

Joint Statement of Support for Mirela Arqimandriti and the Advancement of Gender Equality in Albania

We, the undersigned civil society organizations from across the Western Balkan region, express our full solidarity and support for Mirela Arqimandriti, Executive Director of the Gender Alliance for Development Center (GADC) in Albania, who has recently been the target of public attacks and disinformation campaigns due to her steadfast advocacy for gender equality and women's rights.

Mirela Arqimandriti is a long-standing and respected human rights defender whose work has contributed significantly to advancing equality, justice, and the protection of fundamental human rights in Albania and the Western Balkans. The recent attempts to discredit her and undermine her professional integrity are deeply concerning and represent a broader pattern of backlash against women human rights defenders and the progress made toward gender equality in our societies.

We strongly condemn all forms of harassment, intimidation, or defamation directed at individuals and organizations working to promote equality and human rights. Such attacks not only harm those directly targeted but also aim to silence civic voices and weaken democratic processes.

We call upon:

- Public institutions and decision-makers in Albania to ensure a safe and enabling environment for civil society actors and human rights defenders;
- Media representatives to uphold professional standards, refrain from spreading misinformation, and contribute to informed and respectful public dialogue;
- Regional and international partners to stand in solidarity with civil society organizations and activists facing smear campaigns or threats for their legitimate human rights work.

Gender equality is not a threat — it is a cornerstone of democracy, social justice, and sustainable development.

We reaffirm our commitment to working together to defend these values and support all individuals who courageously uphold them.

Signed by:

Centar za promociju civilnog društva

Center for Research and Policy Making

Kosovo Women's Network

Stella Network

Gender Alliance for Development Center (GADC)

AWEN-Albanian Women Empowerment Network

Autonomous Women's Center

Fondacija Udružene žene

Centar za ženska prava / Women's Rights Center

National Network to end Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence

Ženska Akcija

Akcija Združenska

Keystone Moldova

Fondacija "Lara"

Centar za ljudska prava ImpAct / Center for Human Rights ImpAct