

## **Women's Court - Feminist Approach to Justice**

### ***Activity report September, October, November, December 2016.***

Here's a short report on the activities of Women in Black in connection with organizing the Women's Court-feminist approach to justice in this period. If you are interested in more information, you can find them on our web-sites [www.zeneucrnornom.org](http://www.zeneucrnornom.org) and [www.zenskisud.org](http://www.zenskisud.org) or contact us by mail: [zeneucrnornombeograd@gmail.com](mailto:zeneucrnornombeograd@gmail.com)

**The first Women's Court on the territory of Europe, was held in Sarajevo from May 7<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> 2015**, organized by 10 women's groups from the former Yugoslavia (Movement Mothers of Srebrenica and Zepa; Cure Foundation, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina; Centar for women victims of War; Centre for women's studies, Zagreb, Croatia; Center for women and peace education Anima, Kotor, Montenegro; The Council for Gender Equality, Skopje, Macedonia; Women's Lobby, Ljubljana, Slovenia; Center for women's studies and Women in Black, Belgrade, Serbia. Women's Court was attended by over **500** people from all the countries of the former Yugoslavia, but also from Argentina, Algeria, Palestine, Israel, USA, Spain, Italy, Sweden, Austria, Belgium, Great Britain, etc.

Women in Black, during the five years, are the leaders of program activities of the Women's Court.

The final event in Sarajevo is not the end of the process, but rather an incentive to creating new models of justice out of the feminist perspective. It is the responsibility primarily to the witness, but also an expression of our responsibility to the enormous burden of the recent past.

In continuation of the Women's Court, Women in Black, Belgrade coordinate the program and other activities, with the support of organizations: Anima, Kotor (Montenegro), Center for Women War Victims, Zagreb (Croatia), the Foundation 'Cure', Sarajevo, some members of the former Organizing Committee of the Women's Court continue to participate sporadically (Council for Equality, Skopje, Macedonia), while the other members support without active participation.

In this reporting period, we are reporting activities of Women in Black and other organizations participating in the continuation of the process of Women's Court:

## **I Feminist ethic of care - support witnesses**

**Regional meetings of witnesses** - these meetings of witnesses are part of the continuing process of the Women's Court and in this reporting period we organized four **(4)** and these meetings were held in:

### **Vrnjačka banja, September 8th and 9th 2016**

Meeting was attended by 18 women and the witness from Montenegro, Kosovo, Macedonia and Serbia. The whole event took place in the form of workshops, and was dedicated to psychological support to witnesses; the entire event was coordinated by Ljupka Kovacevic.

### **Banja Vrujci, December 16th, 17th and 18th 2016**

Regional meeting of the Women's Court witness, held in Banja Vrujci (70 km from Belgrade), was attended by 37 people. The meeting was organized by Women in Black from Belgrade in cooperation with: Anima Kotor, Foundation CURE from Sarajevo and the Center for Women War Victims, Zagreb.

Following Women's Court witness participated:

**Bosnia and Herzegovina:** Kadefa Rizvanović, Zumra Šehomerović, Nura Mustafić, Suvada Selimović, Šaha Hrustić, Šehida Abdurahmanović

**Montenegro:** Anka Vukićević, Maja Jovović, Zagorka Matović, Roksanda Peković, Sabina Talović

**Croatia:** Milica Miladinović, Marica Šeatović

**Macedonia:** Marijonka Atanasovska

**Serbia:** Nadežda Kostić, Mirjana Mijailović, Vesna Đorđević, Marija Kovačev

**Slovenia:** Mirjana Učakar

**Women's Court therapist:** Ljupka Kovačević, Nela Pamuković, Jadranka Miličević, Staša Zajović, Mira Vilušić, Marijana Senjak

**Women's Court assistants:** Snežana Obrenović (WIB, Kraljevo), Rada Žarković (WIB, Sarajevo), Refija Hadibulić (Bajranovići/Srebrenica...)

**International friends:** Lejla Mamut (UN Women, Sarajevo), Amrita Kapur (International Center for Transitional Justice, Njujork), and two persons from Latin America.

Following panels were held:

Do courts and trials at the international and national level meet the justice?

In this debate was discussed about the achievements, limitations, contradictions of international justice institutions (the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia / ICTY, trials and courts at national level in the countries of former Yugoslavia (impunity, sacrifice justice ...?); The role of civil society in meeting Justice - the creation of alternative models of justice ...

The lecture was held by Nemanja Stjepanovic, Humanitarian Law Center, Belgrade

### **Comparative review of legislation relating to rape as a war crime - among the former Yugoslav states**

In this panel discussion participated: Milica Kostić, Belgrade, Jadranka Milicevic and Lejla Mamut from Sarajevo, Mira Vilušić from Tuzla and all the participants expressed some achievements in this area (material reparations in BH, unfortunately, include the small number of women victims of crimes).

However, it is necessary to encourage an active policy of support for victims of sexual crimes: symbolic rather than material reparation, empowering survivors development programs (education, health care, housing ...).

It was emphasized that the worst situation is in Serbia since the Law on civil victims of war does not recognized rape as war crime, despite the persistent efforts of the Humanitarian Law Center and related organizations.

**The misuse of religion for political purposes, clericalism and its impact on women's rights** - with the screening of documentary films about the resistance of women in various fields. Participated: Nela Pamuković, Zagreb, Stasa Zajović, Beograd, Lejla Mamut and Jadranka Milicevic, Sarajevo. Short documentaries about feminist resistance to abuse of religion were shown.

During the meeting, feminist team of therapist held several group workshops, as well as numerous interviews with Individuals (feminist ethics of care and responsibility). At this meeting the Amrita Kapur (International Center for Transitional Justice, New York) had individual interviews with the organizers of of WC, as well as a series of group interviews / workshops with the witness on the WC and the WC procs organization, continuation of the process of WC, etc. a text expertise of Amrita Kapur will be published in the publication of books Woman testimony.

In the meeting, a precise plan of activities of WC until May 2017 was made, when the next scheduled meeting of the Women's Court is scheduled.

## **II Promotion of Women's Court - Feminist Approach to Justice**

In this reporting period we organized eight (8) public presentation, in five (5) states of former Yugoslavia. There were **330** participants in total:

Public presentations of WC are consisted of following segments:

- *What is the Women's Court? What is the feminist approach to justice? The history and the process of organizing of the Women's Court*
- *Women's Court - Feminist Approach to Justice (52 minutes) - the documentary*
- *The witnesses speak about their experience testifying in the Women's Court in Sarajevo (What's meant for me to testify on WC ?, as well as the participation in the continuation of the process of WC)*
- *Talk with the audience (Effects of the Women's Court, the continuation of the process of WC, the problems that are facing the most in their environment - proposals, suggestions for maintaining the 'mini' WC on specific issues, etc.).*

**Belgrade/Serbia, October 7th 2016** – there was a promotion of the documentary film "Women's Court - Feminist Approach to Justice" which was attended by 30 witness from all countries of the former Yugoslavia, organizers and supporters of WC. The event was attended by about one hundred and fifty (150) persons from all countries of former Yugoslavia, as well as a dozen European countries.

**Ljubljana/Slovenia, October 16th** - was held at the Social Center "Rog", participants were witness from Croatia (Milica Miladinović Marica Šeatović i i Jovanka Carevic) Slovenia (Mirjana Učakar), the organizers of WC (Nela Pamuković, Marijana Senjak, Stasa Zajović), activists, citizens. The event was attended by about fifty 50 people.

**Pljevlja/Montenegro, October 22nd**- promotion of the film about WC was held in the NGO "Bonafide", participants were witnesses from Montenegro (Sabina Talović) and Serbia (Binasa Džigal), organizers and activists of WC (Stasa Zajović and Violeta Đikanović); was attended by about thirty (30) persons - Bonafide activists, citizens from Pljevlja and also from Priboj, Prijepolje, Bijelo Polje, Belgrade ...

**Prizren/Kosovo, November 5th** – participated by witnesses from Kosovo (Nuri Tholey), Serbia (Lidija Radičević, Nadezhda Kostic), as well as organizers and activists of WC from the Serbia and Kosovo, and was attended by 18 women.

**Belgrade, November 20th** – at the premises of the Civil Rights Defenders on 'Feminist approach to justice - the experience of Women in Black, the lecture took part ten people (10), students / activists Faculty of Law and Faculty of Political Sciences in Belgrade; on this promotion, interactive lecture was held by Staša Zajović.

**Niš/Serbia, November 21st** – in the premises of the Committee for Human Rights in Niš, participated 12 persons, students of social sciences; issue 'feminist approach to justice - the experience of Women in Black'. Video materials about the experiences of Women in Black, and docu-film "Women's Court-feminist approach to justice" were shown.

**Osijek/Croatia, December 8th** – event was held in the City University Library, a part of the campaign "16 Days of Activism Against Violence Against Women", organized by women's associations "Izvor" Tenja, with the support of the Center for Women War Victims from Zagreb and Women in Black from Belgrade. At this promotion participated witnesses from Croatia (Baketa Jelena, Milica Miladinovic, Jovanka Carevic and Marica Šeatović), Serbia (Marija Kovačev), the organizers of WC (Nela Pamuković, Nikolina Zec, Stasa Zajović), a member of the International Chamber (Vesna Teršelič), a promotion was attended by some forty (40) women, mostly activists of local civil society organizations.

**Đulići (Bosnia and Herzegovina), December 22nd** - organized by the Association of Citizens 'Anima' from Đulići and Women in Black, Belgrade; promotion was held in the home of Suvada Selimovic. There were 21 women from nearby cities: Đulići, Klisa, Šetići, Tojšići, Potocari near Srebrenica, Bajramovići, Pljevlja (Montenegro), Leskovac and Belgrade. There were witnesses from BH (Suvada Selimovic, Saha Hrustić, Nura Mustafic, Šehida Abdurahmanović) from Croatia (Milica Miladinović) and Montenegro (Sabina Talović), as well as the organizers and activists of WC (Dunja Hadžiomerspahić, Milka Rosic, Stasa Zajović and Violeta Đikanović).

The most important points:

On all the public presentation of WC witnesses said that the most important thing about WC (as before the events in Sarajevo, and after that) is that it creates a space for solidarity, mutual support, enormous trust as prerequisites for joint effort to fight for just peace. Witnesses also believe that during the process they become activists, and now are included in a number of activities of civil society organizations in their communities and beyond.

However, the witnesses, as well as women (and a few man) who attended public presentations, consider that nationalism, militarism, insecurity for minorities, especially ethnic or minority members on the basis of racial, ideological, sexual) continue to prevail. In addition to meeting people with the idea and experience of WC, one of the goals is to create space for organizing the 'mini' women's courts on specific problems faced by women. Among the proposals for the 'mini' WC were: violence / discrimination on ethnic grounds, including persecution, as well as issues related to violation of labor rights of women at the level of militarization of society and the state ... We can conclude that it is a multi-layered violence, that the various forms of violence intertwined (ethnic / class / gender / militaristic violence).

**III Joint working consultative meetings** - in this period maintained the operational organization of working meetings, expert, activist participating in the continuation of the process of WC: the regional meetings (Banja Koviljaca, Banja Vrujci, etc.) with the participation of organizations that actively participate in the continuation of the process of WC and numerous other bilateral working meetings.

**IV Working meetings of Women in Black:** As leaders of program activities in continuation of the process of WC, we held working meetings (reporting activities, preparation of publications, documents and archives of WC, prepares regional meetings witness, prepares Women book of testimony, the coordination of the working group for making a documentary film about WC, etc.

#### **V Documentary and Feature Film Screenings**

Documentaries produced by WiB's video activism group include films on access to justice, peace, and security. All screenings are followed by discussions about the film and the initiatives related to Women's Court – Feminist Access to Justice.

**Creation of the final version of the documentary Women's Court - feminist approach to justice;** in this reporting period, the film is translated and subtitled in Albanian, English and Spanish.

**VI Women's book of testimony:** work on the book in coordination of Women in Black includes the following segments:

- *Editorial of testimony:* the testimony that the witness gave consent were examined, were made the changes, footnotes are viewed by associates of the Women's Court Masa Malesevic, in the coming period followed by another revision.
- *Documents from the Women's Court:* decisions and recommendations of the International panel of judges were established.
- *Texts associate to WC:* screened, followed by an English translation.
- *Other elements:* analysis of continuation of the ongoing work, the text on the work of the feminist therapeutic team of WC is in the works, etc.

## **VII Participation of the witness and the organizers of WC in the activities of the Women in Black (street actions, visiting the crime scenes, the educational programs):**

### **1. Visiting places of crimes**

- *Sjeverin/Serbia, October 22nd* – joint participation of activists of the Network of Women in Black and the witness from Serbia (Binasa Džigal) at the commemoration;
- *November 19th, Vukovar/Croatia* – participation of witness from BH (Suvada Selimovic, Saha Hrustić and Šehida Abdurahmanović) from Croatia (Jelena Baketa) together with Women in Black activists on the commemoration of the 25th anniversary of the crime in Vukovar;
- *December 20th, Vranić near Belgrade* – witness from of Croatia (Milica Miladinović) with activists of Women in Black Belgrade, 73rd anniversary of Chetnik crimes against civilians of Serbian nationality.

### **2. Women's Peace Meeting:**

- *Prizren/Kosovo, 3, 4. i 5. novembar* – učestvovala svedokinje iz Srbije (Nadežda Kostić i Lidija Radičević), sa Kosova (Nurije Tolaj).

### **3. Women build peace together - support of Women in Black**

- *Đulići, September 23rd and December 22nd and 23rd* - (Suvada Selimović, Šaha Hrustić, Reiha Avdić, Šehida Abdurahmanović, Reiha Abdić from BH), from Montenegro (Sabina Talović).

### **4. Street actions**

- *Belgrade, October 8th* – Peace action on the occasion of 25th years of Women in Black Belgrade, attended by about 30 witness from all countries of former Yugoslavia;
- *Belgrade, October 9th and 10th* - actions of solidarity with refugees in Belgrade parks (Kadefa Rizvanović from BH)
- *Belgrade, November 18th*– to mark 25th years since the crimes in Vukovar, participated witnesses from BH (Suvada Selimovic, Saha Hrustić and Šehida Abdurahmanović), Serbia (Nadezda Kostic).

*(About these actions you can find more in chapter “Street actions” of this report)*

### **VIII Publications**

In this reporting period, we prepared reports about Women’s Court presentations – 35 pages and activity reports on WC.

Belgrade, February 2017.

*(Prepared by: Staša Zajović, in collaboration with Ljupka Kovačević,  
Miloš Urošević and Mirko Medenica)*