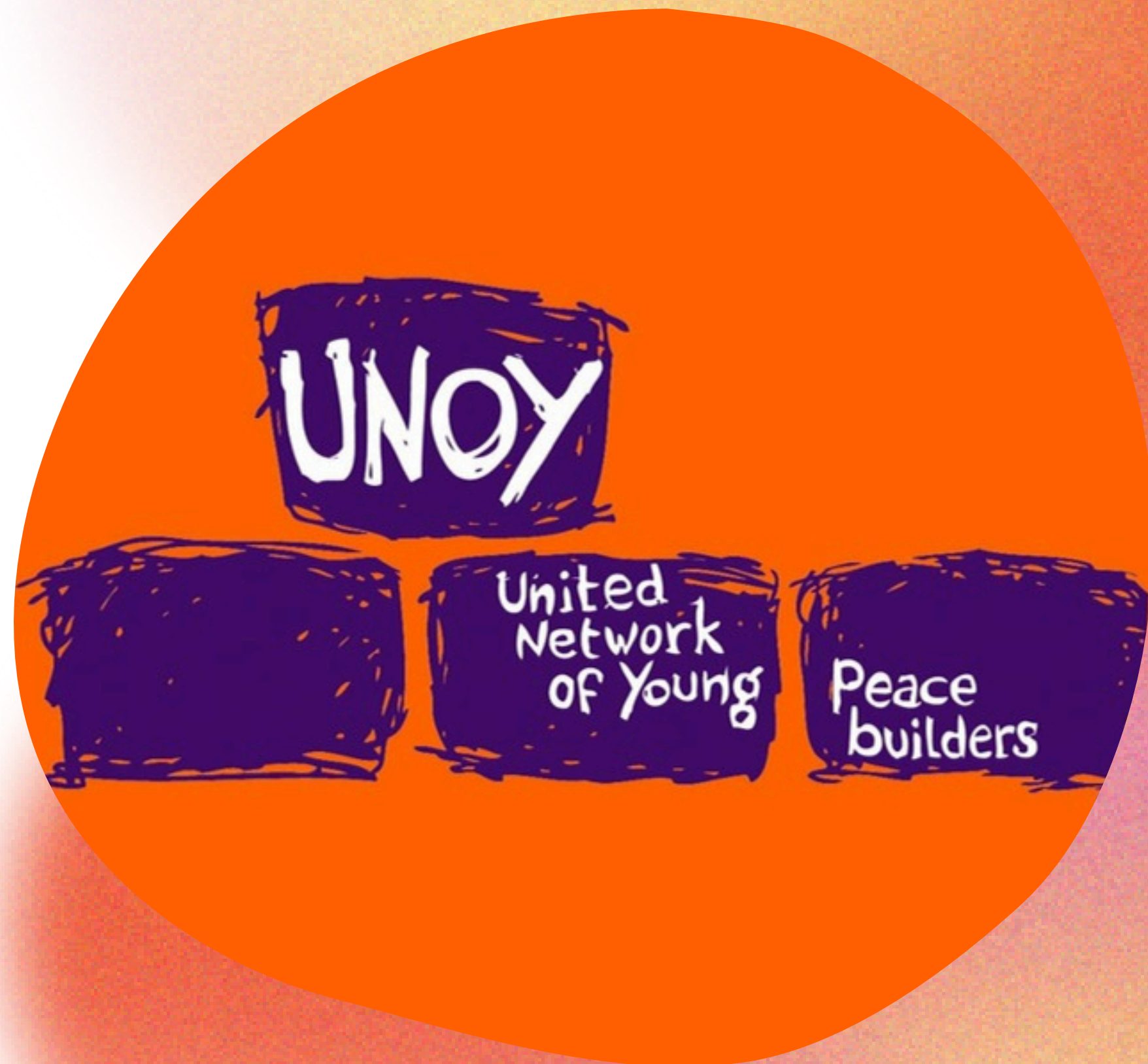
Women's Rights Day

March 8, International Women's Day, also known as the feminist day of struggle is a global day of recognition and action celebrating the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women's rights.

It is also a reminder on the ongoing struggle for gender equality and women's rights. On this day, people around the world come together to honor past and present efforts to challenge discrimination, fight injustice and demand equal opportunities.

In Pristina, a large demonstration took place to mark International Women's Day.





YIHR KS Joins the United Network of Young Peacebuilders (UNOY)

This year, YIHR KS reached an important milestone by officially joining the United Network of Young Peacebuilders (UNOY), the leading global community of youth-led organizations dedicated to peacebuilding.

Out of 144 applicants from around the world, YIHR KS was the only civil society organization from Europe selected to become part of this dynamic and inspiring network. This marks a powerful recognition of our long-standing work in peace advocacy, youth empowerment, and human rights.

UNOY envisions a world where young people actively shape peaceful, inclusive societies. For over three decades, it has worked to end the violence of exclusion by supporting youth participation in decision-making, and by connecting and amplifying the voices of young activists worldwide. This vision resonates deeply with our mission at YIHR KS.

For more than 20 years, YIHR KS has been working to challenge structural injustice, promote reconciliation, and support young people as agents of change. By joining UNOY, we reaffirm our commitment to transforming power structures, dismantling barriers, and building sustainable peace in Kosovo and beyond.

This achievement belongs to every young activist in Kosovo who dares to envision and demand a more just, participatory, and peaceful future. We are proud to carry this momentum forward, together.

Strengthening Legal Education: Internship Programs and Support to the Faculty of Law, University of Prishtina

As part of its ongoing commitment to strengthening access to justice and practical legal education, YIHR KS has continued its support for the internship program for law students in the Basic Courts of Kosovo. In addition, YIHR KS successfully concluded a four-month internship program in partnership with the Faculty of Law, University of Prishtina and Free Legal Aid Agency, enabling eight law students to gain hands-on experience in providing legal assistance to vulnerable communities.

YIHR KS has also extended its support to academic initiatives within the Faculty of Law at the University of Prishtina. This includes strengthening the Master's program in Human Rights, International Criminal Law, and Transitional Justice, as well as supporting the work of the Center for Legal Clinics. These efforts aim to bridge the gap between theory and practice, and to empower the next generation of legal professionals with the tools and knowledge necessary to promote justice and human rights in Kosovo.



Fakulteti Juridik
Faculty of Law

Launchpad hing the book : Resistance, Women of Peace and Justice in former Yugoslavia and Albania

On April, YIHR Kosovo and its partners proudly hosted the launch of Resistance at Reporting House, a powerful book that amplifies the voices of 11 women who played a crucial role in defending peace, justice, and human rights in the former Yugoslavia and Albania.

Through deeply personal testimonies, the book tells the stories of women who stood up against patriarchy, nationalism, and the violence of war. From documenting atrocities to organizing protests and advocating for accountability, these women's efforts are at the heart of transitional justice movements in the region.

Link :

<https://yihhr-ks.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/RESISTANCE-17-24-CM-ENG.pdf>





Regional Conference : Enhancing Partnerships Between Ombudsperson Insitutions and Civil Society for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights

YIHR Kosovo proudly launched and concluded the Regional Conference on “Enhancing Partnerships Between Ombudsperson Institutions and Civil Society for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights”, bringing together key actors from across the region to strengthen cooperation in defense of civic space and the protection of human rights defenders.

The conference emphasized the urgent need for coordinated action in response to growing socio-political pressures, and highlighted the importance of building resilient, cross-sector partnerships to safeguard fundamental rights and democratic institutions.



ECOSOC Youth Forum

YIHR KS Executive Director, Marigona Shabiu, participated in the 2025 ECOSOC Youth Forum, held at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. It took place from April 15 to 17.

The event united young leaders, activists, and policymakers from all around the globe to discuss the critical challenges facing our generation and the actions needed to address them.

National Day of missing persons

YIHR Kosovo, in partnership with the Missing Persons Resource Center (MPRC) and Pro Peace, marked the National Day of Missing Persons by honoring the 1,592 individuals still unaccounted for from the last war in Kosovo. This year's commemoration paid special tribute to two founders of the MPRC, Bajram Çerkini, who passed away in 2025, and Milorad Trifunović, who passed away in 2020, both of whom dedicated their lives to truth, justice, and interethnic solidarity in the search for the missing.

The event featured moving speeches from Aida Çerkini, Negovan Mavrić, Prof. Dr. Bekim Baliqi, and Kushtrim Gara, and was accompanied by a cello performance by Adonis Gjini. Attendees concluded the gathering with a silent walk to the Memorial for Missing Persons to lay flowers in remembrance. The ceremony served as a powerful call for justice, institutional accountability, and the collective responsibility to confront the past in order to build a future rooted in dignity and truth.





Storytelling workshops

YIHR Kosovo organized a storytelling workshop that brought together 40 participants from diverse backgrounds to use storytelling as a tool for addressing the past and fostering reconciliation. Through hands-on sessions, participants explored the technical aspects of storytelling and learned how to craft and document narratives that preserve memory and promote understanding.

The workshop emphasized the power of shared stories in bridging divides and highlighted the strength of diversity in building a more inclusive and peaceful future. This activity was supported by NED

Civil Society Report 2024

We are pleased to announce that the Human Rights Network (HRN) has officially published the 2024 Civil Society Report on Human Rights in Kosovo. A total of 40 civil society organizations contributed to the development of this comprehensive report, which presents 96 recommendations to Kosovo institutions aimed at improving the human rights situation in the country.

The report is available in Albanian, Serbian, English, and Romani, and can be accessed below.

Link : <https://yihhr-ks.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/04-Report-Civil-Society-Report-on-Human-Rights-2024-ENG-04.pdf>





Peace Academy

YIHR Kosovo successfully concluded the 2nd edition of the Peace Academy*, bringing together 12 participants from diverse communities across Kosovo for an inspiring six-day journey of learning, reflection, and exchange. Under the expert facilitation of Sabina Kaqinari, the program featured lectures and discussions led by eight distinguished speakers and academics (Majbritt Lyck-Bowen, Reid Pierce, Lucia Pulido Fentanes, Gezim Visoka, Sanja Pavlović, Shyrete Tahiri, Atdhe Hetemi, and Bekim Blakaj) who offered diverse perspectives on transitional justice, peacebuilding, state-building, and dealing with the past.

Through both academic and non-formal learning formats, the Peace Academy equipped participants with the knowledge, tools, and motivation to become future drivers of reconciliation and justice across the Western Balkans.

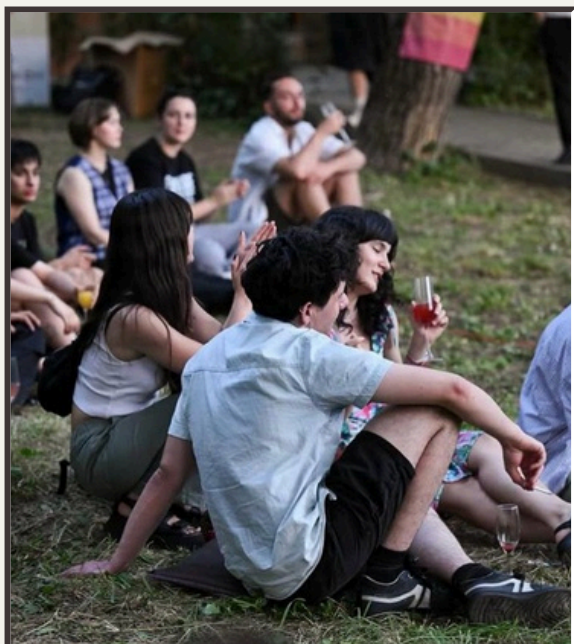
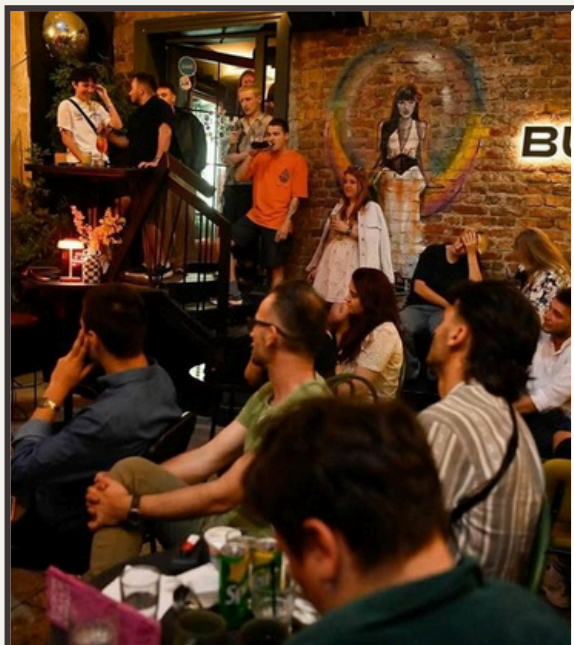
*This activity was supported by SMARTS BALKAN



120 Empty Chairs, One Clear Message: End the Deadlock

Civil society organizations gathered in front of the Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo to demand an immediate solution to the ongoing institutional crisis. In a powerful symbolic action, 120 empty chairs, one for each Member of Parliament, were placed at the Assembly entrance, representing the failure of elected officials to fulfill their most basic duty: ensuring a functional, representative, and accountable Parliament. Each chair carried a direct message calling for responsibility, political dialogue, and urgent action, while the ticking of surrounding clocks echoed the growing urgency and frustration.

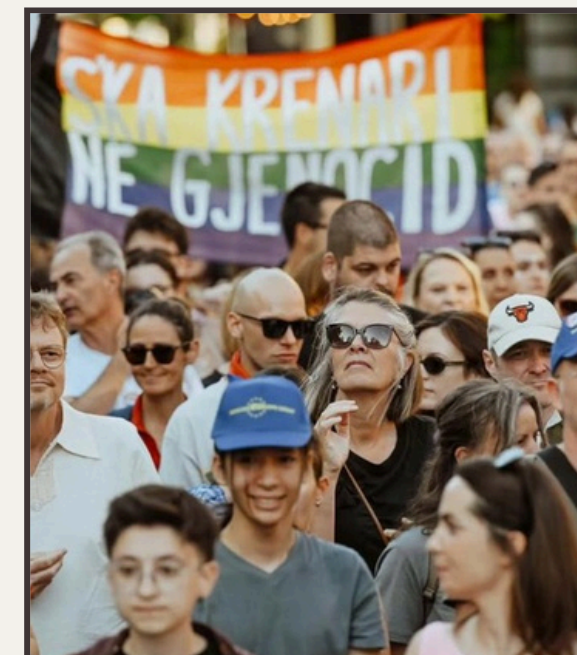
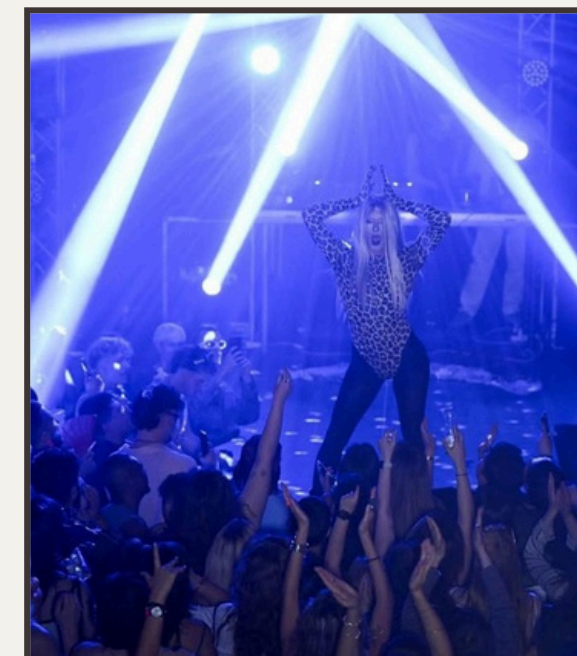
The protest highlighted the deepening political deadlock, marked by a lack of institutional will and a dangerous erosion of democratic functioning, parliamentary oversight, and public trust. In a context of geopolitical uncertainty, financial isolation, and stalled reforms, the continued paralysis of the Assembly is a serious act of political irresponsibility. Civil society reaffirmed its determination to hold decision-makers accountable and to keep pressing for a democratic return to institutional functionality.



Pride Week

During Pride Week in Prishtina, YIHR Kosovo set up a vibrant series of events under the theme “No Step Back”, highlighting resilience in the face of rising global backlash and threats to LGBTQI+ rights. Throughout the week, YIHR KS supported and co-organized a rich program including the official opening at the Government Building, the creative “Art for Pride” and writing workshops, the insightful panel “What Does It Mean to Be Queer at UP?”, an intimate Pride Talk with Vullnet Krasniqi, a moving Poetry Night, and a joyful and empowering Drag Show.

The week culminated in a powerful Pride Parade through the streets of Prishtina, followed by a festive concert at the National Library. Several other community-led activities also took place throughout the week, reinforcing collective visibility and solidarity. YIHR KS’s active engagement reaffirmed its commitment to gender equality, freedom of expression, and the rights and dignity of LGBTQI+ people in Kosovo and beyond.



Meet our new interns



Lisa Wolfughel joined YIHR Kosovo for her final-year internship as part of her Master's in Security, Stabilization, and International Intervention at Sciences Po Strasbourg. With a background in political science and human rights, she brings diverse experiences from journalism, public administration, and political communication. Her strong interest in European affairs and conflict resolution aligns closely with YIHR's mission. Passionate about writing fiction, cinema, and travel, Lisa is also curious about cultures and languages.



Salomé Mazure is a Master's student from Sciences Po Aix, who joined YIHR Kosovo for her final-year internship. With a strong background in human rights, gender studies, and regional geopolitics, her research focuses on the impact of the Yugoslav wars on women in post-conflict Kosovo. Passionate about social justice, memory, and migration, she brings both academic insight and creative flair. She enjoys street photography and she used to compete in karate at a high level.



Youth Initiative for
Human Rights-Kosovo



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Youth Initiative for Human
Rights-Kosovo (YIHRS KS)



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