

# Kosovo National Day Special

## Our women are a source of national pride

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On this 13th anniversary of independence, I would like to pay tribute to Kosovo's women. Their contributions, achievements and sacrifices in many fields for freedom, peace and prosperity extend well beyond the homeland of the Republic of Kosovo.

Most famous is St. Mother Theresa, who while focusing on the poorest of the poor, spread joy, love and care to the world.

Shote Galica, an outstanding warrior, is remembered for the saying, "Life without knowledge is like a war without weapons."

Vasfije Krasniqi, one of approximately 20,000 women who endured ethnic violence during the 1999 Kosovo War, was the

first to speak openly about it. The Heroinat Memorial was unveiled in Prishtina in 2015 to honor all Kosovar women active during the war.

Atifete Jahjaga was Kosovo's first female president and one of the first in southeast Europe. Vjosa Osmani-Sadriu is the first female speaker of the assembly and Meliza Haradinaj-Stublla is our first female foreign affairs minister.

Hana Qerimi, co-founder of Digital School, is the winner of the Albanian Women in ICT 2018 award and a participant in the Fortune 500 Global Mentorship Program.

Pop superstars Rita Ora and Dua Lipa are Kosovo-born refugees whose parents fled to the U.K. Nexhmije Pagarusha was a renowned musician and actress often referred to as the queen of Kosovar music for her distinct soprano vocal range.

Judoka Majlinda Kelmendi became the first Kosovar to win Olympic gold after triumphing in the 52-kg division at the Rio

de Janeiro Games in 2016. Distria Krasniqi, another judoka, has won 32 medals in major competitions, recently taking gold at the International Judo Federation's 2021 world masters in Doha.

Nezakete Hakaj is president of JICA Alumni Association while Luljeta Arifi is president of Kosovar-Japanese Friendship Association. Amjeza Alaj, Dea Luma and Arbenita Sopaj are some of the Kosovar Ph.D. students who have studied in Japan.

In conclusion, the Republic of Kosovo is a young, small European country with an increasing presence on the international scene. The role of our women in many areas is pivotal and Kosovo is eternally grateful. Women are our national pride. The future of Kosovo-Japan relations is bright and promises great accomplishments.

*This content was compiled in collaboration with the embassy. The views expressed here do not necessarily reflect those of the newspaper.*