

2025

ANNUAL REPORT

Youth Initiative for Human Rights – Kosovo

Table of contents

Highlights of 2025	3-9
January	10
February	11
March	12
April	14
May	15
June	16
July	17
August	18
September	19
October	20
November	21
December	22
Closing Remarks	24

2025 HIGHLIGHTS

Opening of the Children of War Museum

In 2025, YIHR KS opened the **Children of War Museum**, an alternative space of remembrance dedicated to the children whose childhoods were disrupted by the war in Kosovo. This museum honors the resilience of those whose lives were forever changed, emphasizing marginalized war experiences and giving voice to stories that have long been overlooked.

After five years of tireless work, we inaugurated the museum with its first exhibition, **"Play Interrupted,"** which takes visitors through the experiences of children who survived the war—capturing moments of fleeing, fear, hiding, play, and the complex emotions that only war can evoke. The exhibition, and the museum as a whole, serves as a tribute to all who endured the horrors of war, regardless of ethnicity or background.

At YIHR KS, sharing these stories holds special significance. These narratives are not only about the past—they are a vital reminder for the future. By preserving these memories, we break the silence, challenge forgetfulness, and make a powerful call for reflection, justice, and reconciliation.

Throughout this year, the museum has welcomed a wide range of visitors, including schools, citizens of Kosovo, international guests, organizations, and most of the embassies in the country, highlighting the importance of preserving these memories and sharing them with diverse audiences.

The Children of War Museum is open to the public at **St. Adrian Krasniqi, Prishtina (YIHR KS offices)**

Monday to Thursday: 9:00 - 17:00

Friday: 9:00 - 14:00





2025 HIGHLIGHTS

« Resistance: Women of peace and justice in former Yugoslavia and Albania » - Book Launch

“**Resistance**” was published as the culmination of a two-year project by **Pro Peace Kosovo** and **YIHR Kosovo**, highlighting the courageous role of women in promoting peace, justice, and human rights in the former Yugoslavia and Albania.



This book serves as a powerful call to action, honoring the women who stood against injustice and inspiring future generations to continue the fight for peace, dignity, and human rights.

It offers an exploration of the transformative role women played in resisting war, violence, and political oppression in the former Yugoslavia and Albania. Through the personal testimonies of 11 women, the book reveals their pivotal roles in defying patriarchal systems and nationalist ideologies to champion peace, justice, and human rights. It documents their relentless fight for truth, reconciliation, and recognition of war crimes.



2025 HIGHLIGHTS

« Enhancing Partnerships Between Ombudsperson Institutions and Civil Society for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights » - Regional Conference



We were thrilled to organize the successful conclusion of our Regional Conference: “Enhancing Partnerships Between Ombudsperson Institutions and Civil Society for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights”.

The conference brought together influential leaders from Ombudsperson institutions and civil society organizations (CSOs) across the region, highlighting the importance of collaboration in defending civic space and protecting human rights defenders in today's challenging socio-political landscape.

The conference highlighted the vital role of CSOs in advancing human rights through advocacy, legal support, and protection efforts. The conference concluded with discussions on strengthening partnerships between institutions and civil society, addressing emerging threats, and moving from dialogue to concrete action.

The overall message was clear: **Regional solidarity and cross-border collaboration are essential to building a stronger, more resilient human rights ecosystem.**





A year that demanded action...

In 2025, Kosovo experienced a prolonged political crisis, yet activists remained steadfast in their efforts to support democratic processes and promote stability. Throughout the year, we led the **RIGHTS x 365** campaign, commemorated key national and international observances—including *Zero Discrimination Day*, *International Women’s Day*, *International Roma Day*, *Constitution Day*, *National Day of Missing People*, *International Workers’ Day*, *Pride Week*, *International Refugee Day*, *Youth Day*, *the International Day of Enforced Disappearances*, *International Peace Day* and *Human Rights Day*—and honored the massacres of the Kosovo War.

Our presence in the public sphere was sustained through protests, street activism, and continuous advocacy, ensuring that human rights remained at the forefront of civic life.

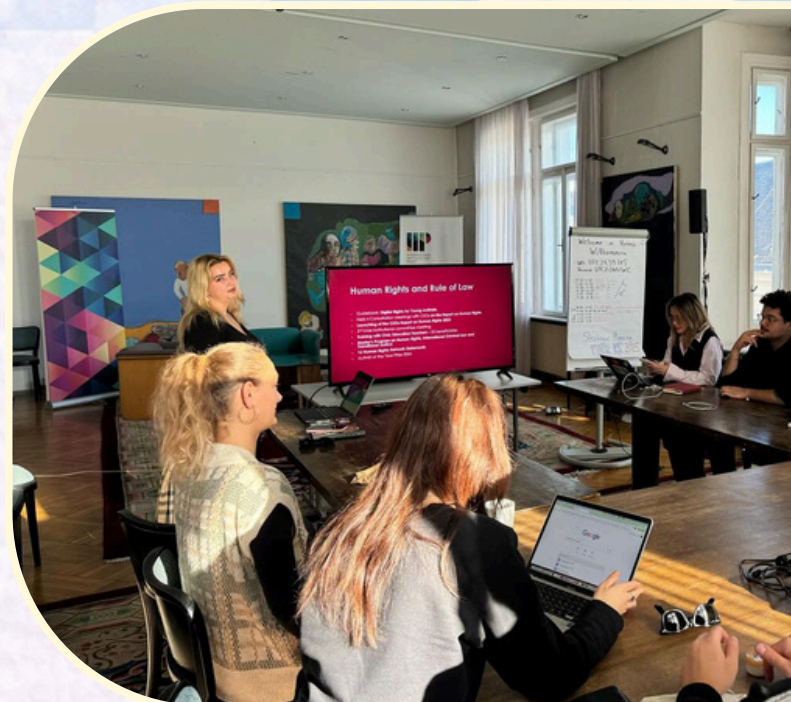


JANUARY marked the beginning of the year with the launch of new initiatives and the continuation of ongoing activities.



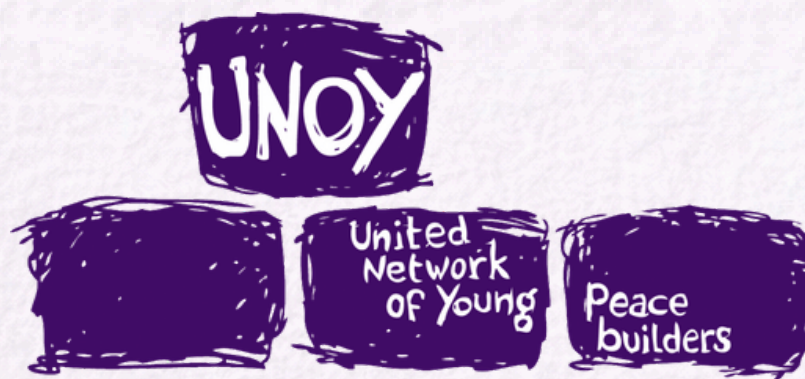
A major milestone this month—and a highlight for both 2025 and the organization—was the opening of the **Children of War Museum** and its inaugural exhibition, **“Play Interrupted.”** The museum was established as a space of collective memory dedicated to preserving and presenting the lived experiences of children during the war in Kosovo.

The beginning of 2025 focused on internal consolidation and long-term strategic direction through YIHR Kosovo’s Annual Strategic Planning, where we strengthened internal coordination and ensured that upcoming activities remained aligned with YIHR KS’s mission and strategic objectives.



In **FEBRUARY** the organization continued implementing its planned activities while strengthening partnerships and engagement with stakeholders.

During this month, work on youth mobility and regional cooperation advanced through the launch of the **Cross-Border Internship Program**, which enabled young people from Kosovo and Serbia to gain professional experience within civil society organizations, and foster dialogue, trust, and cooperation among participants.



This month also marked **YIHR KS's acceptance into the United Network of Young Peacebuilders (UNOY)**, making it the only civil society organization from Europe out of 144 global applicants.

Shortly after, **Digital Rights Week** addressed critical human rights challenges in the digital space, including freedom of expression, privacy, and online safety, reinforcing our commitment to digital rights advocacy.

TË DREJAT DIGJITALE JANË
TË DREJTA TË NJERIUT

TË DREJAT DIGJITALE JANË
TË DREJTA TË NJERIUT

TË DREJAT DIGJITALE JANË
TË DREJTA TË NJERIUT

TË DREJAT DIGJITALE JANË
TË DREJTA TË NJERIUT

TË DREJAT DIGJITALE JANË
TË DREJTA TË NJERIUT

TË DREJAT DIGJITALE JANË
TË DREJTA TË NJERIUT

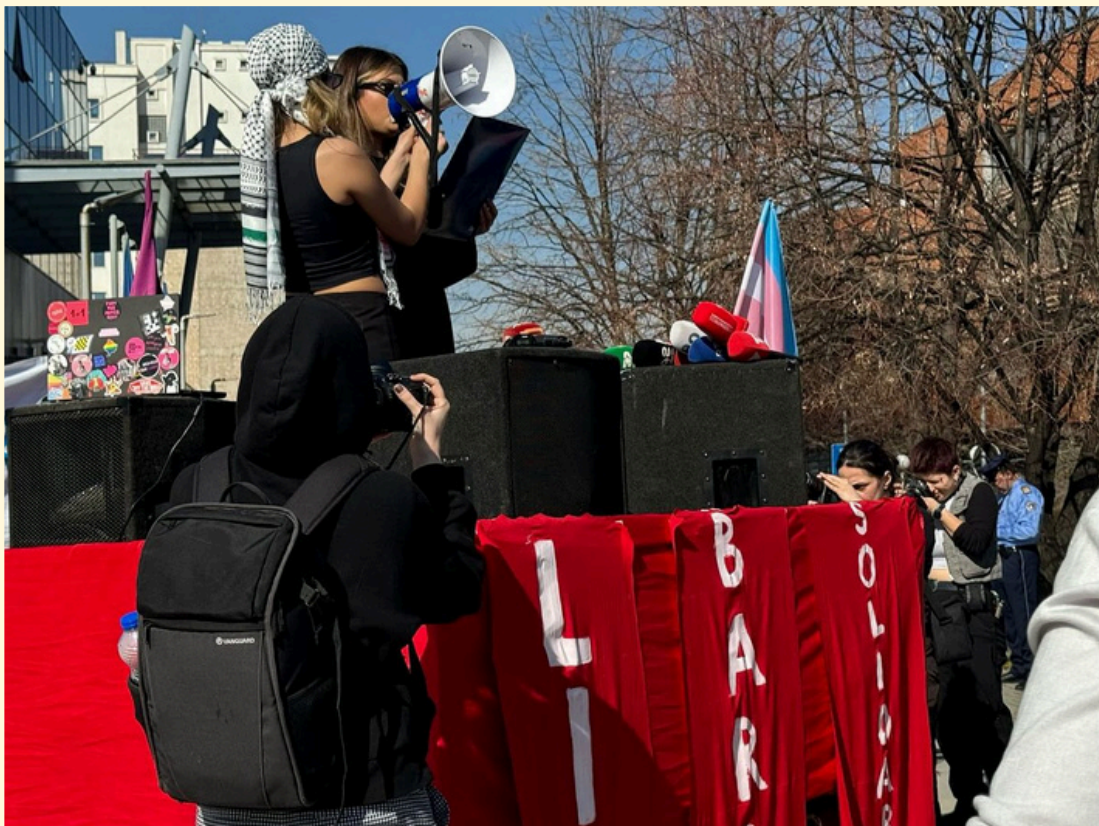
TË DREJAT DIGJITALE JANË
TË DREJTA TË NJERIUT

TË DREJAT DIGJITALE JANË
TË DREJTA TË NJERIUT

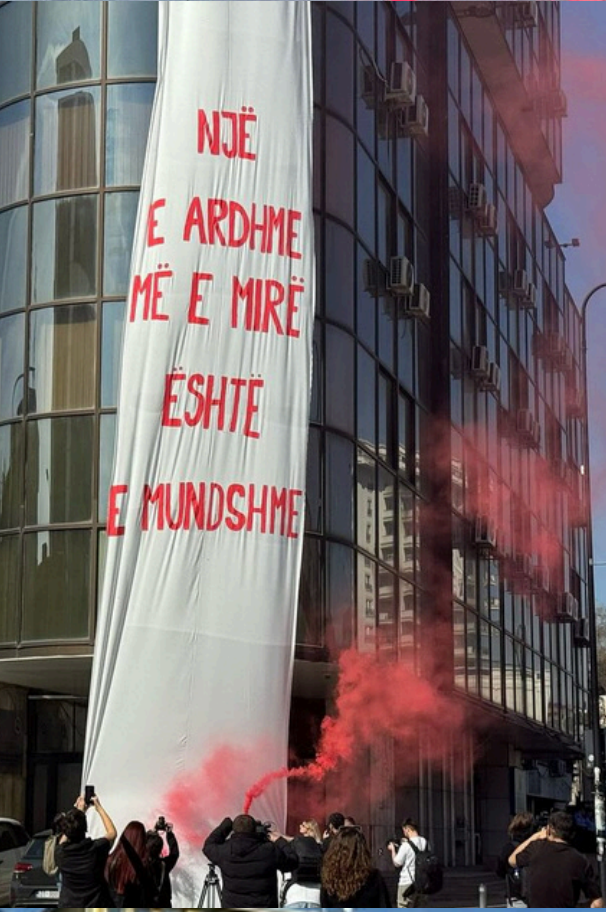
MARCH was characterized by active program implementation and several initiatives aimed at advancing the organization's mission and objectives.

On the **International Day for Zero Discrimination**, YIHR KS marks one year since initiating our lawsuit against institutional discrimination. We send a clear message that no one is above the law and call on Kosovo institutions to demonstrate zero tolerance for hate and discrimination.

Later this month, our team marched under the slogan
WE MARCH FOR ONE ANOTHER,
advocating for gender equality and the rights of women and girls..



Through these actions, YIHR KS reaffirmed its commitment to **accountability, equality, and the continued fight against discrimination** in all its forms.



Work on memory, gender justice, and resistance was advanced through the launch of “**Resistance: Women of Peace and Justice in Former Yugoslavia and Albania**” in **APRIL**.



The book brings together the testimonies of eleven women who played key roles in resisting war, violence, and political oppression, documenting atrocities, organizing protests, and advocating for peace and human rights.

Institutional accountability and regional cooperation were further addressed through the Regional Conference on “**Enhancing Partnerships Between Ombudsman Institutions and Civil Society for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights.**” The conference brought together ombudsman institutions and civil society organizations to examine coordinated responses to shrinking civic space and increasing threats against human rights defenders.



The month concluded with the commemoration of the **National Day of Missing Persons**, honoring the 1,592 individuals still missing from the war in Kosovo. On this day, we paid special tribute to the lives and work of two remarkable individuals who dedicated themselves to truth and justice in the search for missing persons: Bajram Çerkini and Milorad Trifunović. As every year, we turned off the lights for five minutes to remember the missing people and stand in solidarity with their families.



MAY began with the publication of the **6th Civil Society Report on Human Rights** by the Human Rights Network, in which our annual monitoring of the human rights situation contributed key findings, insights and recommendations.

Youth leadership and peace education were at the core of activities throughout the month, marked by the implementation of the second edition of the **Peace Academy in Kosovo**. Led by a diverse group of scholars, practitioners, and survivors, the program provided participants with the knowledge and skills to act as future trainers and changemakers within their communities and across the region.



At the international level, YIHR Kosovo strengthened our global engagement through participation in the **2025 ECOSOC Youth Forum** at the United Nations Headquarters in New York.



To complement these efforts, we hosted **two storytelling workshops** which brought together participants from different ethnic backgrounds to explore narratives as a tool for reconciliation and memory.



We kick-started **JUNE** with a strong focus on inclusion, visibility, and cultural resistance through active engagement in Pride Week in Prishtina, held under the theme “**No Step Back.**”

Activities addressed issues ranging from queer experiences in higher education and online harms to artistic expression, storytelling, and institutional responsibility for LGBTQI+ rights, reinforcing the importance of public and cultural spaces as sites of resistance and empowerment.



YIHR KS also marked **World Refugee Day** with a public screening of the documentary “*69 Minutes of 86 Days*” at the Activism Hub. The screening encouraged reflection on displacement, resilience, and the human impact of conflict, linking global refugee experiences to local discussions on empathy, responsibility, and human rights.



Continuing our annual tradition, in **JULY** 2025 we marked the 30th anniversary of the Srebrenica genocide, one of the most horrific crimes against humanity in Europe since World War II.

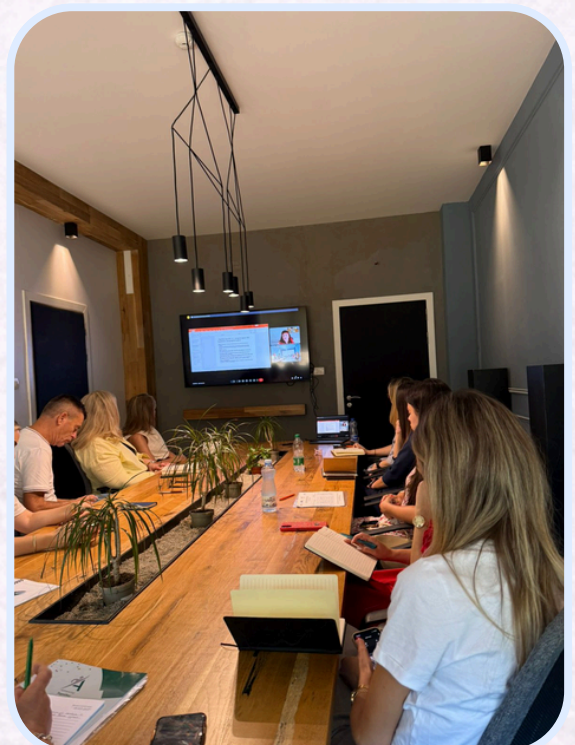


On July 11th, we gathered at Skënderbeu Square to honor the victims, stand in solidarity with their families, and remember all survivors. Remembering the victims is our act of resistance and a step toward reconciliation.



The “**Gender-sensitive Citizen Monitoring and Accountability**” project was also successfully completed. Over several months, we assessed how local governance integrates gender equality, highlighting progress and areas needing further work, such as gender-responsive budgeting, women’s economic empowerment, and inclusive participation.

The summer of 2025 will be remembered as a period of widespread civic mobilization, marked by numerous protests, due to the blockade of government institutions, reflecting public frustration and demand for accountability.



In **AUGUST** 2025, we organized several impactful initiatives to advance human rights, civic engagement, and accountability in Kosovo.



We conducted a training on “**Protection from Discrimination and the Guidelines for Handling Discrimination Cases.**” The session brought together agency officials and partners providing free legal aid, focusing on the newly drafted guidelines designed to ensure a consistent and fair approach to addressing discrimination cases.

Later in the month, YIHR KS hosted a **Capacity Building Bootcamp** which gathered representatives from 12 civil society organizations across Kosovo. Through lectures, interactive workshops, and team-building exercises on human rights, youth, and environmental justice, participants strengthened their skills, reflected on shared challenges and fostered collaboration to advance social change within their communities.



To mark the **International Day of Enforced Disappearances**, we held a street action titled “**The Waiting Hour.**” The event honored the 1,590 people who remained missing from the last war in Kosovo. Through this action, we expressed solidarity with affected families, raised public awareness, and urged institutions to prioritize the search for truth and justice.



SEPTEMBER started with high schoolers joininig engaging educational sessions that explored peacebuilding, conflict transformation, and challenging prejudice all over Kosovo.



YIHR KS also marked **International Peace Day** where citizens came together and expressed what peace means to them. Through these simple yet powerful gestures, the event reminded everyone that peace starts with each of us, and that even the smallest actions can spark broader change.

We also welcomed international practitioners of transitional justice to Kosovo for a study visit on **Transitional Justice and Reconciliation**. The program offered insights into Kosovo's post-war journey, visits to courts handling war crimes, and discussions with justice institutions, all to deepen our understanding of accountability, justice, and reconciliation.

Later in the month, YIHR KS supported grassroot NGOs through **Small Grant Schemes to strengthen civic engagement and social cohesion**, fostering inclusive community action and empowering local organizations to create spaces where citizens can participate, connect, and collaborate for a stronger, more united society.



In **OCTOBER** we celebrated the completion of a one-year internship program at the Basic Courts of Kosovo for a group of young dedicated lawyers.

We continued with our **Peace Academy sessions** which were held over several municipalities. Through interactive learning, students explored conflict transformation, dialogue, and peaceful coexistence, developing practical skills for addressing challenges within their communities.



At the same time, YIHR representatives joined the **Global Transformative Transitional Justice in Practice Conference** in Berlin, contributing to discussions on youth engagement and cross-country approaches to healing after conflict.



During this period, the YIHR KS strengthened its engagement with democratic resilience and information integrity through a training workshop **"Digital Security – How to Identify and Stop Disinformation."** Participants gained practical tools to recognize, analyze, and counter disinformation, reinforcing the importance of informed and responsible civic engagement in today's increasingly complex digital world.

At the international level, YIHR KS took part in the **World Forum for Democracy**, joining activists, policymakers, and youth leaders in discussions on revitalizing democratic practices.

In **NOVEMBER** our series of “**Post Memory Talk**” started with Flutura Nishori and Aid Çerkini.

This is a platform that aims to foster critical reflection and intergenerational dialogue on the collective memory of the war in Kosovo and youth engagement in peacebuilding and dealing with the past.

YIHR KS attended the **World Forum for Democracy** in Strasbourg, where global leaders, activists, and youth innovators came together to explore how we can revive and strengthen democracy today. From discussions on youth-driven innovation to addressing cases of disinformation, the forum served as a space for meaningful dialogue and networking.

We supported together with UNDP, “**Recycling as Artistic Practice**”, implemented by Sehmet Institute. This exhibition created a space where participants experimented with recycled materials to produce works that intertwine art, ecology, and queer inclusion. The final showcase, curated by Anyla Kabashi, invited reflections on environmental responsibility and the transformative power of art.



In **DECEMBER**

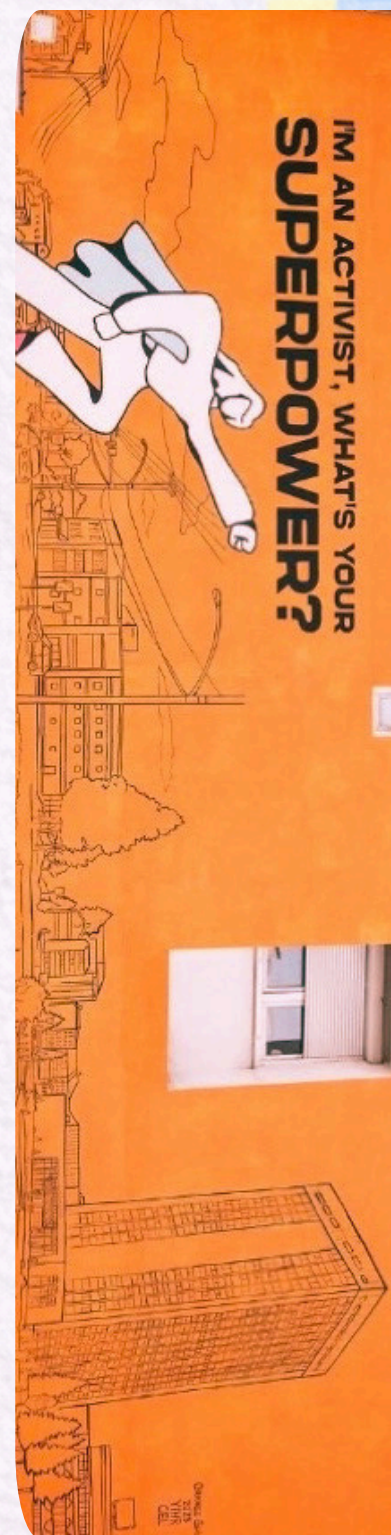
At a time when democracy faces mounting challenges, Human Rights Week – Volume 12 created a space for resistance, reflection, and collective action. **Human Rights Week** was held under the theme “**demoCRISIS**,” addressing the threats to democracy, shrinking civic space, and ongoing global and local crises.

To mark International Human Rights Day, a new mural was launched in central Prishtina with the message: “***I am an activist, what’s your superpower?***”

YIHR KS premiered the animated documentary **Kosovo 1989–1999**, guiding audiences through the historical events leading up to and during the Kosovo War. The screening created space for reflection, dialogue, and responsibility, featuring conversations with Tim Judah, Veton Surroi and Serbeze Haxhijaj.

The week concluded with a closing ceremony celebrating activism, courage, and collective resilience. Feminist activist and digital rights expert Shanley Clemot McLaren addressed participants, emphasizing that every act of resistance strengthens democracy. During the ceremony, Ermira Murati, publicly known as “Orange Girl” was named the 2025 **Human Rights Activists of the Year**, honoring her dedication to combining art and activism to tackle social issues in Kosovo, including women’s health, breast cancer awareness, gender equality, and the empowerment of marginalized communities.

We ended the year through our Small Grant Scheme, where we launched a mural in Ferizaj with our partners RinOn, as well as organized an exhibition with Sekhmet Institute.





CLOSING

A message to everyone from YIHR KS team:

Together, we demand a future where young people:

- Have the power to transform conflict
- Participate in decision-making without barriers
- Partner for peace without fear or threat

#Rights not just today, not yesterday, not tomorrow, but 365 full days!♥

This work was made possible thanks to the generous support of our donors and partners:

- **CEL Kosova**
- **DokuFest**
- **Pro Peace**
- **Berghof FOUndation**
- **German Government through GIZ Kosovo**
- **European Union (EU)**
- **Council of Europe**
- **Rockefeller Brothers Foundation**
- **NED**
- **UNDP Kosovo**
- **UNMIK**
- **SEE Check and EU**
- **Smart Balkans**
- **Université des Culture de Geneve**
- **Uje Rugove**
- **British Council**