

HUMAN
RIGHTS
HUMAN

**CIVIL SOCIETY
REPORT ON HUMAN
RIGHTS**

IN KOSOVO IN 2025

HUMAN
RIGHTS

MAY 2026

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LIST OF TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Ahtisaari Plan (2007)	The Comprehensive Proposal for the Kosovo Status Settlement
AJK	Association of Journalists of Kosovo
AoK	Assembly of Kosovo
BPO	Basic Prosecutor's Office
BSPK	Union of Independent Trade Unions of Kosovo
CAT	Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CERD	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
CoE	Council of Europe
CPT	European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
CRSV	Conflict-related sexual violence
CSO(s)	Civil society organization(s)
ECHR	European Convention on Human Rights
ECtHR	European Court of Human Rights
ECPMF	European Centre for Press and Media Freedom
EU	European Union
FCNM	Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities of the Council of Europe
FLAA	Free Legal Aid Agency
GoK	Government of Kosovo
HRN	Human Rights Network Kosovo
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
IDP(s)	Internally Displaced Person(s)
IMC	Independent Media Commission
IPA	Information and Privacy Agency of Kosovo
Istanbul Convention	Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence
KAA	Kosovo Accreditation Agency
KAS	Kosovo Agency of Statistics
KCS	Kosovo Correctional Service

KJC	Kosovo Judicial Council
KP	Kosovo Police
KPC	Kosovo Prosecutorial Council
KPCVA	Kosovo Property Comparison and Verification Agency
KPGE	Kosovo Program for Gender Equality
K-Albanian	Kosovo Albanian
K-Ashkali	Kosovo Ashkali
K-Egyptian	Kosovo Egyptian
K-Roma	Kosovo Roma
K-Serb	Kosovo Serb
LGBTI+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex+
LIK	Labor Inspectorate of Kosovo
MCYS	Ministry of Culture, Youth, and Sports
MCoR	Municipal Commission on Returns
MESTI	Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation
MFLT	Ministry of Finance, Labor and Transfers
MLSW	Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare
MoH	Ministry of Health
MoJ	Ministry of Justice
NCPD	National Council for People with Disabilities
NGO(s)	Non-governmental organization(s)
NPM	National Preventive Mechanism
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OGG	The Office of Good Governance, Human Rights, Equal Opportunities, and Non-Discrimination
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
OIK	Ombudsperson Institution of Kosovo
OPCAT	Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PIK	Police Inspectorate of Kosovo
PISA	Program for International Student Assessment
SOC	Serbian Orthodox Church
SPO	Special Prosecution Office of Kosovo
TAK	Tax Administration of Kosovo
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
UUESC	United Union of Education, Science and Culture in Kosovo
Venice Commission	European Commission for Democracy Through Law
WGMP	Working Group for Missing Persons
WHO	World Health Organization

1. INTRODUCTION

1. The Civil Society Report on Human Rights in Kosovo provides an overview of the human rights situation in Kosovo in 2025. It includes main issues and developments, human rights violations and challenges to the effective realization of human rights in practice. The Report is produced jointly by civil society organizations (CSOs) working in a diverse number of areas relevant to human rights. This Report aims to serve as a non-governmental and independent tool to assess the overall human rights situation in Kosovo, thus filling an existing gap in joint reporting on human rights in Kosovo at the local and international levels, in addition to enhancing cooperation and coordination between CSOs.

2. The Report is structured into four main sections: **Section A** examines civil and political rights, including the right to prohibition of torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment; the right to liberty and security of person, the right to a fair trial and access to justice; the freedom of expression, opinion, information and the right to privacy; the freedom of peaceful assembly; the freedom of association, and freedom of belief, religion and conscience. **Section B** covers economic, social and cultural rights, such as the right to education; the right to health; labor rights, and the right to property and concludes with an overview of cultural rights. **Section C** examines the rights of persons in vulnerable positions, such as rights of children, youth, persons with disabilities, non-majority communities, LGBTI+, and people on the move. **Section D** is the last section, which elaborates on a number of cross-cutting and specific human rights issues such as, transitional justice and human rights, corruption and human rights, the impact of environmental issues in relation to human rights, and the right to equality and non-discrimination.

2. METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

3. The joint CSO Report on Human Rights 2025 provides an overview of the human rights situation in Kosovo in 2025 from the perspective of civil society. The document reflects areas critical to an in-depth understanding of the development of human rights in Kosovo in the context of its ongoing development as a democratic state with universal values of human rights and freedoms. The methodology is underpinned by the necessity for a broad-spectrum perspective that intersects aspects of policy, practice and experience and provides therefore an alternative overview of the human rights situation in Kosovo. Even though the report aims to be comprehensive, it is acknowledged that there are limitations to what has been covered.

4. Drawing on the methodology developed by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) for the development of human rights indicators, a revised methodology has been used since 2022 for the drafting of the report. On the basis of lists of indicators developed for each human rights section, the data gathered reflect not just a qualitative effort to understand the context. They are also the result of a quantitative endeavour to measure the human rights situation.

5. The drafting process of the report was led by the principle of full participation and ownership by key CSOs that work in the human rights field at the local and national level. The data collection for compiling the joint CSO report consisted of several approaches. First, the report is the result of the respective contributions of 42 CSOs working on particular human rights issues. In addition to this, for the second consecutive year in the process of the drafting of the CSO Report on Human Rights, interviews were held with a number of CSOs in order to discuss specific human rights issues and cross-check certain data from their respective areas of expertise. This allowed for grouping the report into four sections referred to above, namely **Section A, B, C and D**. Finally, this report relied on extensive desk research. For each of the underlying sections, data was amassed from a variety of reliable resources. In addition, the report was reviewed at three successive phases of the drafting process. By means of one consultative meeting organized by Human Rights Network¹, the contributing CSOs were able to discuss the findings and provide suggestions subsequently incorporated into the joint CSO report. Furthermore, the consultative procedures were enabled by means of email correspondence between the NGO YIHR KS and contracted researchers.

6. The following 42 NGOs contributed to this report: Activism Roots, Advocacy Center for Democracy Culture (ACDC), Advocacy Training & Resource Center (ATRC), Advancing Together (AT), Association of Journalists of Kosovo (AJK), Association of Paraplegics and Paralyzed Children of Kosovo (HANDIKOS), Balkan Green Foundation (BGF), Balkan Investigative Reporting Network Kosovo (BIRN Kosovo), Center for Affirmative Social Actions (CASA), Center for Equality and Liberty (CEL), Center for Information and Social Enhancement (QIPS), Civil Rights Program Kosovo (CRP/K), Durmish Aslano, DYLBERIZM, FollowUp, Forum Civil Peace Service (ZFD), GAP Institute, Group for Legal and Political Studies (GLPS), Hanuma NGO, Institute for Advocacy of Corrective Policies (IAPK), Kosovo Gender Studies Center (KGSC), Kosovo Institute for Policy Research and Development (KIPRED), Kosovo Law Institute (KLI), The Kosova Rehabilitation Center for Torture Victims (KRCT), Kosovo Women's Network (KWN), Kosovo Young Lawyers (KYL), Lëvizja FOL, Lëvizja Queer Studentore, Medica Gjakova, Missing Persons Resource Center (MPRC), New Social Initiative (NSI), NGO AKTIV, Omladinska Parteska Aktivnost (OPA), Qendra për Informim, Kritikë dhe Aksion (QIKA), The Network of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Women's Organizations of Kosovo (RROGRAEK), Save the Children Kosova/o, Syri i Vizionit, Terre des Hommes (Tdh), The Ideas Partnership, TOKA, Voice of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians in Kosovo (VoRAE), and Youth Initiative for Human Rights Kosovo (YIHR KS).

1 Human Rights Network (HRN) (2025). The HRN is a network of seven organizations that work together on further advancing human rights for all in Kosovo. Members of the HRN are: Youth Initiative for Human Rights – Kosovo (YIHR KS), Association of Paraplegics and Paralyzed Children of Kosovo HANDIKOS, Center for Equality and Liberty (CEL), Kosovo Law Institute (KLI), Kosovar Gender Studies Center (KGSC), New Social Initiative (NSI), Voice of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians (VoRAE). YIHR KS is the founder and the Secretariat of the HRN. This report is delivered with the financial support of the Human Rights Component of the United Nations Mission Interim Administration in Kosovo (UNMIK) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).

3. KOSOVO'S GENERAL HUMAN RIGHTS FRAMEWORK

7. Kosovo's commitment to human rights and fundamental freedoms is robustly enshrined in its Constitution and legislation, adopting a comprehensive threefold approach. Primarily, the Constitution incorporates numerous provisions dedicated to upholding fundamental freedoms and human rights. Article 3 of the Constitution explicitly obliges public authorities in Kosovo to ensure equal treatment under the law and unwavering respect for internationally recognized fundamental human rights and freedoms. Furthermore, Article 7 of the Constitution establishes the foundational principles of Kosovo's constitutional order, emphasizing values such as equality, respect for human rights and freedoms, and non-discrimination, with a specific acknowledgment of gender equality as a fundamental tenet. Chapter II of the Constitution delineates meticulous provisions safeguarding civil and political rights, encompassing fair trial rights, privacy, and freedoms of opinion, expression, peaceful assembly, association, and movement. It also extends protections to economic, social, and cultural rights, including the right to education and freedom of profession. Noteworthy is Article 53, which mandates that any interpretation of human rights and fundamental freedoms, as guaranteed by Kosovo's Constitution, aligns with the established jurisprudence of the European Court of Human Rights.

8. Secondly, Kosovo incorporates several international human rights instruments into its domestic legal framework. Such entrenchment is based on Article 22 of the Constitution, which stipulates that nine United Nations (UN) and regional human rights instruments are directly applicable in Kosovo, providing an additional legal basis for protecting and promoting human rights and freedoms in Kosovo. In September 2020, the Assembly of Kosovo amended Article 22 to include the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention) among the directly applicable human rights instruments, marking a significant advancement for women's rights. All of these directly applicable human rights instruments take precedence over Kosovo's legislation or other acts of public institutions in cases of conflict, a legal stance confirmed by the case-law of the Constitutional Court of Kosovo as well.² Although the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) is not among the international human rights instruments directly applicable in Kosovo, the Assembly of Kosovo adopted the 2030 Agenda and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals in a unanimous resolution on January 24, 2018, providing a meaningful entry point for promoting and protecting economic, social, and cultural rights in Kosovo.

9. In spite of the positive membership recommendation adopted by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) in April 2024 through Opinion No. 302 (2024), Kosovo's bid to join the Council of Europe remained unresolved during 2025. While PACE had affirmed that Kosovo's aspirations to join the organisation deserved a positive response and highlighted the potential benefits of access to the European Court of Human Rights for persons under Kosovo's jurisdiction,

² Constitutional Court of Kosovo, case no. [K1207/19](#), paragraphs 105-111.

the final decision by the Committee of Ministers did not materialise. As of the reporting period, in 2025, Kosovo remained outside the organisation, and the existing monitoring and accountability gap persisted concerning several Council of Europe conventions directly applicable under Article 22 of the Constitution.

10. Thirdly, Chapter III of the Constitution provides exclusive guarantees and special protection to the non-majority communities in Kosovo. These guarantees are considered as “specific rights” in addition to other rights provided by Chapter II of the Constitution, which apply exclusively to inhabitants belonging to the same national or ethnic or religious group traditionally present in Kosovo.³ Among some other more standard protection clauses, this Chapter includes several provisions which ensure affirmative measures in political, economic and social protection of non-majority communities in Kosovo.⁴

11. Kosovo has established dedicated bodies and mechanisms to promote and protect human rights, such as the Ombudsperson Institution, the Office of Good Governance, Human Rights, Equal Opportunities, and Non-Discrimination (OGG), the Presidential Council for Democracy, the Inter-Ministerial Coordinating Group on Human Rights, the Office of the Language Commissioner, the Agency for Gender Equality, the Free Legal Aid Agency, the Agency for Information and Privacy, and the AoK Committee on Human Rights to name but a few key institutions.

12. CSOs in Kosovo play a central role in monitoring the implementation of the human rights framework and in systematically reporting on shortcomings and institutional failures. Their jointly produced annual reports constitute a key accountability instrument that informs public debate and foregrounds the concerns of different groups and communities. Traditionally, the recommendations issued through this process are formally communicated to relevant central and local institutions, which provide a basis for institutional follow-up. Although annually, a significant number of recommendations remain unaddressed, institutional responses indicate partial progress that reflect the growing recognition of CSO monitoring as a legitimate mechanism of accountability.

³ Article 57 of the Constitution.

⁴ See for example, Articles 59, 60, 61 and 62 of the Constitution.

4. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

13. The reporting period in 2025 was marked by a prolonged political deadlock following the parliamentary elections, with delays in the constitution of the Assembly and the formation of new institutions affecting legislative continuity, political accountability, and decision-making across key sectors. This institutional paralysis occurred alongside increasing financial constraints affecting civil society organizations (CSOs), many of which continued to operate under reduced donor support and delayed funding cycles. This formed the backdrop for a weakened overall human rights environment with reduced capacities in the monitoring and response to human rights concerns in 2025.

14. In the field of civil and political rights, Kosovo continued to face structural shortcomings in the protection of the right to life, humane treatment, liberty, fair trial rights, freedom of expression, and institutional accountability. Gender-based violence and femicide remained urgent concerns, with several serious cases during the reporting period exposing continuing failures in the enforcement of protection measures and institutional coordination. The reporting period was also characterized by prolonged judicial proceedings and language barriers in access to justice as well as low institutional compliance, which continued to undermine fair trial guarantees and effective remedies.

15. With regard to economic, social, and cultural rights, the reporting period reflected limited progress alongside enduring inequalities previously reported upon. Access to quality healthcare, especially mental health services, remained insufficient in 2025 while socio-economic vulnerability continued to affect marginalized communities disproportionately. Labour rights enforcement remained weak with particular concerns relating to unsafe conditions and ineffective inspection mechanisms. Environmental degradation with severe air pollution as a particular concern continues to affect the rights to health and life.

16. The rights of particular persons continued to require urgent and targeted protection in 2025. Women, children, persons with disabilities, LGBTI+ persons, non-majority communities, older persons, and people on the move continued to encounter discrimination and barriers in accessing services. These included gender-based violence, exclusion from inclusive education and employment, linguistic and representational inequalities, accessibility barriers, and low trust in public institutions.

17. Cross-cutting issues in 2025 included transitional justice, corruption, climate-related harms, and non-discrimination. Progress in addressing wartime legacies remained limited with survivors and affected communities continuing to face delays in recognition, reparations, and effective remedies. Corruption allegations and low implementation of oversight recommendations continued to weaken confidence in public institutions. During the reporting period, financial pressures on CSOs further constrained independent monitoring and advocacy, despite their central role in documenting violations and advancing institutional accountability.

5. SECTION A: CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS

5.1 The right to life

18. The right to life, defined as an absolute right, enjoys the widest protection under international human rights law. It is recognized in Article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), Article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), and Article 2 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). In accordance with Article 6 of the ICCPR, the right to life is “the inherent right of every person to life” and guarantees that no one shall be “arbitrarily deprived of life.” Furthermore, the UNHRC underscores that no derogation is permitted even during armed conflict, public emergencies, or humanitarian crises. In 2025, the European Court of Human Rights clarified that States’ positive obligations under Article 2 of the ECHR extend to the protection of individuals from life-threatening environmental harm. In *Cannavacciuolo and Others v. Italy*, the Court found a violation of the right to life based on the authorities’ prolonged failure to prevent and address known risks arising from severe environmental pollution.⁵

19. Within Kosovo’s constitutional framework, the right to life is guaranteed under Articles 22 and 25 of the Constitution, with Article 25 explicitly prohibiting capital punishment, thereby aligning Kosovo with European human rights standards. The obligation of the State in this regard is not only negative, thereby prohibiting arbitrary deprivation of life. It is also positive as it requires the adoption of appropriate measures to safeguard the lives of all persons under its jurisdiction.

20. It remains valid in 2025 that duty bearers and responsible authorities have continued to demonstrate a largely reactive response to femicide in Kosovo.⁶ Indeed, authorities continue to prioritize reporting and prosecution. This assessment is reinforced in a study by the NGO Group for Legal and Political Studies (GLPS). The study identifies enduring systemic shortcomings, including the absence of femicide as a distinct criminal offence, the underuse of gender-motivated murder provisions, weak institutional coordination, lack of disaggregated data, absence of monitoring mechanisms such as femicide observatories, and limited application of protective measures such as electronic monitoring and victim compensation.⁷ The study further documents cases in which state failures to protect women have been formally recognised by the Ombudsperson Institution and the Constitutional Court, underscoring that the problem is not lack of knowledge but lack of implementation. Taken together, these findings confirm that, despite heightened visibility of femicide and public outrage, Kosovo’s response remains fragmented, legally insufficient, and institutionally inconsistent, requiring not only legislative reform but sustained implementation, robust data systems, targeted training of justice and security actors, and dedicated mechanisms to monitor and prevent femicide.

21. In the continued absence of a coherent and effective state response, civil society actors in 2025 have remained central to advocacy and coordination efforts aimed at preventing femicide and addressing its structural drivers. On 20 March 2025, the Barabar Forum titled Collaborative Strategies to End Femicide was held in Pristina, bringing together over 30 participants, including represen-

5 European Court of Human Rights (2025), [Case of Cannavacciuolo and Others v. Italy](#).

6 KWN (2025), [Zero Tolerance? Monitoring the Institutional Response to Gender-Based Violence in Kosovo](#).

7 GLPS (2024), [institutional treatment of domestic violence cases 2023-2024](#).

tatives of the Kosovo Police, the Ombudsperson Institution of the Republic of Kosovo (OIK), women's rights activists, and civil society representatives from K-Albanian, K-Serbian, K-Roma, K-Ashkali, K-Egyptian, and other communities. The Forum provided an interinstitutional and interethnic space to examine the pervasiveness of gender-based violence and femicide across communities in Kosovo and to formulate joint strategies and recommendations for prevention. The discussions reaffirmed that gender-based violence cuts across ethnic and social divisions and that sustained, collaborative approaches remain essential both for prevention and for the provision of meaningful and effective support to survivors.⁸

22. In 2025, the Court of Appeal upheld the life imprisonment sentence against Edmond Lajqi, confirming on 9 June 2025 that the first-instance judgment had correctly and comprehensively established the facts of the case and properly assessed both personal and material evidence, including the defendant's admission of guilt. As previously reported, Lajqi had been sentenced to life imprisonment by the Basic Court in Peja on 27 December 2024 after pleading guilty to the murder of his wife, Gjyljeta Ukella, committed on 16 April 2024 in Peja. The Court of Appeal found no mitigating circumstances that would exclude criminal responsibility and affirmed that the legal qualification of the offence and the imposed sentence were justified.⁹ According to the prosecution, the murder occurred following a history of psychological and physical violence exercised by the perpetrator against the victim, culminating in her being shot at close range with a firearm, causing immediate death. In addition to the conviction for aggravated murder, the defendant was also found guilty of unlawful possession of a weapon.¹⁰ The confirmation of the life sentence represents a rare instance of judicial finality in a femicide case. Furthermore, in February 2025, the Court of Appeals confirmed the life imprisonment sentence against Dardan Krivaqa for the murder of Marigona Osmani, who died as a result of extremely severe and brutal injuries. The appellate court upheld the first-instance judgment of the Basic Court in Ferizaj.¹¹ Yet, these judicial cases remain an exception rather than evidence of a systemic shift in the state's response to gender-based killings.¹²

23. Despite the judicial outcomes of Lajqi and Krivaqa reflecting instances of adequate sentencing in 2025, they have not translated into broader deterrent consequences. This is evidenced by another occurrence of attempted femicide in November 2025. A woman in Gadime e Ulët/Donje Gadimlje (Lipjan/Lipljan) was brutally attacked with an axe by her husband in an incident classified by the prosecution as attempted aggravated murder. The victim survived and was hospitalized, while the suspect was arrested after an intensive search. Crucially, the attack occurred despite the existence of an active protection order against the perpetrator, prompting public concern and sharp criticism from women's rights organizations regarding the failure to effectively enforce preventive measures. The case is illustrative of a persistent gap between formal legal frameworks and their implementation in practice, and reinforces that even where courts demonstrate severity after

8 CASA (2025), [Barabar Forum: Collaborative strategies to end femicide](#).

9 KWN (2025), [A glimmer of hope and justice for women murdered in Kosovo](#).

10 KWN (2025), [Reaction of the Kosovo's women's network to the recent killings in Kosovo due to illegal weapons](#).

11 KWN (2025), [A glimmer of hope and justice for women murdered in Kosovo](#).

12 BetimiperDrejtësi (2025), <https://betimiperdrejtësi.com/apeli-verteton-denimin-me-burgim-te-perjetshem-ndaj-te-akuzuarit-per-vrasjen-e-bashkeshortes-se-tij-ne-peje/>

a crime, systemic deficiencies in protection and enforcement continue to place women at extreme risk.¹³

24. As of 2025, no formal investigative or judicial follow-up was undertaken in relation to the death of a four-year-old girl in Gjakovë/Đakovica in February 2024. As reported in the CSO report of 2024, the case raised serious concerns regarding a potential failure in medical care and possible ethnic discrimination against a child from an ethnically marginalized community, prompting several CSOs including members of the HRN to call for a transparent and thorough investigation. The Institute of Forensic Medicine delivered a report in June 2024 stating that the child died resulting a blood infection¹⁴. This finding has been publicly contested by the family, who have stated that they do not believe the report reflects the actual circumstances leading to the child's death. Although the parents reported visible injuries when taking their child to the hospital, the report concluded that no bodily injuries were identified. The subsequent closure of the case despite the parents' contestation can reflect the authorities' diminished scrutiny and weakened accountability in cases involving a child from a marginalized community.

25. In 2025, suicide remains a serious concern with police data recording 13 suicides in the first nine months of the year, alongside a high volume of crisis calls and online interventions handled by the Lifeline Suicide Prevention Center. These figures may be partially the result of a lack of institutional response particularly in the absence of a dedicated legal framework for suicide prevention.¹⁵ Although in 2024, a petition launched by NGO QIPS and 15 other NGOs requesting the Assembly of Kosovo to draft a Law on Suicide Prevention was reported with proposed measures for suicide prevention, as of 2025, this has yet to lead to a specific law or national strategy addressing suicide prevention.

26. In mid-2025, life expectancy at birth in Kosovo was estimated at 78.4 years, indicating a modest but continued improvement compared to the previous year in 2024 when the corresponding figure stood at 78.20 years, meaning that life expectancy increased by 0.256 percent over the one-year period.¹⁶

27. In 2025, the NGO the Kosovo Law Institute (KLI) raised concerns that the death of a person at Lake Ujman on 27 July may constitute a breach of the institutional obligation to protect the right to life. KLI argues that state institutions failed to fulfill their legal obligations to regulate and designate bathing areas, while simultaneously promoting Lake Ujman as a recreational site despite its legal status as a protected drinking water source. They have identified the absence of clear prohibitions and safety measures alongside misleading public communication as a foreseeable risk to life which calls for an institutional investigation under Article 2 of the European Convention on Human Rights.¹⁷

28. In 2025, persistent air pollution in Kosovo raises concerns related to the state's obligation to protect the right to life. The death of a former coal mine worker from lung cancer in Obiliq/Obilić in 2025 after decades of exposure to toxic dust and emissions from nearby coal-fired power plants

13 Syri (2025), [Arrestohet i dyshuari për sulmin me sëpatë ndaj bashkëshortës në një fshat të Lipjanit](#).

14 Indeksonline (2024), [IML report: The death of the 4-year-old girl in Gjakova was natural, the family does not believe it](#)

15 QIPS (2025), [Mental health and social health care services in Kosovo](#).

16 Statbase (2025), [Life expectancy at birth in Kosovo](#).

17 KLI (2025), [Instituti i Kosoves per drejtesi kerkon llogaridhenie per vdekjen tragjike ne liqenin Ujman](#)

was directly linked by medical professionals to the man's long-term environmental pollution.¹⁸ Notwithstanding institutional statements to reduce emissions, the population remains exposed to preventable health risks as the result of severe air pollution in Kosovo.¹⁹

29. Recommendations

- The Assembly of Kosovo (AoK) should take immediate measures to draft a national strategy on suicide prevention;
- The Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Kosovo Police should ensure the effective enforcement of protection orders in domestic violence cases by introducing mandatory real-time monitoring and response mechanisms, including immediate police intervention in cases of breach;
- The Ministry of Environment, Spatial Planning and Infrastructure should enforce binding environmental and public safety regulations to prevent foreseeable risks to the right to life.

5.2 The prohibition of torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment

30. The prohibition of torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment is an absolute norm of international law. It is enshrined in Article 5 (UDHR), Article 7 (ICCPR), Article 3 (ECHR), and the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT). At the domestic level, Article 27 of the Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo explicitly prohibits torture and any form of cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment. The absolute and non-derogable nature of this prohibition has been affirmed by the Human Rights Committee (General Comment No. 20 (1992), ICCPR, Art. 7). The Committee against Torture has further clarified States' obligations regarding implementation (General Comment No. 2 (2008)), redress for victims (General Comment No. 3 (2012)), and the principle of non-refoulement (General Comment No. 4 (2017)). Preventive and procedural safeguards are reinforced through the Optional Protocol to the CAT (OPCAT), which mandates independent monitoring of places of detention via national preventive mechanisms, as well as through the Istanbul Protocol (2022) and the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules, 2015). The prohibition of torture constitutes a peremptory norm of international law (*jus cogens*), permitting no derogation under any circumstances and giving rise to *erga omnes* obligations binding on all States.

31. In line with Article 5 (UDHR) and Article 27 of the Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo, the prohibition of torture and inhuman or degrading treatment encompasses the protection of physical and mental integrity, conditions of detention, the use of force in custodial and non-custodial settings, and State responses to domestic and communal violence. Article 3 (ECHR) imposes an absolute obligation on States not only to refrain from ill-treatment, but also to take positive measures to prevent violations, protect individuals at risk, and ensure prompt, independent, and

¹⁸ Reuters (2025), [Balkan air pollution crisis threatens public health, EU membership goals](#).

¹⁹ Balkan Green Foundation (2025), [The poison of Prishtina that makes every breath a struggle](#).

effective investigations. Recent ECtHR case law (2025) has reaffirmed these positive obligations, which, under Kosovo's constitutional framework, require effective preventive, investigative, and accountability mechanisms.²⁰

32. Although the legal framework for the prevention of torture and ill-treatment is in place discontinuities persist in implementation. In particular, the year 2025 marks weaknesses in the effective investigation of complaints and the translation of safeguards into practice. In this respect, the National Preventive Mechanism, which operates under the OIK, conducted 60 unannounced visits to places of detention and issued recommendations that pointed to persistent deficiencies in detention conditions and serious concerns regarding the protection of persons with mental illness within justice and social care systems. In addition to individuals with mental health issues, they furthermore deemed necessary additional measures to safeguard the rights of vulnerable groups, including women and non-majority communities.²¹

33. In line with the recommendations stated above, 2025 marked a number of capacity-building efforts of correctional and healthcare staff to improve conditions in correctional facilities and strengthen safeguards against ill-treatment. Throughout the year, the Council of Europe supported multiple targeted interventions addressing prison healthcare,²² forensic psychiatry, and safeguards in closed institutions. These included the refinement and practical implementation of Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for prison healthcare and forensic psychiatric treatment,²³ with a specific emphasis on compliance with the Istanbul Protocol and the protection of persons deprived of liberty. The specific training activities different institutional mechanisms including members from the Kosovo Correctional Service (KCS), prison healthcare providers, the Institute of Forensic Psychiatry, prison inspectors, and the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture and focused on documenting and reporting ill-treatment, inter-institutional coordination, and the management of vulnerable groups such as persons with mental health conditions and violent extremist prisoners.²⁴ While these initiatives demonstrate growing institutional awareness and investment in professionalization, their very scope underscores ongoing concerns regarding detention conditions, accountability mechanisms, and the need for sustained preventive and investigative capacity to ensure that legal guarantees against ill-treatment are effectively realized in practice within Kosovo's correctional system.²⁵

34. In this respect the NGO Kosova Rehabilitation Center for Torture Victims (KRCT) notes that while in 2024 the Kosovo Correctional Service allocated 8 million EUR for capital investments, including (i) the construction of a new correctional facility for women in Lipjan/Lipljan, (ii) a new correctional facility in Prizren for pre-detention centers in the Prizren and Pejë/Peć regions, and (iii) the renovation of the Forensic Institute of Psychiatry, none of these projects had been initiated or completed as of 2025.²⁶

20 European Court of Human Rights, Council of Europe (2025), [Overview of the case-law 2025](#).

21 European Commission (2025), [Kosovo report 2025](#).

22 Council of Europe (2025), [Mental health care and correctional staff in Kosovo enhanced their knowledge and skills on procedur frame work in the treatment of persons deprived of liberty](#).

23 Council of Europe (2025), [Council of Europe supports the Ministry of Health of Kosovo to further strengthen the provision of health care in prisons](#).

24 Council of Europe (2025), [Prison practitioners in Kosovo* learn from their peers in working with violent extremist prisoners](#).

25 Council of Europe (2025), [Council of Europe assists Kosovo* authorities in strengthening institutional capacities on safeguards against ill-treatment in prisons and other closed institutions](#).

26 KRCT (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

35. Notably, from 2006 until June 2024, NGO KRCT had access to monitor correctional facilities in Kosovo. However, in June 2024, the Ministry of Justice (Correctional Service) proposed a new monitoring agreement, which NGO KRCT rejected, citing violations of its mission and mandate. The agreement introduced new restrictions, requiring NGO KRCT to notify authorities in advance before conducting monitoring visits, obtain prior approval from detainees, and navigate additional bureaucratic obstacles to access official prisoner records. Since March 2025, the KRCT has signed the agreement proposed by the Ministry of Justice despite the aforementioned restrictions, because the Ministry has not expressed a willingness to change this agreement. NGO KRCT warns that these restrictions severely undermine independent human rights monitoring, which has greatly influenced the reflection of the full state of the prison system in Kosovo. National Protection Mechanism against Torture now is the only mechanism that has the authority to conduct such oversight, while NGOs are excluded. As a result, since March 2025, NGO KRCT has been monitoring human rights conditions in Kosovo's correctional facilities even with all the restrictions mentioned. The MoU with the Ministry of Justice will expire in March 2026 and it remains uncertain whether the next government will make any changes regarding the restrictions from the current MoU.²⁷

36. NGO KRCT notes that prisoners' complaints primarily concern access to and the quality of healthcare services. Despite the challenges presented by the new MoU with the Ministry of Justice regarding the access of NGO KRCT to correctional institutions, the delay in the implementation of that agreement has also affected the presence of KRCT monitors in correctional institutions during 2025, which has also affected the coverage of the situation in correctional institutions in Kosovo. However, during 2025, the NGO KRCT has received 79 calls from prisoners who have expressed various complaints, where cases of delays reviewing requests for the use of various benefits and for medical treatment have dominated.²⁸

37. In 2025, KRCT recorded three complaints concerning the use of force in correctional institutions: one during a monitoring visit to the High Security Prison in Gërdovc/Gerdovce in September 2025, and two during a visit to Dubravë/Dubrava Correctional Centre. Despite the limited number of complaints, the absence of systematic and continuous monitoring mechanisms constrains a comprehensive assessment of the situation. More broadly, correctional institutions in Kosovo have demonstrated gradual improvements in aligning detention conditions with human rights standards in recent years, although oversight gaps remain evident.²⁹ NGO KRCT did not receive any prior notification from prison management regarding the use of force in these cases. Only after the monitoring team identified and reported the incident did the management respond, asserting that the force applied was lawful and proportionate under the applicable legal framework.³⁰

38. Despite the rising number of prisoners with drug addictions linked to their criminal offenses, NGO KRCT observes that they are held alongside the general prison population. The Kosovo Correctional Service lacks a dedicated strategy or specialized rehabilitation program to address their treatment needs.³¹

27 KRCT (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

28 KRCT (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

29 KRCT (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

30 KRCT (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

31 KRCT (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

39. Allegations have been raised by some prisoners that privileged individuals are being accommodated in Pavilion D at the Dubravë/Dubrava Correctional Centre, as per KRCT.³² Initially established as a facility for individuals with special needs, its operationalization was delayed and its capacity remained limited. By 2024, it had shifted to exclusively housing sentenced individuals for defined rehabilitation periods, with a focus on skill development and structured programming. KRCT highlights that this shift represents a departure from the pavilion's original purpose and reflects ongoing inconsistencies in correctional policy implementation.

40. In 2025, Kosovo's prison system continued to address extremism primarily through rehabilitation and deradicalization measures within its high-security facilities, notably Dubravë/Dubrava Prison and the High Security Prison in Gerdovc/Gerdovac.³³ The Correctional Service has implemented a range of programs targeting individuals convicted or suspected of terrorism-related offences. These include strict security containment with psychosocial interventions, but also targeted anger-management training, deradicalization curricula, and vocational education intended to reduce recidivism and support reintegration. As of the reporting period, 168 individuals had passed through Kosovo's prison system on terrorism-related charges with only 16 remaining in custody as of yet under enhanced security regimes, which shows a shift from large-scale detention to long-term reintegration management. Yet, in spite of participation in rehabilitation programs, authorities also acknowledge the persistent resistance among some inmates rooted in entrenched ideological beliefs.

41. In 2025, Kosovo and Denmark formalized their cooperation on the use of the correctional facility in Gjilan/Gnjlane through the signing of a Cooperation Agreement between the Kosovo Correctional Service and the Danish Prison and Probation Service.³⁴ This agreement operationalizes the bilateral treaty on the transfer of convicted foreign nationals sentenced to deportation in Denmark, which was ratified in 2024 and already documented in the previous year's CSO report. The agreement regulates the practical administration of the facility, including daily operations, and infrastructure in correspondence with Danish prison standards.³⁵ It establishes a co-governance model under which the prison will be jointly managed by a Danish-appointed governor and a Kosovar-appointed director, with approximately 220 correctional officers from Kosovo and additional Danish staff, and provides for extensive training of Kosovar personnel in accordance with Danish prison rules and practices. It is important to highlight that Kosovo bears responsibility for prison conditions, security, and investigations into deaths or alleged staff misconduct. This fragmented allocation of authority may risk undermining accountability and effective remedies, and may weaken safeguards against ill-treatment and violations of the right to life within Kosovo's correctional system. It is also notable that this agreement appears to be setting a precedent with other European countries also exploring comparable arrangements with Kosovo. More specifically, in 2025, Belgium's Justice Minister confirmed that Kosovo is being considered as a potential detention site in efforts to address prison overcrowding and facilitate deportation.³⁶

42. In the Kosovo Police, Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) regulate officers' conduct during investigations, interrogations, and the holding of arrested persons in police custody for up to 48

32 KRCT (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

33 Pristina Insight (2025), [Inside Kosovo's prisons: rehabilitation programs aim to support resocialization.](#)

34 Kosovo Correctional Service (2025), [Kosovo and Denmark sign the cooperation agreement.](#)

35 Telegrafi (2025), [Dibrani: Prisoners from Denmark expected to be settled in Gjilan in April 2027.](#)

36 Belga (2025), [Belgium considers Kosovo prison deal for overcrowded jails.](#)

hours, including safeguards against ill-treatment; these SOPs were revised and approved in 2019. Accountability for misconduct is governed by Administrative Instruction No. 04/2019 on Disciplinary Violations, under which minor violations are handled by the Professional Standards Unit and serious violations by the Police Inspectorate of Kosovo.

43. Despite the legislative framework outlined above, the 2025 reporting period reveals ongoing incidents of police brutality. The Police Inspectorate of Kosovo (PIK) has repeatedly recommended suspensions and initiated investigations in response to cases involving the excessive use of force, misconduct and deaths in custody. In particular, between April and August 2025, PIK arrested or recommended the suspension of multiple officers across municipalities including Kaçanik/Kaçanik, Suharekë/Suva Reka, Gjilan/Gnjilane, Pejë/Peć, and Klinë/Klina, citing abuse of authority, falsification of official reports, or the use of force against detainees.³⁷ In July 2025, three officers were suspended following the death of a suspect at a police station, an incident that drew public scrutiny and prompted an Ombudsperson investigation.³⁸

44. In 2025, information disclosed through an internal police report reviewed by NGO BIRN revealed serious and long-standing institutional failures within the Pejë/Peć police station that have direct implications for the prevention of ill-treatment and accountability for abuse.³⁹ The report shows that during a period of a decade, at least 197 criminal reports and 186 civil and disciplinary complaints were not forwarded to the prosecution or processed internally. The systematic withholding of case files, confirmed by the ongoing investigation of PIK points to structural failures which although do not document specific acts of torture, include prolonged failure to investigate allegations involving violence, misconduct and ill-treatment.⁴⁰ This raises serious concerns about the effectiveness of safeguards against torture and cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment.

45. On 23 May 2025 in North Mitrovica, a Kosovo Police officer grabbed a Kosovo Serb high-school graduate by the neck during a traditional graduation parade, followed by a brief scuffle with several officers. Police acknowledged the encounter and cited “provocations” by the student. However, police did not similarly respond to provocations made by an Albanian individual at a nearby café, instead singling out the Serbian youth.⁴¹ In addition to this instance, in 2025 another case of alleged mistreatment of an individual by police officers emerged upon arrest of the individual in Sočanica/Soqanicë.⁴²

46. As a result of persistent patterns of police ill-treatment and systemic weaknesses in accountability mechanisms, EULEX monitored and carried out a review of 25 criminal cases involving police officers. This review found that most instances of violence occurred outside police premises, though several also took place inside detention facilities, and included acts such as kicking, slapping, and beatings with batons, including against minors.⁴³ A significant proportion of the officers

37 Insajderi (2025), [IPK arrests one police officer and recommends the suspension of two others](#).

38 Balkan Insight (2025), [Kosovo Ombudsperson probes police brutality claims after man's death](#).

39 BIRN (2025) cited in Balkan Insight (2025), [Kosovo Police Station Failed to Process Hundreds of Reports of Offences](#).

40 ibid.

41 NSI (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo 2025.

42 EULEX (2025), [EULEX public post on X](#).

43 Koha (2025), [EULEX recommends cameras on police uniforms to prevent ill-treatment](#).

charged belonged to special police units, and investigative actions were frequently delayed, in some cases by weeks or months, undermining the effectiveness of evidence collection and judicial oversight. As a result of these findings, EULEX recommended that body-worn cameras be introduced as a preventive and accountability measure to reduce the risk of abuse and strengthen public trust in law enforcement.⁴⁴

47. Recommendations

- The Ministry of Health and the Kosovo Correctional Service should establish dedicated mental health services within the correctional facilities to ensure that prisoners with mental health disorders receive appropriate treatment separate from the general prison population;
- The Ministry of Justice and the Kosovo Correctional Service should restore independent monitoring access to correctional facilities by eliminating the restrictive conditions that undermine transparency and accountability in prison management;
- The Police Inspectorate of Kosovo should strengthen oversight mechanisms within the Kosovo Police by ensuring timely and transparent investigations into excessive use of force;
- The Kosovo Police should ensure non-discriminatory and professional conduct in interactions with non-majority communities.

5.3 The right to liberty and security of person

48. The right to liberty and security of the person is protected under international human rights law, most notably in Article 9 of the ICCPR and Article 5 of the ECHR, which prohibit arbitrary arrest and detention and require legality, judicial oversight, and effective remedies. As clarified by the UN Human Rights Committee, liberty and security constitute an inseparable guarantee, encompassing both protection from unlawful detention and safeguards against abuse of state power. At the domestic level, Article 29 of the Constitution of Kosovo restricts deprivation of liberty to exhaustively listed situations and subjects it to judicial control, with further regulation provided by the Criminal Procedure Code and the Code of Juvenile Justice. In 2025, the jurisprudence of the European Court of Human Rights reaffirmed the centrality of Article 5 safeguards, particularly the need for individualized assessment, prompt judicial review, and heightened protection for vulnerable persons, standards that remain directly applicable to Kosovo's constitutional and legislative framework.

49. In 2025, the implementation of electronic monitoring under Law No. 05/L-003 On the Electronic Supervision of Persons whose Movement is Limited by the Decision of the Court moved from a formal framework toward limited operational use. Building on the launch of the electronic monitoring system in late 2024, Kosovo Police reported that between January and September 2025, electronic bracelets were applied to 30 individuals, all male and all involved in cases of domestic violence, with the highest concentration in the Prishtinë/Priština region.⁴⁵ At the same time, EULEX supported institutional capacity-building through a two-day workshop in April 2025 for

⁴⁴ Koha (2025), [EULEX recommends cameras on police uniforms to prevent ill-treatment](#).

⁴⁵ Dukagjini (2025), [30 burra të përfshirë në dhunë në familje u monitoruan me hallka elektronike](#).

the Kosovo Correctional Service and Kosovo Probation Service, focusing on best practices in electronic monitoring.⁴⁶ However, serious concerns persist regarding transparency, consistency, and effectiveness. In a high-profile attempted femicide case in Lipjan, where the suspect reportedly had an active protection order, authorities did not clarify whether electronic monitoring had been imposed. This is a clear indication of a lack of information-sharing and risk assessment measures. Civil society organizations have consequently called for institutional accountability and a public evaluation of the system's impact, noting the absence of official reports assessing whether electronic monitoring has effectively strengthened the enforcement of protection orders or prevented repeat violence against women.

50. In 2025, the formal EU-facilitated dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia has largely been stalled with no factual progress. The EU continues to host discussions through its Special Representative, Peter Sørensen, and has convened meetings of chief negotiators in Brussels where issues like economic cooperation and missing persons were discussed. However, no breakthrough agreement has emerged in 2025.⁴⁷ While positions between Kosovo and Serbia remain unaltered, the situation in Kosovo has been exacerbated by the political impasse, which defined the political climate in 2025 due to Kosovo authorities failing to constitute the AoK, alongside the continued impact of EU restrictive measures imposed on Kosovo.⁴⁸

51. The security situation in the north of Kosovo has remained volatile since mid-2022. The year 2025 marks a continuation of the fragile climate surrounding North Mitrovicë/Mitrovica. In this regard, 2025 has been marked by persistent patterns of contestation over authority and territorial control in the Serb-majority municipalities of northern Kosovo. The following few paragraphs detail in depth the events that occurred in northern Kosovo.

52. In February 2025, Kosovo Police conducted a security operation in the village of Rodel, Leposaviq/ Leposavić municipality, near the Kosovo–Serbia border, during which an arsenal of weapons, ammunition, military equipment, and uniforms was discovered in an abandoned house. The seized items included firearms, cartridges, gas masks, military supplies, tactical gear, documentation, and dozens of uniforms bearing the insignia of “Civilna Zaštita,” a Serbian parallel structure declared illegal by Kosovo authorities. According to the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Kosovo Police, the discovery constitutes evidence that parallel and organized security structures remain active in northern Kosovo.⁴⁹

53. The entrenched presence of illicit weapons and paramilitary capacity within civilian spaces continues to define Kosovo's security landscape in the North of Mitrovicë/Mitrovica. In June 2025, Kosovo Police conducted a coordinated security operation in a village in the municipality of Zvečan/Zveçan, resulting in the seizure of a significant quantity of illegal weapons and military-grade equipment. The operation was carried out following intelligence indicating the presence of concealed armaments and involved Kosovo Police units in cooperation with KFOR and

46 Eulex (2025), [introducing electronic monitoring in Kosovo's correctional system](#).

47 European Western Balkans (2025), [Sørensen hosted a “long meeting” with negotiators of Serbia and Kosovo, next meeting in July](#).

48 Prishtina insight (2025), [EU envoy meets Kosovo leaders, urges progress on Ohrid deal implementation](#).

49 Gazeta Express (2025), [Kosovo police discover uniforms and ammunition in the north of the country](#).

EULEX.⁵⁰ Notably, the weapons were discovered hidden underground in plastic piping within a stable structure and included firearms, ammunition, hand grenades, and heavy weapon components. Serbian politician Aleksandar Arsenijević, although no evidentiary details were disclosed publicly.⁵¹ In September 2025, Kosovo Police uncovered a cache of illegal firearms, ammunition, and related equipment in the basement of a residential building near “Car Lazar” Square in North Mitrovica/Mitrovicë following a targeted intelligence and a rapid operational response. The confiscated items included automatic and long firearms, ammunition, magazines, restraints, and protective gear, prompting the State Prosecutor to initiate proceedings for unauthorized possession of weapons, although no arrests had been made at the time of reporting.⁵²

54. Furthermore, in Zvečan/Zvečan, in April 2025, a serious security incident was reported when two hand grenades were thrown at the Kosovo Post building shortly after midnight, causing material damage but no injuries. According to Kosovo Police, one grenade exploded while a second remained unexploded inside the building, prompting the evacuation of nearby residents and a controlled detonation by the specialized explosive ordnance disposal unit. The scene was secured by police, and the Anti-Terror Unit initiated intensive investigative actions to identify the perpetrators. The State Prosecutor was notified and instructed that the case be classified as “causing general danger,” reflecting the gravity of the incident and its implications for public security in Kosovo.⁵³

55. Also in April 2025, Kosovo’s security agencies conducted a joint operation over two days (5–6 April) resulting in the detention of 16 individuals travelling in four vehicles with Serbian license plates from Kragujevac. Among them were four active members of Serbia’s security services. Four suspects were apprehended in Gjakovë/Đakovica. Authorities reported having found maps of Kosovo, photographs related to the Banjska incident, and various weapons and equipment. This led to their 48-hour detention by order of the prosecutor. A further 12 individuals were detained in Prizren, where they were reportedly staying at the Orthodox Theological Seminary, including two active Serbian security officers alleged to have family or professional ties to persons implicated in violent incidents against Kosovo Police. Kosovo authorities stated that the use of a religious institution may indicate an attempt to conceal activities or provoke interethnic tensions, while emphasizing that investigations are ongoing and that the public will be informed of further developments.⁵⁴

56. In September 2025, the Prishtina Basic Court ordered 30 days of pre-trial detention for a Kosovo Police officer on suspicion of espionage and actions undermining the constitutional order of Kosovo. The suspect, Bojan Jevtić, an ethnic Serb police officer originating from Kamenicë/Kamenica, is alleged to have leaked confidential police documentation to Serbia’s state security service, the Security Intelligence Agency (BIA). According to the prosecution, the materials concerned sensitive information related to Kosovo’s security structures and constitutional order, although details were withheld due to the classified nature of the case. The investigation further links the alleged information transfer to a Kosovo Police operation conducted in September 2023, shortly after a deadly armed attack in northern Kosovo in which a Kosovo Police officer was killed. While

50 Koha (2025), [Weapons seized in Zvečan, Sveçla says it was seized at the Serbian politician’s facility.](#)

51 Koha (2025), [Weapons seized in Zvečan, Sveçla says it was seized at the Serbian politician’s facility.](#)

52 Koha (2025), [Illegal weapons, ammunition and equipment seized in North Mitrovica.](#)

53 Gazeta Express (2025), [Two hand grenades were thrown by unidentified individuals, residents were evacuated – Details from the explosion in Zvečan.](#)

54 IndeksOnline (2025), [Sveçla provides new details of Serbs arrested: 12 of them in Prizren.](#)

the defense requested house arrest and offered financial guarantees, the court deemed detention necessary. The case raises serious concerns regarding insider threats, institutional infiltration, and vulnerabilities within Kosovo's security sector, particularly in the context of post-Banjska security developments and ongoing regional tensions.⁵⁵

57. On 7 June 2025, Arbnor Spahiu, a former member of the Kosovo Police Special Unit, was arrested by Serbia at the Horgoš border crossing while returning from Austria and placed in pre-trial detention by the Higher Court in Subotica on Serbian suspicion of aggravated murder allegedly linked to the Banjska attack of 23 September 2023.⁵⁶ Kosovo authorities rejected the allegations, stressing that Spahiu had left the Kosovo Police in 2022 and had been residing legally in Germany. Following multiple extensions of detention and sustained diplomatic and legal engagement by Kosovo institutions, Spahiu was released after approximately five months in custody and returned to Kosovo on 21 November 2025.⁵⁷

58. Since 13 June 2025, Kosovo authorities have expelled five members of the Serbian Ministry of Internal Affairs residing in Kosovo, citing national security grounds, with measures including expulsion and, in some cases, revocation of citizenship under the Law on Citizenship, as confirmed by Acting Interior Minister Xhelal Sveçla. The EU spokesperson responded that such measures should be used only as a last resort and must follow due legal process, in line with the European Convention on Human Rights, particularly Article 8 requiring individual, evidence-based assessments. The EU stated it is closely monitoring the expulsions and has urged Kosovo authorities to ensure respect for fundamental rights and access to legal remedies, a position echoed by the German and Italian embassies and the OSCE.⁵⁸

59. A recent 2025 report by the NGO CASA finds that insecurity perceptions among K-Serbs in the north remain high and closely tied to deep mistrust of Kosovo Police and government. The report links this to the mass withdrawal of K-Serb police and judicial staff in late 2022 and the September 2023 Banjskë/Banjska attack, noting a resulting security vacuum filled by prolonged deployment of special police units, fortified bases, and rapid intervention forces. Survey data show that a majority of K-Serbs rate the security situation as unsatisfactory, report very low trust in police and oversight mechanisms, and identify the heavy presence of special units, restrictions on essential supplies, and organized crime as primary drivers of insecurity, while expressing relatively higher trust in KFOR. The withdrawal of Serb officers has created a persistent representational deficit in policing that recruitment efforts have not addressed.⁵⁹

60. The NGO New Social Initiative (NSI) notes that on 15 January 2025, during operations targeting Serbia-run institutions south of the Ibar/Ibër River, Kosovo Police temporarily detained the President of the Temporary Municipal Body of Lipljan/Lipjan (Milan Joksimović) and three employees,

55 Prishtina Insight (2025), [Kosovo Serb police office detained over spying allegations](#).

56 Balkan Insight (2025), [Kosovo demands release of ex-policeman detained by Serbia](#).

57 BetimiperDrejtësi (2025), <https://betimiperdrejtësi.com/ish-polici-arbnor-spahiu-lirohet-nga-burgu-ne-serbi/>

58 Reporterri (2025), [EU on expulsion of members of the Serbian police should have been the last resort](#).

59 CASA (2025), [Building trust enhancing security through Kosovo police engagement with Kosovo Serb community](#).

as well as the President of the Temporary Municipal Body of Vučitrn/Vushtrri Milan Kostić.⁶⁰

61. According to NSI, on the evening of 6 March 2025, six minors (aged around 14–16) were detained by Kosovo Police in the northern part of Mitrovica/Mitrovicë following reports of an inter-ethnic altercation involving groups of youths. The group taken into custody included four K-Serb boys, one Bosniak, and two Albanian boys. According to police and initial information, the youths were stopped on suspicion of participating in a fight between Serb and Albanian teenagers. However, after reviewing CCTV footage, officials concluded that three of the Serb boys had not been involved in the incident and were released almost immediately. One of the minors who remained in custody, a Bosniak boy, later claimed he was mistreated and physically assaulted while detained at the station. In his account, he described being approached by officers, handcuffed, pushed to the ground, slapped, punched, and kicked, including being hit in the head and ribs during questioning in a room he said was without cameras. He also stated that lights were turned off and blinds closed during part of this alleged mistreatment, and that he was asked to disclose the names of other youths he had been with. He said he was kept without access to his parents or a lawyer throughout this time. On 8 March 2025, the incident prompted a public protest in North Mitrovica/Mitrovicë, organized by the parents of the detained minors, including the family of the Bosniak boy.⁶¹

62. On 25 April 2025, NGO NSI noted that graffiti reading “UÇK” appeared on the wall of a house in Goraždevac/Gorazhdec in the Peć/Pejë municipality, a predominantly Kosovo Serb village.⁶²

63. On 7 May 2025, NGO NSI states that during a traditional village event in Rapča/Rapçë attended by thousands of people, Kosovo Police detained a 17-year-old minor after noticing that he was wearing a T-shirt displaying a map of Kosovo with the inscription “Dragaš, Kosovo and Metohija” in Cyrillic. The young man was taken for questioning, and after that released to continue his defense at liberty.

64. On 16 June 2025, the Mayor of Klokot municipality, Vladan Bogdanović, was temporarily detained at the Bela Zemlja/Dheu i Bardhë crossing point and questioned for approximately 2.5 hours, as per NSI.

65. On 28 June 2025, NGO NSI noted that in the context of the Vidovdan commemorations, Kosovo Police detained a number of Serbs in several separate interventions. First, in Gračanica/Graçanicë near the Monastery Kosovo Police detained V.P., identified as the organizer of a pilgrimage group from Belgrade that had arrived to participate in Vidovdan commemorations. The group was reportedly wearing red, blue, and white T-shirts with the inscription “United Serbia” when police approached and requested identification before detaining him in front of the monastery.⁶³

66. Similarly, NGO NSI notes that during Vidovdan commemorations in Gračanica/Graçanicë and at the Gazimestan memorial complex, Kosovo Police detained a number of Kosovo Serbs in several separate interventions. The detentions were carried out after officers found individuals in possession of or displaying Serbian national flags, sports-related insignia, and clothing or accessories

60 NSI (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

61 NSI (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

62 NSI (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

63 NSI (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

with historical or patriotic symbols. The individuals were taken to police stations for questioning, and police cited suspicions related to incitement of hatred or public disorder. Several detainees were later released after questioning, while proceedings were initiated against some of them.⁶⁴

67. Furthermore, on 28 June 2025, near the Gazimestan memorial site, Kosovo Police detained Stefan Veljković, vice-president of the Serbian Democracy party, ahead of the Vidovdan memorial service. The detention followed police identifying that Veljković was wearing a T-shirt bearing the image of the party's president, Aleksandar Arsenijević. At the time of the incident, Arsenijević was not present in Kosovo, as Kosovo authorities were reportedly seeking him in connection with weapons found at a facility registered in his name. Later the same day, Veljković and several other party members including Ivan Orlović, Aleksandar Acković, Zoran Obrenović, and Aleksandar Lazović were stopped again by police near a roundabout in Vučitrn/Vushtrri and taken to a police station. According to their statements, they were not informed of the grounds for detention, were not allowed to contact a lawyer or family members, and were questioned about their political views and activities, including being asked to unlock their mobile phones, which they refused without a court order. The group was reportedly held for approximately six hours. All detainees were released later that night without charges, fines, or written decisions, and were reportedly told by police that they were “free for now.” No official explanation regarding potential further proceedings was provided at the time.⁶⁵

68. On 1 September 2025, NGO NSI reported that Kosovo Police detained two K-Serb minors, aged 15 and 16, from Zubin Potok after conducting an inspection of a school bus operating on the North Mitrovica–Zubin Potok route. The boys were detained because of the inscriptions and motifs on the T-shirts they were wearing, which police described as offensive slogans and imagery, including “Chetniks North” and “You fight, the north will burn” with motifs associated with Red Star Belgrade fan culture. The minors were taken to the police station in North Mitrovica/Mitrovicë and questioned in the presence of a social worker, and subsequently issued fines for displaying what police termed “shameful or offensive content” before being released.

69. On 6 September 2025, NGO NSI reported that Kosovo Police detained Lazar Milosavljević, a K-Serb resident of Leposavić/Leposaviq, after he stepped outside his home to dispose of household garbage. According to media reports, police officers stopped and detained him because he was wearing a T-shirt displaying the image of Prince Lazar over a map of Kosovo and Metohija, which officers reportedly assessed as inappropriate or provocative content. Milosavljević was taken to the police station for questioning, where the incident was processed, after which he was released.⁶⁶

70. On 6 September 2025, NGO NSI states that graffiti bearing the inscriptions “UÇK” and “Adem Jashari” was reported near a local church in Batuse/Batushë village, Kosovo Polje/Fushë Kosovë municipality. The graffiti was written on a surface in the immediate vicinity of the church premises

64 NSI (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

65 NSI (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

66 NSI (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

and was noticed by local residents shortly thereafter. Furthermore, on 10 September 2025, graffiti bearing the inscription “UÇK” was reportedly written on the asphalt of a local road in Stanišor/Stanishor village, Novo Brdo/Novobërdë municipality.

71. On the night of 18 September 2025, NGO NSI notes that Kosovo Police reportedly entered the compound of KBC Kosovska Mitrovica, including the security booth serving both the hospital and the adjacent Health Centre in North Mitrovica/Mitrovicë. According to reports, police officers conducted a search of the facility during late-night hours, remaining inside the compound for a limited period of time. No official information was publicly released at the time regarding the grounds for the search, whether a warrant was presented, or whether any items or persons were sought or detained during the operation.⁶⁷

72. On 8 October 2025, Kosovo Police detained a 15-year-old boy in North Mitrovica/Mitrovicë after he was observed wearing a hoodie with the inscription “Žandarmerija” and a Serbian emblem. The Kosovo Police confirmed the minor was taken to a police station, fined 300 EUR for disturbing public order and peace, and released immediately afterward.⁶⁸

73. On 22 October 2025, graffiti bearing the inscription “UÇK” appeared on multiple electricity poles along the road in Dobrotin/Dobërton village near Lipljan/Lipjan, close to the Knez Lazar Elementary School. The graffiti were visible on the poles leading toward the neighbouring village of Slovinje/Silovi, and while many were later painted over by locals at the request of Kosovo Police, the inscription remained visible on at least two poles.⁶⁹

74. On 2 December 2025, graffiti reading “UÇK” was written on abandoned buildings along the Pristina–Raška main road in the area of Dudin Krš/Kërshi i Dudës, within the municipality of North Mitrovica. The graffiti appeared on structures adjacent to the roadway and were documented in the morning by local observers and media outlets.⁷⁰

75. Recommendations

- The Police Inspectorate should provide oversight and transparency regarding police operations, particularly in northern Kosovo, by ensuring the strict adherence of Kosovo Police to legal procedures that guarantee unhindered access to legal representation for all detainees;
- The Police Inspectorate should initiate prompt and transparent investigations into allegations of unlawful detention and ill-treatment by police officers, including cases involving minors and non-majority communities.

5.4 The right to a fair trial and effective remedy

76. The right to a fair trial and an effective remedy is firmly established in international human

⁶⁷ NSI (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

⁶⁸ NSI (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

⁶⁹ NSI (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

⁷⁰ NSI (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

rights law. It is first articulated in Article 10 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), which guarantees the right to a fair and public hearing, and reinforced by Article 8, which affirms the right to an effective remedy. These guarantees are legally codified in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), notably in Article 14 on fair trial rights and Article 2(3), which obliges States to provide effective and enforceable remedies. The scope of these obligations has been clarified by the Human Rights Committee in General Comment No. 32 (2007) and General Comment No. 31 (2004). At the regional level, Articles 6 and 13 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) enshrine corresponding rights, with the European Court of Human Rights underscoring the centrality of access to justice, including the necessity of legal aid in certain circumstances (*Airey v. Ireland*, 1979). Complementary guidance is provided by the UN Basic Principles on the Independence of the Judiciary, while parallel obligations are reaffirmed in sector-specific instruments such as the Convention against Torture and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

77. These international guarantees are directly incorporated into the domestic legal order and binding on all public authorities. The Constitution secures fair trial guarantees through Article 30 on the rights of the accused and Article 31 on the right to a fair and impartial trial, while Article 32 establishes the right to an effective legal remedy against judicial and administrative acts that infringe individual rights or interests. These constitutional protections are operationalized through a comprehensive legislative framework governing criminal, civil, and administrative proceedings, including the Criminal Procedure Code (No. 08/L-032), the Criminal Code (No. 06/L-074), the Law on Contested Procedure (No. 03/L-006), and the Law on Administrative Disputes (No. 08/L-182), which together regulate procedural fairness, access to justice, and the availability of remedies across legal domains.

78. Following the first Practical Guide on Admissibility Criteria for individual referrals developed by the Constitutional Court, together with NGO Kosovo Law Institute (KLI), in 2024 as a means for assisting applicants and legal practitioners in meeting procedural requirements under the Constitution and the Court's Rules of Procedure, the Court has continued to support access to justice by publishing regular jurisprudence bulletins and individual decisions. For the period 2025, summaries of case law have been made available for periods including January–March 2025 and beyond, reflecting its ongoing adjudication of constitutional rights and remedies.⁷¹ Although these measures may not contribute to the substantive component of fair trial or remedy rights, they improve procedural clarity and access to constitutional justice from a practical perspective.

79. The previous CSO report documented the 2024 amendment of Law No. 04/L-017 on Free Legal Aid, including the extension of free legal assistance to journalists and the institutional relocation of the Free Legal Aid Agency under the Ministry of Justice.⁷² In a 2025 report about the application of the European Court of Human Rights in Kosovo, the NGO KLI assesses the functioning of free legal aid in practice, finding that access to legal representation in Kosovo's courts is generally high

71 Constitutional Court, [Vendimet e publikuara gjate muajit Shkurt 2025](#).

72 HRN (2025), [Civil Society Report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2024](#).

and largely compliant with fair trial standards, particularly in criminal proceedings.⁷³ However, the report raises serious concerns regarding the agency's institutional independence, concluding that its subordination to the Ministry of Justice is incompatible with constitutional guarantees and ECtHR jurisprudence⁷⁴, and that the 2024 Draft Concept Document fails to adequately address risks of politicization or to safeguard the autonomy of free legal aid provision.⁷⁵

80. A NGO KLI report on civil justice in Kosovo in 2025 further illustrates that excessive length of proceedings remains one of the central obstacles to the effective enjoyment of fair trial rights in practice. Based on the analysis of 200 first-instance judgments, the report found that the average duration of civil cases before Basic Courts was approximately 875 days, with significant disparities between courts; the longest average duration was recorded in the Basic Court of Pristina, followed by Mitrovica. The report also found that proceedings before the Court of Appeals lasted on average 611 days, calculated from the issuance of the first-instance judgment to the appellate judgment. Taken together, the findings indicate that a civil case, from initiation until becoming final, lasts on average around 1,451 days. Such delays raise serious concerns regarding compliance with the constitutional and Convention standard of adjudication within a reasonable time and confirm that prolonged civil proceedings continue to undermine effective access to justice and legal certainty in Kosovo⁷⁶.

81. In its examination of the application of ECtHR jurisprudence in Kosovo, which has been mentioned above, the NGO KLI found that the average duration of civil proceedings, calculated from the filing of the lawsuit to the issuance of a first-instance judgment, amounts to 1,546 days. Such delays raise serious concerns regarding compliance with the right to a fair trial within a reasonable time.⁷⁷ In addition to this, the NGO KLI report found that in criminal proceedings, the average time between the initiation of proceedings through the filing of an indictment in criminal cases or a lawsuit in civil and administrative cases and the issuance of a first-instance judgment was 1,256 days, which is equivalent to almost three and a half years.

82. According to NGO KLI's 2025 report on civil justice, the judiciary made measurable progress in reducing the backlog of civil cases, but the overall caseload remains high and continues to affect the efficiency of proceedings. In 2025, courts at all three levels started the year with 139,858 pending civil cases and ended it with 129,641 unresolved cases, meaning that the judiciary resolved 10,219 more civil cases than it received during the year. However, the report concludes that this reduction is not sufficient to substantially address the existing backlog. While all Basic Courts performed positively by resolving more cases than they received, the Court of Appeals did not follow the same trend, resolving 8,384 fewer cases than it received and thereby increasing its backlog. The report also highlights that the Basic Court of Pristina remains the most burdened court, with significant caseload pressure also observed in Prizren and Gjakovë/Đakovica⁷⁸.

83. Regarding the realization of the right to a fair trial within a reasonable time, the MoJ previously published for public consultation the Draft Law on the Realization of the Right to a Trial within a

73 KLI (2025), [The application of ECtHR jurisprudence in Kosovo](#).

74 KLI (2021), "Politicization against the constitution of FLA".

75 KLI (2024), "Experiment on the Free Legal Aid".

76 KLI (2026), "Civil Justice in Kosovo 2025".

77 KLI (2025), [The application of ECtHR jurisprudence in Kosovo](#).

78 Ibid.

Reasonable Time. According to the NGO KLI, the draft law in its published form did not adequately address the structural problem of excessive judicial delays. NGO KLI criticized the draft for establishing fixed deadlines of three years for first-instance proceedings and two years for second-instance proceedings, arguing that such uniform benchmarks are inconsistent with the case-law of the ECtHR, which requires an individualized assessment based on the circumstances of each case.⁷⁹ KLI further assessed that the ECtHR criteria were treated as secondary rather than central standards, raising concerns regarding compatibility with Article 53 of the Constitution, which requires human rights to be interpreted consistently with ECtHR jurisprudence. During the reporting period, no clear information was publicly available regarding further advancement, revision, or adoption of the draft law following the consultation process. NGO KLI therefore maintained that effective reform in this area requires broader inter-institutional measures addressing systemic court delays and ensuring alignment with European human rights standards.⁸⁰

84. Despite the ongoing internal reforms within the judiciary during 2025, aimed at improving efficiency, transparency, and institutional capacity, these measures have not translated into effective protection of the right to a fair trial or access to effective remedies in practice. This implementation gap is reflected in the findings of the OIK, which, in its 2025 annual reporting, identified persistent structural shortcomings affecting access to justice. In 2025, the OIL received 1,669 complaints, involving 2,687 citizens, with the largest share relating to the right to legal remedies (203 complaints) and the right to a fair and impartial trial (122 complaints). Courts were among the most frequently implicated institutions, accounting for 353 complaints, alongside ministries and administrations (680 cases) and municipalities (254 cases). During the reporting year, the OIK opened 591 investigations, including 40 ex officio cases, and closed 689 cases. However, institutional responsiveness remained weak: of the 678 recommendations issued in 2025, only 18 percent were implemented. These figures indicate persistent barriers to effective remedies, limited compliance with oversight mechanisms, and ongoing deficiencies in the practical enforcement of fair-trial guarantees.⁸¹ Notably, the number of complaints show an increase to the previous reporting period (with a total of 1,349 complaints).⁸²

85. In line with ECtHR standards, linguistic rights form an integral part of the right to a fair trial, particularly in ensuring that parties can effectively participate in proceedings. The NGO KLI 2025 monitoring finds that, in general, courts in Kosovo have respected the linguistic rights of parties during proceedings. However, the report identifies structural shortcomings that affect the practical effectiveness of these rights, particularly in terms of access to translated legal materials and consistency in their provision. While interpretation during hearings is largely ensured, gaps in the translation of documents and broader legal resources may still limit the full and effective exercise of linguistic rights, as required under ECtHR jurisprudence⁸³.

86. In 2025, NGO BIRN-affiliated outlet KALLXO.com reported on a case that raised serious concerns regarding judicial impartiality and the effective protection of the right to a fair trial and

79 KLI (2024), [The trial within a reasonable time. Constitutional issues with the current draft law.](#)

80 KLI (2025), [The application of ECtHR jurisprudence in Kosovo.](#)

81 OIK (2025), [The Ombudsperson presented one year of work to the media.](#)

82 HRN (2025), [Civil Society Report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2024.](#)

83 KLI (2025), [The application of ECtHR jurisprudence in Kosovo.](#)

effective remedy. In September 2025, KALLXO.com published an audio recording involving Judge Naime Krasniqi-Jashanica and Prosecutor Edina Jupolli, in which the two were heard discussing an ongoing domestic violence case with the accused, using language perceived as sympathetic toward the defendant and dismissive of the victim's credibility.⁸⁴ The recording called into question the principles of judicial independence, prosecutorial impartiality, and equality of arms, particularly in the context of domestic violence proceedings where victims require heightened procedural protection. The incident illustrates how perceived bias and informal communication by judicial actors can undermine confidence in the fairness of proceedings and obstruct access to effective remedies.⁸⁵

87. In addition to the case mentioned above, the NGO BIRN took charge of a continued systematic monitoring of court proceedings in complex and high-profile cases, contributing to transparency and public scrutiny as supporting safeguards for the right to a fair trial and effective remedy.⁸⁶ Through detailed reporting on war crimes trials, homicide cases, and other proceedings of heightened public interest, including the trial of Sllagjan Trajković and hearings related to the Reçak massacre, NGO BIRN and its investigative platform KALLXO.com documented courtroom dynamics, evidentiary practices, procedural developments, and judicial reasoning.⁸⁷ While such reporting does not constitute a legal remedy in itself, it plays an important role in exposing how fair-trial guarantees operate in practice, particularly in sensitive cases involving serious crimes and historical accountability.

88. In 2025, the NGO KLI published a monitoring report on court proceedings in the Special Department of the Basic Court in Pristina and the Basic Court in Pristina, Gračanica/Graçanicë Branch, based on the observation of 226 hearings over a seven-month period, predominantly involving cases affecting the K-Serb community. The report identifies language-related deficiencies as a recurring structural obstacle to procedural efficiency and equal access to justice. In the Special Department, 16 of 97 monitored hearings (16.5 percent) were postponed, primarily due to the absence or delayed translation of case-file documents, despite the consistent presence of interpreters during hearings and the introduction of simultaneous interpretation in early 2025. Similar challenges were observed in the Gračanica/Graçanicë Branch, where 18 of 129 hearings (approximately 14 percent) were postponed, including civil cases delayed due to the absence of interpreters and untranslated documentation. Beyond procedural delays, NGO KLI highlights a persistent lack of translations of key legal materials into Serbian, including judgments and legal commentaries, which it characterises as a systemic barrier to the effective exercise of fair-trial rights and legal remedies. The report recommends targeted interventions, including increased funding, strengthened translation capacity, quality-control mechanisms, improved administrative coordination, and the systematic translation and publication of judicial decisions in Serbian.⁸⁸

89. In June 2025, the NGO ACDC presented research on the inclusion of non-majority communities in Kosovo's free legal professions, highlighting severe underrepresentation of the K-Serb community. The findings show that only 1 of 137 active notaries, 34 of 1,456 licensed lawyers

84 Kallxo (2025), [Raportimi i Kallxo.com për skandalin e gjyqtarës dhe prokurorës, Haxhiu: I bëj thirrje autoriteteve që të ndërmarrin masa urgjente.](#)

85 BIRN (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

86 ibid.

87 ibid.

88 KLI (2025), [Efikasiteti gjyqësor në praktikë dhe të drejtat gjuhësore në sistemin gjyqësor.](#)

(2.33 percent), and none of the enforcement officers are from the K-Serb community, including in Serb-majority municipalities in northern Kosovo. The report identifies structural and administrative barriers to access, including opaque selection procedures, lack of reasoning in appointment decisions, insufficient language support, and the absence of affirmative measures despite qualified candidates. It concludes that the persistent exclusion of non-majority communities from public legal professions undermines equality before the law, effective access to justice, and trust in legal institutions.⁸⁹

90. In 2025, funding for the Agency for Free Legal Aid increased by 26,000 EUR or approximately 5 percent.⁹⁰ This marginal rise reflects a continuity vis-à-vis the previous years rather than substantive reform. From a structural perspective, this also means that factual access to legal representation remains underfunded, thereby affecting particularly economically vulnerable individuals.

YEAR	2025 ⁹¹	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020
GOVERNMENT BUDGET IN EUR	563,418	537,831	444,170	443,995	439,298	422,699

Figure 1. Government budget for legal aid in Kosovo between 2020 and 2025

89 ACDC (2025), [Conference Held on the Inclusion of Non-Majority Communities in the Free Legal Professions in Kosovo](#).

90 GAP (2025), [Draft Budget 2025, Analysis of budget revenues and expenses](#)

91 GAP (2025), [Draft Budget 2025, Analysis of budget revenues and expenses \(see table page 13 for a comparison between 2024 and 2025\)](#).

91. In 2025, NGO KOMF and UNICEF published a report about the shortcomings of the practical implementation of diversion measures in the Juvenile Justice system of Kosovo despite its progressive legislation.⁹² The report notes that while the Juvenile Justice Code prioritizes diversion as the primary response for children in conflict with the law, a significant number of cases continue to be processed through formal court proceedings with up to half remaining unresolved within the same year. In addition to this, the findings demonstrate inconsistent prosecutorial practices across Basic Prosecution Offices, gaps in inter-institutional coordination, and instances of procedural misapplication. The report also highlights limited access to rehabilitative services which restrict the availability of non-judicial remedies and thus the right of juveniles to effective remedy in practice.⁹³

92. Closely related to the report described above, in April 2025, a working group operating under the Kosovo Police with support from NGO KOMF finalized the Standard Operating Procedure and accompanying form for the application of the diversion measure known as the “Police Warning.” Under the Juvenile Justice Code, this measure may be imposed on juveniles in conflict with the law who are first-time offenders for criminal offences punishable by a fine or imprisonment of up to three years. The Police Warning is issued by a police officer with the authorization of a state prosecutor for juveniles. The adoption of this procedure marks a concrete step toward strengthening diversionary practices in 2025, with the stated aim of avoiding formal court proceedings, supporting rehabilitation and reintegration of juveniles into the community, and reducing recidivism.⁹⁴

93. Eulex has identified the excessive and routine use of pretrial detention as a systemic concern in war crime related cases where the Basic Court of Pristina frequently justifies detention solely on the basis of a suspect’s dual citizenship and presumed flight risk.⁹⁵

94. Recommendations

- The Ministry of Justice should ensure the institutional independence of the Free Legal Aid Agency by removing its subordination to the Ministry and establishing legal and operational safeguards that prevent political interference in the provision of legal aid;
- The Ministry of Justice should revise the Draft Law on the Right to a Trial within a Reasonable Time to ensure full alignment with ECtHR standards, avoiding fixed uniform deadlines and instead applying individualized assessment criteria based on case-specific circumstances.
- The Assembly, Government, and public officials should refrain from commenting on ongoing cases, court decisions, and the work of individual judges and prosecutors, in order to safeguard judicial independence and public trust in the justice system.

92 UNICEF (2025), [Implementation of diversion measures within the Juvenile Justice System](#).

93 UNICEF (2025), [Implementation of diversion measures within the Juvenile Justice System](#).

94 KOMF (2025), [KOMF mbështet hartimin e procedurës standarde të veprimit për “vërejtjen policore.”](#)

95 EULEX (2025), Justice monitoring report.

5.5 The freedom of expression and opinion, the right to information, and the right to privacy

95. Freedom of opinion and expression is a core human right recognized in Article 19 of the UDHR, encompassing the right to hold opinions and to seek, receive, and impart information through any media. This protection is given binding legal form in Article 19 of the ICCPR, which safeguards both the absolute right to hold opinions without interference and the qualified freedom of expression. As clarified by the Human Rights Committee in General Comment No. 34 (2011), any restriction on expression must meet strict tests of legality, necessity, and proportionality and is permissible only to protect the rights or reputations of others, or interests such as national security, public order, public health, or morals. Comparable guarantees are set out in Article 10 of the ECHR, under which limitations are allowed solely when prescribed by law and demonstrably necessary in a democratic society. The ECtHR's jurisprudence, notably *Handyside v. United Kingdom* (1976), has consistently affirmed that freedom of expression extends to ideas and information that offend, shock, or disturb.

96. In Kosovo's legislative framework, these international legal standards are mandatory; they are safeguarded in Article 40 of the Constitution and a number of other laws. These include Law No. 04/L-046 on the Radio and Television of Kosovo, Law No. 04/L-44 on the Independent Media Commission, Law No. 06/L-085 on the Protection of Whistleblowers, Law No. 04/L-137 on the Protection of Journalism Sources, Law No. 03/L-118 on Public Gatherings, Law No. 02/L-37 on the Use of Languages, Law No. 02/L-65 Civil Law Against Defamation and Insult, and Law No. 02/L-31 on Freedom of Religion in Kosovo, among others. In general, Kosovo's freedom of expression legislation and media laws are in line with standards of the Council of Europe and the ECtHR case law.

97. An important constitutional development concerning freedom of expression and media independence in Kosovo occurred in 2025 to curtail legislative overreach in the regulation of the media sector. On 30 April 2025, the Constitutional Court of Kosovo annulled the Law on the Independent Media Commission (IMC), finding that several of its provisions violated constitutional guarantees of media freedom and regulatory independence. The Court held that the procedures for proposing IMC members, the criteria for dismissing the chairperson and members, and the regulation of sanctions exposed the Commission to undue political influence. It further reaffirmed the mandatory requirement that at least five of the eleven IMC members be women, treating gender representation as a binding legal standard rather than a policy preference. The ruling followed sustained opposition over a three-year period by media professionals and civil society actors, led by media lawyer Flutura Kusari, the Association of Journalists of Kosovo, and national and international organizations, who consistently warned that the law would undermine media pluralism and regulatory autonomy.⁹⁶ Subsequent judicial developments further underscored institutional instability regarding the IMC. A Supreme Court decision of June 17, 2025 annulling the IMC Board's election of its Chair reinforced concerns regarding procedural irregularities and governance defi

⁹⁶ European Centre for Press and Media Freedom ECPMF's Post (24 April 2025), Kosovo: we welcome the Constitutional Court's ruling on the media law

cits within the Commission.⁹⁷ In 2025, the NGO KLI successfully challenged the actions of the IMC concerning amendments to its Rules of Procedure and the subsequent election of its Chairperson. The IMC had adopted and applied regulatory changes on the same day, enabling the premature replacement of the incumbent Chair. The Basic Court found that this process violated fundamental procedural safeguards, including transparency and public consultation requirements, and declared the decision on the election unlawful.⁹⁸ Subsequently, the Supreme Court of Kosovo upheld NGO KLI's claim and annulled the amendments to the Rules of Procedure, confirming that the IMC had acted outside the limits of the law.⁹⁹

98. A marked regression in freedom of expression in Kosovo was documented in 2025 through international monitoring mechanisms.¹⁰⁰ According to the 2025 World Press Freedom Index published by Reporters Without Borders (RSF), Kosovo recorded the steepest decline in the Balkans, falling 24 places from 75th in 2024 to 99th out of 180 countries in 2025, its lowest ranking in over a decade.¹⁰¹ Reporters Without Borders (RSF) attributed this drop to politicized media regulation, the use of strategic lawsuits against public participation (SLAPPs), restricted access to public information, and persistent safety risks for journalists, noting that although Kosovo's media landscape remains diverse, its development is constrained by a small, segmented market. Particular concern was raised regarding sustained political pressure and hostile rhetoric directed at journalists. These findings were echoed locally by the Association of Journalists in Kosovo, which described the ranking as alarming and linked it to a prolonged hostile policy environment towards the media.¹⁰² In this respect, the NGO FOL shows that forms of threat towards journalists have been more dispersed and more difficult to address particularly in the digital space.¹⁰³

99. Rather than engaging with the factual contents of the RSF report, the political debate that followed its publication in 2025 turned into an issue of responsibility with the Acting Prime Minister attributing the decline to the media sector rather than public authorities.¹⁰⁴

100. Against this backdrop, the Association of Journalists (AJK) of Kosovo has expressed repeated serious concern in 2025 regarding what it characterizes as a sustained campaign by the largest parliamentary party, Vetëvendosje, directed against the national private broadcaster Klan Kosova. According to AJK, public statements by senior party officials, including a call by the party's Secretary General urging party members to boycott the broadcaster have contributed to an environment of hostility toward the outlet.¹⁰⁵ In this context, AJK has called on Vetëvendosje to cease practices that undermine media freedom and freedom of expression and to refrain from rhetoric that may endanger the safety of journalists.¹⁰⁶

97 Safe Journalists 2025, [AJK welcomes the constitutional courts annulment of the IMC Law.](#)

98 Betimi per Drejtesi (2025), <https://betimiperdrejtesi.com/ikd-fiton-rastin-ndaj-kpm-se-gjykata-themelore-shpall-te-paligjshem-vendi-min-per-zgjedhjen-e-kryetarit-te-kpm-se/>

99 Betimi per Drejtesi (2025), <https://betimiperdrejtesi.com/supremja-aprovon-kerkesepadine-e-ikd-se-shfuqizohet-ndryshimi-i-rregullores-se-punes-se-kpm-se/>

100 AJK (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

101 Balkan Insight (2025), [RSF report: Media freedom tumbling in most Balkan countries.](#)

102 AJK (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

103 Fol (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

104 Koha (2025), [Kurti: Problemi janë pronarët e mediave dhe mungesa e profesionalizmit.](#)

105 AJK (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

106 AJK (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

101. In the same period, Klan Kosova initiated legal proceedings against acting Prime Minister Albin Kurti, filing a defamation lawsuit on 16 May 2025 before the Basic Court in Pristina. The broadcaster alleges that repeated public references by Kurti during the February 2025 electoral campaign characterized the outlet as “Klan Serbia” and suggested affiliations with Serbian interests. This constituted defamatory and reputationally damaging statements amplified through public rallies and corresponding media dissemination. The case is grounded in the Civil Law No. 02/L-65 Against Defamation and Insult,¹⁰⁷ seeks judicial recognition of the statements as unlawful, a public retraction and apology, and compensation for material and non-material damages. The lawsuit represents a further institutionalization of tensions between political leadership and the broadcaster within an already polarized media environment.

102. Further concerning is how the political deadlock of Kosovo affected the public broadcaster Radio Television of Kosovo (RTK) in 2025. Resulting the prolonged parliamentary deadlock, the second instalment of the annual state allocation for RTK was not disbursed in July 2025 as foreseen in the budget. This is attributed to RTK falling within parliamentary oversight; as such, the funds had to first go through the procedural approval of the Assembly’s Budget Committee to then be subjected to the Ministry of Finance’s allocation. However, since the Assembly failed to be constituted, much of the budget foreseen for RTK remained inaccessible thereby putting at risk the salaries of more than 700 employees.¹⁰⁸ Resultantly, employees of RTK initiated protest actions both in August 2025,¹⁰⁹ and in November 2025.¹¹⁰ By late November, the European Center for Press and Media Freedom (ECPMF), the European Federation of Journalists (EFJ) and the International Press Institute (IPI) called on the Acting Prime Minister to urgently approve and transfer RTK’s budget to ensure payments of overdue salaries.¹¹¹ This international reaction resonated with domestic calls for action.¹¹² By the end of November, however, the Acting GoK temporarily managed to resolve the issue by allocating funds through the state budget savings.¹¹³

103. Further regarding the public Broadcaster RTK, the Association of Journalists of Kosovo (AJK) raised concerns over the removal of six RTK journalists from their on-screen roles without prior notice, characterizing the decision as arbitrary and indicative of censorship. It assessed the measure as a response to the journalists’ editorial independence and internal criticism, while reiterating concerns about political influence over RTK management.¹¹⁴ AJK called for the decision to be revoked and expressed support for the journalists in pursuing further action.¹¹⁵

104. In alignment with the 2025 RSF report, a Human Rights Watch publication of the same year documented weak protection for journalists who undergo persistent harassment, attacks and forms of political interference. By using data from the AJK, the report indicates 54 incidents against

107 Assembly of Kosovo (2025), [Civil Law no. 02/L-65 against defamation and insult](#).

108 Prishtina Insight (2025), [Kosovo’s parliamentary deadlock leaves broadcaster short of funds](#).

109 Balkan Insight (2025), [Give Kosovo’s public broadcaster its funds, workers demand](#).

110 Balkan Insight (2025), [Kosovo Public Broadcaster’s Staff Protest Over Unpaid Wages](#).

111 Safe Journalists (2025), [Kosovo: EFJ and partners urge government to release RTK budget and protect media freedom](#).

112 AJK (2026) and GLPS (2026), respective inputs for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

113 Betimi për Drejtësi (2025), [Sindikata e Punëtorëve të RTK-së mirëpret vendimin për pagat: Greva mund të rikthehet nëse në janar hasim në situata të tilla](#).

114 AJK (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

115 AJK (2025), [AJK strongly condemns arbitrary removal of six RTK journalists from the screen](#).

journalists during the reporting period including one physical attack, one death threat and 15 cases involving harassment, hate speech and defamatory campaigns originating from political actors.¹¹⁶ Notably, this also included the circulation of AI-manipulated media that misleadingly represented journalists as insulting political actors, conversely resulting in hostile online commentary contributing to potential risks for journalists.¹¹⁷

105. In October 2025, the NGO KLI publicly reacted to statements made by Faton Peci, Member of the Assembly, acting Minister, and then still candidate for Mayor of South Mitrovica, who, following election-day reporting, publicly named journalists and media representatives and accused them of committing criminal offences in connection with their coverage.¹¹⁸ NGO KLI assessed that publicly formulating criminal accusations against journalists on the basis of their reporting constitutes undue pressure and risks producing a chilling effect on critical and independent media.

106. In further line with the protection of journalists in Kosovo, a recent report by the NGO Network of Women Journalists of Kosovo, published in 2025, shows that despite their preponderance in the media sector, women journalists continue to face heightened safety risks in environments already characterized by structural inequality towards women.¹¹⁹ The absence of tailored safety policies compound their exposure to risk, according to the report.¹²⁰

107. The NGO FOL has stated that journalists and media workers during this period have faced physical attacks and direct threats; political pressure and interference in editorial work; strategic lawsuits (SLAPPs) aimed at intimidation and obstruction of reporting; attacks and smear campaigns on social media; as well as threats affecting the private and family lives of journalists. In the first eight months of 2025 alone (January – August), 29 new incidents involving journalists were recorded (including cases of serious threats), a clear indicator of the continued pressure on the media.¹²¹ Both AJK and FOL have separately highlighted the insufficiency of institutional response in these cases.

108. With regards to K-Serb journalists, in June 2025 in Goraždevac/Gorazhdec (Peć/Pejë municipality), the case with journalist Damjan Portić from Radio Goraždevac raised concerns. The journalist went to document the removal of graffiti from a wall near the local church. During the event, which was attended by workers hired by the municipality and Kosovo Police officers, Portić was confronted by two uniformed and two plainclothes police officers who identified him and then verbally harassed him, repeatedly ordering him to “get out of here” and to leave the scene despite the fact that the work was taking place on a public surface. According to his account, one police officer also attempted to prevent him from photographing or filming the removal, citing a law, although he was not given a clear explanation why he could not record the activity. Portić reported that he had identified himself as a journalist but was still told to move away and was impeded in covering the event.¹²²

116 Koha (2025), [Human Rights Watch: Kosovo has weak protection for journalists](#).

117 Safe Journalists (2025), [Other threats to Journalists: Lirim Mehmetaj](#).

118 KLI (2025), [Akuzat drejtuar gazetarëve lidhur me raportimet zgjedhore janë presion ndaj mediave, QNJ-IKD e gatshme të ofrojë mbrojtje ligjore për gazetarët](#).

119 AJK (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

120 Network of Women Journalists of Kosovo (2025), [Position and Safety of Women Journalists in Kosovo](#).

121 FOL (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

122 NSI (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

109. Monitoring by the NGO AKTIV and Democracy in Action (DiA) during the electoral processes throughout 2025 showed persistent shortcomings in institutional transparency, inclusiveness, and equal access to information for non-majority communities. The findings indicate a continued absence of targeted voter education and outreach campaigns for these communities, alongside recurring language-related deficiencies in the availability, accuracy, and timeliness of election information in Serbian. Significant accessibility gaps were identified on the Central Election Commission (CEC) website, including non-functional sections on the Serbian-language homepage shortly before the elections, raising concerns regarding equal access to essential information. Despite a budget of 11 million EUR, the CEC had not implemented EU Election Observation Mission Recommendation No. 5 on accessible and inclusive voter information ahead of local elections, reflecting limited institutional responsiveness to prior recommendations. Additional concerns arose from the CEC's initial refusal to accredit journalists from Serbian-language media outlets, a decision later reversed but which nonetheless raised questions regarding transparency and media oversight. These recurring deficiencies risk undermining public trust, discouraging political participation among non-majority communities, and weakening the perceived legitimacy and inclusiveness of democratic institutions.¹²³

110. In addition to concerns about the safety of journalists, misinformation, disinformation and continued interethnic fissures continue to characterize the digital landscape of Kosovo in 2025.¹²⁴ In this respect, the president of the Association of Journalists of Kosovo (AJK) drew media attention to Serbian-speaking media broadcasting from Belgrade often disseminating misinformation and xenophobic language against Kosovo.¹²⁵ Similarly, Serbian media journalists are often the target of defamatory language in the digital media of Kosovo.¹²⁶ An OSCE endeavor to counteract continued issues across ethnic lines, and other pertinent areas in the media landscape resulted in a report titled *Beyond Fake News: Advancing media and information literacy for an informed society*. Notably, the report includes six policy briefs aimed at providing a picture of the specific challenges characteristic of media literacy in Kosovo, and addressing the challenges.¹²⁷ The policy briefs also address (4) the impact of misogyny and stereotyping, (5) the necessity of student media literacy to safeguard against online risks and commercial manipulation, and the (6) the importance for understanding the use and limitation of AI tools for fact-checking and countering disinformation.¹²⁸

111. The right to privacy is firmly anchored in international human rights law, notably in Article 12 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), which prohibits arbitrary interference with an individual's privacy, family, home, or correspondence, and in Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), which guarantees the right to respect for private and family life. At the constitutional level in Kosovo this right is safeguarded through Article 36 which makes emphatic reference to privacy and family life, including the protection of personal data (Article 36.4)

123 AKTIV (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

124 OSCE (2025), [Beyond fake news: Advancing media literacy for an informed society](#).

125 The Fix (2025), [Press Freedom groups urge Kosovo government to take measures to protect journalists](#).

126 Balkan Insight (2025), [easy targets: Digital abuse of Serb journalists in Kosovo](#).

127 OSCE (2025), [Beyond fake news: Advancing media literacy for an informed society](#).

128 *ibid.*

and the secrecy of correspondence (Article 36.3). In the legislative framework, these constitutional guarantees are operationalized primarily through two laws: This includes the Law No. 06/L-082 on the Protection of Personal Data and the Law No. 06/L-081 on Access to Public Documents. The Information and Privacy Agency (IPA) of Kosovo is the independent supervisory authority responsible for overseeing compliance of public institutions with these laws.

112. In June 2025, the IPA, with the support of the Council of Europe finalized the Draft Law on Personal Data Protection by Law Enforcement Institutions.¹²⁹ This legislative process aimed at aligning Kosovo's legal framework with the EU Law Enforcement Directive (Directive (EU) 2016/680). The draft law establishes a domestic regulatory foundation for the processing of personal data by law-enforcement authorities by drawing on international standards including the Convention on Cybercrime (Budapest Convention).¹³⁰ Its finalization lays the groundwork for strengthened institutional safeguards and more effective cross-border cooperation in combating cybercrime and handling electronic evidence, subject to harmonization with domestic legislation and formal adoption.¹³¹

113. Despite the legislative foundations, however, the year 2025 marked shortcomings in compliance to the law by various public institutions. More particularly, the IPA imposed fees totaling 110,000 EUR (between 2024, and 2025), for the unlawful publication of personal data online. The cases ranged from the disclosure of citizens' personal identification numbers to telephone numbers, residential addresses and medical diagnoses.¹³²

114. Another fee by the IPA was imposed on the Kosovo Prosecutorial Council (KPC) in January 2025 because the KPC failed to provide access to public documents requested by the NGO Kosovo Law Institute (KLI). The request from the NGO KLI dated from October 2024 and concerned a request to access statistical data about the number of indictments filed by the prosecutors of the Special Prosecution Office of Kosovo (SPRK) during the period 2021 to 2024 with their respective case outcomes and appeals. Following the KPC's failure to respond, the KLI filed a complaint with the IPA in November 2024. This resulted in a warning and a seven-day deadline for the SPRK to comply with a subsequent notification on January 8 2025 of administrative sanction. The SPRK requested an additional month to extract data, but since the IPA determined this request was without a legal basis, it ordered the KPK to pay a 3,000 EUR fine within 30 days through Decision No. Gj-1001/2024 under Article 33 (3) of Law No. 06/L-081 on Access to Public Documents.¹³³

115. In continuation of the issue of data privacy, a 2025 NGO BIRN policy paper shows that data-protection in the sphere of telecommunications in the Western Balkans in general, including Kosovo specifically, is unsatisfactorily aligned with progressively changing EU standards. In Kosovo the Law No. 04/L-109 on Electronic Communications regulates data retention. In spite of this however, the paper finds that across the Western Balkans, including Kosovo, retention of traffic

129 Council of Europe (2025), [Octopus project – CYBERKOP Action: Finalization of the Draft Law on Personal Data Protection by Law Enforcement Institutions in Kosovo](#).

130 Council of Europe (2026), The Convention on Cybercrime (Budapest Convention ETS no. 185) and its Protocols. <https://www.coe.int/en/web/cybercrime/the-budapest-convention>

131 Council of Europe (2025), [Octopus project – CYBERKOP Action: Finalization of the Draft Law on Personal Data Protection by Law Enforcement Institutions in Kosovo](#).

132 Prishtina Insight (2025), [Kosovo institutions fined 110.000 euros for violating citizens' privacy](#).

133 Gazeta Express (2025), [The AIP fined the KPK 3 thousand euros for not providing IKL with access to public documents](#).

and metadata is both indiscriminate and widespread with weak oversight mechanisms In Kosovo particularly, oversight is described in the paper in terms of fragmentation across multiple bodies, i.e. the telecommunications regulator and data-protection authorities. This raises issues about accountability and interinstitutional coordination.¹³⁴

116. In furtherance of the issue of tele-communications, on October 31, 2025, KALLXO.com published an investigation on the risks of buying used phones in Kosovo.¹³⁵ The article showed that the used phone market often operates in the informal “black” market without strict procedures to securely erase personal data, significantly increasing the risk that buyers’ private information could be recovered or misused unless proper privacy safeguards are followed. Experts and privacy officials advised people to wipe their data thoroughly and recommended using licensed businesses to reduce risks.¹³⁶

117. In addition to complaints concerning tele-communications, the IPA reported an increase in complaints in 2025 relating to the installation and use of video surveillance systems that may violate citizens’ privacy rights. As of early December 2025, the Agency had conducted 155 inspections resulting in 51 citizen complaints, including inspections of 16 businesses in April 2025, the majority of which were found non-compliant with legal requirements governing the processing of personal data captured through security cameras. In its oversight capacities, the IPA has acknowledged serious constraints with only six inspectors responsible for personal data protection supervision.¹³⁷

118. NGO BIRN and KALLXO.com reported that the IPA ordered “Zenel Hajdini” School in Prishtina to stop collecting students’ personal data through the messaging app Viber.¹³⁸ The article explained that a parent complaint revealed the school was asking for sensitive information via Viber, and IPA found that using the app did not meet legal data-protection standards, requiring the school to switch to safer methods for handling personal data.¹³⁹

119. In further line with the issue of data protection, the NGO CiviKos Platform, in cooperation with the IPA and the Institute for Technology and Society (ITS) published a practical and multilingual Guideline for Data Protection for Civil Society Organizations. The document is designed to assist civil society actors in strengthening compliance with Kosovo’s data protection framework by providing operational guidance on the lawful and secure processing of personal data relating to beneficiaries, members, and partners. Its significance lies in addressing capacity gaps within the non-governmental sector at a time of increased digital exposure and data-security risks.¹⁴⁰

120. In 2025, continued concerns were raised regarding the effective implementation of Law No. 06/L-085 on the Protection of Whistleblowers, which provides safeguards against retaliatory measures for individuals reporting misconduct, including dismissal, demotion, or other adverse

134 Balkan Insight (2025), [At the crossroads: Data retention policies in the western Balkans amid shifting EU standards.](#)

135 Kallxo (2025), [Rreziku nga shitblerja e telefonave të përdorur.](#)

136 BIRN (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

137 Balkan Insight (2025), [Security Cameras Proliferate in Kosovo – and Privacy Complaints Rise.](#)

138 Kallxo (2025), [Shkolla nuk guxon të mbledhë të dhëna private për nxënësit duke përdorur “Viber”-in.](#)

139 BIRN (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

140 Platforma Civikos (2025), [Guideline for Data Protection for Civil Society Organizations.](#)

employment actions. In May 2025, Shyqeri Krasniqi, internal auditor at the Municipality of Fushtë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje, stated that he was suspended and ultimately dismissed after reporting irregularities in public procurement related to the construction and renovation of sports halls, involving investments of approximately 830,000 EUR between 2018 and 2020 and an additional 313,000 EUR in renovations, with further expenditures reported in 2024 despite continued structural defects. Krasniqi had submitted documentation to the prosecution in 2023, leading to investigations involving at least eleven individuals, nine of them public officials; however, he alleges that shortly after making his findings public in April 2025, he received accelerated and irregular performance evaluations that he contends were used to justify his dismissal.¹⁴¹ This case follows earlier concerns, including the dismissal and partial reinstatement of another reporting official in the state reserves procurement affair.¹⁴²

121. Recommendations

- The Kosovo Police and the Prosecution should ensure the effective investigation of all threats and attacks against journalists by prioritizing such cases and initiating investigations ex officio;
- The Kosovo Police and the Prosecution should also operationalize rapid response; mechanisms in cases involving journalists including action in situations of emergent risk;
- The Ministry of Justice should introduce legal safeguards against the misuse of judicial procedures targeting journalists (SLAPPs) including reviewing the legal framework to prevent abusive litigation and ensure the protection of freedom of expression.

5.6 The freedom of peaceful assembly

122. The right to peaceful assembly is guaranteed at the international level under Article 20 of the UDHR and legally binding under Article 21 of the ICCPR, which permits restrictions only when they are lawful, necessary, and proportionate in a democratic society for legitimate aims such as national security, public order, or the protection of the rights of others. In General Comment No. 37 (2020), the Human Rights Committee clarified that assemblies may take diverse forms, including online gatherings, and emphasized States' positive obligation to facilitate and protect peaceful assemblies. Within the European framework, Article 11 of the ECHR similarly protects freedom of assembly and association, a principle reinforced by the ECtHR in *Plattform "Ärzte für das Leben" v. Austria* (1988), which affirmed that States must not only refrain from interference but also take reasonable measures to enable assemblies to proceed without disruption. The right is further reinforced under Article 5(d)(ix) of CERD, ensuring equality in its enjoyment, and Article 7 of CEDAW, which guarantees women's equal participation in associations and public life.

123. In Kosovo, this right is enshrined in Article 43 of the Constitution, which guarantees the "right to organize gatherings, protests and demonstrations and the right to participate in them." The legislative framework further specifies this protection through Law No. 08/L-166 on Public Gatherings, Law No. 04/L-076 on Police, and the Criminal Code No. 06/L-074.

141 Prishtina Insight 2025, [Whistleblower Accuses Kosovo Municipality of Reprisal Dismissal After Exposing Corruption](#).

142 Southeast Europe Coalition on Whistleblower Protection (2025), [Speak up, get shut down: How Kosovo protects suspects and punishes the whistleblowers](#).

124. In May 2025, several CSOs organized and participated in protests regarding the ongoing political stalemate in Kosovo. A symbolic protest in front of the Assembly of Kosovo was organized to denounce the ongoing political stalemate following the February parliamentary elections. Activists placed 120 empty chairs outside the Parliament building, each representing a seat in the legislature. The chairs bore written placards with messages such as “Why have we chosen you?,” “Politicians have stopped the clock,” and “The Assembly is not functional—please try again later,” articulating public frustration with institutional paralysis. The chair designated for the Speaker of the Assembly carried the single word “Enough.” Small clocks were positioned alongside the chairs to underscore the time lost since the elections and the continued failure to constitute a functioning Assembly.¹⁴³

125. Amid the prolonged parliamentary deadlock, in July 2025, a symbolic protest outside the AoK drew public attention to the institutional crisis as lawyer Arianit Koci brought four donkeys to the entrance of the Assembly building, openly framing the act as commentary on political leadership and the continued failure of Members of Parliament to elect a Speaker. At the time, more than 50 voting attempts had failed, and the Constitutional Court had imposed a 30-day deadline for the constitution of the Assembly. Koci’s protest, accompanied by additional symbolic acts, including cutting his hair in front of the building, became emblematic of broader public frustration with institutional paralysis.

126. In addition to the parliamentary deadlock, Kosovo war veterans protested the Kosovo Specialist Chambers (KSC) through a demonstration held in August 2025. Thousands of Kosovo war veterans gathered in Pristina to protest against the KSC, proclaiming institutional bias and injustice in the prosecution of former Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) leaders. The protest was organized by the veterans’ association who expressed support for four former senior KLA officials currently in detention before the court. Protesters characterized the tribunal as distorting Kosovo’s liberation narrative and undermining the legitimacy of the armed struggle. No incidents of violence were reported. The mobilization reflects ongoing societal contestation over transitional justice processes and the perceived tension between internationalized accountability mechanisms and dominant national memory frameworks.¹⁴⁴

127. On 8 March 2025, International Women’s Day in Kosovo was marked by a protest march in Pristina organized by the collective *Marshojmë S’festojmë* under the slogan “We March for Each Other.” The march proceeded from Zahir Pajaziti Square to the Government building, where organizers presented demands to institutions responsible for preventing and addressing gender-based violence. Held against the backdrop of continuing femicide, domestic violence, rape, and structural gender inequality, the protest recalled several killings and attempted killings of women recorded during the previous year, emphasizing repeated institutional failures in prevention and protection.¹⁴⁵

143 Prishtina Insight (2025), [Public apathy in times of crisis: Citizens trapped between disillusionment and inaction.](#)

144 AP News (2025), [Kosovo veterans rally against an EU-backed court prosecuting their former independence fighters.](#)

145 KWN (2025), [Marching for each other.](#)

128. In May 2025, cleaning workers in Prishtina protested in front of the municipal building over unpaid wages and outstanding debts linked to the dispute between the Municipality of Prishtina and the Regional Waste Company *Pastrimi*. The company had suspended waste collection since 14 May, citing blocked payments of 2.7 million EUR, lack of fuel, and financial inability to continue operations, resulting in significant waste accumulation across the capital. During the reporting period, no final agreement had been reached, while the Basic Prosecution in Prishtina authorized evidence-gathering regarding possible environmental harm arising from the prolonged failure of waste management services.¹⁴⁶

129. In May 2025, hundreds of business owners and representatives blocked major access roads to Prishtina in protest against a decision by the Energy Regulatory Office requiring companies with more than 50 employees and annual turnover exceeding 10 million EUR to procure electricity on the open market as of 1 June 2025. The measure removed their access to state-subsidized tariffs. Business representatives stated that the reform could increase electricity costs by up to 200 per cent, with some projecting a tripling of annual energy expenditures. They requested a one-year transitional period to enable investment in renewable energy infrastructure. The regulator framed the reform as part of market liberalization commitments linked to Kosovo's EU accession process. Acting Prime Minister Albin Kurti rejected postponement, arguing that continued subsidies would shift financial burdens from approximately 1,200 companies onto household consumers. The reform unfolded in a structurally fragile energy context: Kosovo generates over 90 percent of its electricity from ageing coal-fired plants, remains dependent on imports to cover supply deficits, and spent 114 million EUR on electricity imports in 2024.¹⁴⁷

130. On 14 June 2025, the annual Pride Parade was held in Prishtina as part of Pride Week organized by Prishtina Pride under the slogan "No Step Back," bringing participants together in a public march calling for equality, dignity, and stronger protection of the rights of LGBTI+ persons in Kosovo.¹⁴⁸

131. Reports from local Serbian outlets state that on 28 June 2025, during Vidovdan commemorations in Gračanica/Graçanicë, a convoy of vehicles reportedly drove near the Gračanica Monastery displaying Albanian national flags and repeatedly sounding car horns. The incident occurred on a date of high symbolic significance for the K-Serb community and was perceived by some local actors as provocative.¹⁴⁹

132. Recommendations

- The Kosovo Police should ensure the facilitation and protection of all peaceful assemblies by strictly applying the principles of legality and proportionality while refraining from any form of intimidation;
- The Ministry of Internal Affairs should adopt and enforce clear operational guidelines for the management of public assemblies and clear non-discriminatory policing practices;
- The Assembly of Kosovo should ensure the timely constitution and effective functioning

146 KALLXO (2025), [Punëtorët e "Pastrimit" protestë para Komunës së Prishtinës, Rama: Askush nuk do të mbetet pa punë.](#)

147 Reuters (2025), [Kosovo businesses block roads over power price hike.](#)

148 Prishtina Pride (2025), [Pride week 2025.](#)

149 NSI (2025), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

of legislative institutions in order to prevent prolonged political deadlock that undermines democratic participation and contributes to recurring public protests.

5.7 The freedom of association

133. Freedom of association is a core component of the international human rights framework. It is recognized in Article 20 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), including the prohibition in Article 20(2) against compelled membership. The right is legally binding under Article 22 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which guarantees the freedom to form and join associations, including trade unions, subject only to restrictions prescribed by law and necessary in a democratic society. The Human Rights Committee, in General Comment No. 25 (1996), has linked freedom of association to political participation and public affairs. Specific labour protections are codified in ILO Convention No. 87 (1948) and Convention No. 98 (1949). At the regional level, Article 11 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) protects this right, with the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) affirming in *Demir and Baykara v. Turkey* (2008) that collective bargaining forms part of its essential content and in *Wilson, National Union of Journalists and Others v. United Kingdom* (2002) that protection against anti-union discrimination is integral to its exercise. Non-discrimination in the enjoyment of this right is further guaranteed under Article 7(c) of CEDAW and Article 5(d)(ix) of CERD. Complementing these binding instruments, the Venice Commission and OSCE/ODIHR Joint Guidelines on Freedom of Association (2014) provide authoritative standards for legislative and institutional compliance.

134. The freedom of association is guaranteed through Article 44 of the Kosovo Constitution, which includes the right to “establish an organization without permission” (Art. 44.1) and the right to establish trade unions (Art. 44.2). In addition to these constitutional protections, a set of domestic laws and regulations further regulate the exercise of this right, including legislation governing NGOs, labor relations, and trade unions.

135. The Law No. 06/L-043 on Freedom of Association in Non-Governmental Organizations further regulates the constitutional right to associate without obtaining permission. Known as the NGO Law, the legislation for NGOs provides an improved legal environment by removing limitations for foreign residents, and introducing new legal forms with shortened periods for registration. As described in the previous CSO report of 2024, the Law No. 08/L-244 amended and supplemented Law No. 06/L-043 on the Freedom of Association in Non-Governmental Organizations in 2024, thereby introducing a formal right of appeal against final administrative decisions.¹⁵⁰ This mechanism was operationalized in 2025 through the Administrative Instruction No. 02/2025 adopted by the Ministry of Internal Affairs.¹⁵¹

136. Furthermore, the Law No. 04/L-011 for the Organization of Trade Unions in Kosovo, and the Law No. 03/L-212 on Labor regulates one’s right to form trade unions in the context of public and

150 HRN (2025), [Civil Society Report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2024](#).

151 YIHR (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

private employment sectors. The NGO Law applies to all types of NGOs, including grassroots organizations. The Administrative Instruction No. 12/2022 on the Registration, Operation, and Deregistration of Non-Governmental Organizations, also defines the procedures for registration, operation, and deregistration of institutes as a new form of organization of NGOs recognized by the NGO Law. The NGO public registry has to be updated and should ensure that Kosovo's electronic system of NGOs is fully reliable.

137. Reverberating the reporting period of 2024, the year 2025 did not bring about the approval of the Government Strategy for Cooperation with Civil Society (2026-2031), despite ongoing efforts by the Office for Good Governance (OGG) and the NGO CiviKos Platform to finalize its development. This continued delay, coupled with the inactivity of the Council for Cooperation of the Government with Civil Society throughout the year, raises concerns about the GoK's commitment to fostering meaningful engagement with civil society organizations in Kosovo. The absence of an updated strategy further underscores the stagnation in institutional cooperation, limiting the effectiveness of civil society participation in policymaking processes.¹⁵²

138. In October 2025, a group of CSOs addressed a joint letter to António Costa, Ursula von der Leyen, Kaja Kallas and Aivo Orav, requesting the full lifting of the restrictive measures imposed on Kosovo from 2023 following tensions in the north of the country. In their letter, the CSOs argued that the measures had negatively affected Kosovo's European integration process; in its subsequent response in December 2025, the European Commission announced a partial withdrawal of measures.¹⁵³

139. In 2025, Save the Children Kosovo published the Manual on the Functioning of Child-led Municipal Assemblies (CLMAs),¹⁵⁴ consolidating over a decade of practice in supporting child participation at the local level. The manual operationalizes children's right to participation, including the right to express views and be heard, and strengthens the practical realization of the right to assembly in municipal governance structures. It provides structured guidance on the establishment, organization, and institutional integration of CLMAs, positioning them as formal mechanisms for children's collective representation in local decision-making. The manual further recommends clearer institutional ownership by municipalities, alignment with the Law on Child Protection, and the inclusion of CLMA representatives within municipal child rights teams, addressing gaps in Administrative Instruction (GRK) No. 06/2022. Overall, the publication represents a concrete step in 2025 toward institutionalizing children's participatory and assembly rights at the local level.¹⁵⁵

140. The climate for freedom of association remained formally safeguarded in 2025; however, monitoring by NGO NSI reported incidents of intimidation targeting members of the K-Serb community engaged in political association, including the throwing of a molotov cocktail on 26 January 2025 in Ranilug/Ranillug at the family home of Aleksandra Popović, a member of the Municipal Election Commission affiliated with the Serb List, the puncturing of the private vehicle tires of Milan Kostić, president of the Provisional Authority of Vučitrn/Vushtrri and Serb List candidate, overnight between 1 and 2 February 2025, and the burning of a private vehicle belonging to a

152 Civikos (2026), [Working Group Workshop in the framework of drafting the Strategy for Government-Civil Society Cooperation 2026–2031](#).

153 Indeks online (2025), [A letter is sent to the EU requesting the lifting of measures against Kosovo](#).

154 Save the Children Kosova/o (2025), [Manual on the Functioning of Child Led Municipal Assemblies](#).

155 Save the Children Kosova/o (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

family member of Časlav Sofronijević, a Serb List candidate for municipal assembly member, on 22 August 2025 in Zvečan/Zveçan.¹⁵⁶

141. During the reporting period, NGO AKTIV was subjected to a series of public attacks and discreditation efforts that can be characterized as a coordinated smear campaign within a politically polarized environment. Over a three-month period, three separate incidents targeted the organization and members of the Empirika Platform through unsubstantiated allegations and defamatory media narratives, contributing to a hostile information climate and increasing reputational and operational pressures. In at least one case, media self-regulatory mechanisms confirmed breaches of professional standards, underscoring the lack of factual basis for certain claims. The campaign required AKTIV to redirect substantial time and resources toward crisis response, public clarification, and engagement with oversight bodies, thereby affecting project implementation and limiting open participation in dialogue processes, particularly in smaller communities. More broadly, such targeting risks creating a chilling effect on civil society actors working on sensitive issues, including minority rights and interethnic relations, and may contribute to the narrowing of civic space and democratic dialogue.¹⁵⁷

142. Recommendations

- The GoK should operationalize the Strategy for Cooperation with Civil Society and its accompanying Action Plan upon approval by meaningfully including civil society in decision making processes;
- The Ministry of Local government Administration should institutionalize Child-Led Municipal Assemblies into municipal decision-making structures;
- The Kosovo Police and the Prosecutor should investigate and prosecute forms of intimidation and violence aimed at individuals engaged in political and civil society activities.

5.8 The freedom of belief, conscience and religion

143. Freedom of thought, conscience and religion is guaranteed under Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and legally binding under Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which protects the right to adopt a religion or belief of one's choice and to manifest it individually or in community with others. The Human Rights Committee, in General Comment No. 22 (1993), clarified that freedom of thought and belief is absolute and non-derogable, while limitations may apply only to the external manifestation of religion or belief and must be prescribed by law and strictly necessary and proportionate. Furthermore, Article 9 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) guarantees this right, permitting restrictions only when necessary in a democratic society for public safety, public order, health, morals, or the protection of the rights and freedoms of others. The right is further reinforced by Article 5(d)(vii) of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination

¹⁵⁶ NSI (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

¹⁵⁷ AKTIV (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

(CERD), and by Article 2 of the 1992 UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, which affirms the collective dimension of religious freedom and the right of minorities to practice their religion without discrimination.

144. At the Constitutional level in Kosovo, freedom of belief, conscience and religion is guaranteed under Article 38, which protects the right to hold, change and manifest a religion or belief, individually or in community with others, and includes the right not to be compelled to join a religious community or disclose one's religious affiliation. The collective dimension of this right is further reinforced by Article 59(1), which safeguards the rights of communities to express, maintain and develop their culture and to preserve essential elements of identity, including religion. Kosovo is defined as a secular state under Article 8, requiring institutional neutrality in matters of religious belief; this principle was reaffirmed by the Constitutional Court in the Arjeta Halimi case,¹⁵⁸ where the Court emphasized that public authorities are bound to uphold state neutrality in religious affairs.

145. As in the previous reporting period, in 2025, the enactment of the Draft Law on Religious Freedom remained unresolved. Although the draft had been approved by the Government in 2023 with the stated objective of updating the legal framework on religious freedom and enhancing compatibility with constitutional and international human rights standards, it was not included in the Government's 2024 Legislative Agenda and has not been adopted by the Assembly. The reform was expected to clarify the legal status of religious communities, including explicit recognition of rights relating to property ownership and rental, financial administration, employment, and the establishment of humanitarian and educational institutions, as well as to provide for the establishment of a commission to address practical matters and define criteria for the registration of new religious communities in Kosovo.

146. Kosovo has established 43 Special Protective Zones pursuant to Law No. 03/L-039 on Special Protective Zones, aimed at safeguarding sites of religious and cultural significance, particularly those associated with the Serbian Orthodox Church. These zones provide enhanced legal protection against activities that may harm or disturb the historical, cultural, or natural environment, and are subject to continuous security oversight by a specialized, multi-ethnic police unit. While no major security breaches or large-scale incidents were reported at these sites in 2025, isolated cases of vandalism, desecration, and public contestation regarding the historical identity of certain religious sites were recorded, raising ongoing concerns regarding the preservation of religious heritage.

147. In 2025, Kosovo's interfaith coexistence has been increasingly challenged by coordinated disinformation campaigns that instrumentalised religion to inflame interethnic and political tensions, as per Prishtina Insight.¹⁵⁹ Investigations by the Special Prosecution and counterterrorism institutions confirmed that radical religious ideologies, which circulate primarily through online platforms, continued to be used to spread hate speech, incite division between Muslim groups, and frame isolated incidents near Serbian Orthodox sites as systemic religious persecution. Furthermore, Russian state-linked media and Serbian officials amplified narratives portraying Kosovo's institutions as hostile to the Serbian Orthodox Church, including exaggerated or unfounded

158 Gjykata Kushtetuese, (2011) <https://gjk-ks.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/BULETINI-2011-SHQ.pdf>
159 Prishtina Insight (2026), [How disinformation undermines interfaith tolerance in Kosovo.](#)

claims regarding cemetery destruction and alleged provocations near religious sites.¹⁶⁰

148. Religious themes have also been instrumentalised at different times during the local 2025 and early parliamentary elections, particularly in debates surrounding LGBTI+ rights, headscarves, and “family values,” reflecting the persistence of religion as a polarising political tool. While these dynamics did not amount to structural violations of freedom of religion, they contributed to an atmosphere in which misinformation, stigma and external geopolitical narratives strain Kosovo’s interfaith equilibrium.¹⁶¹

149. The Supreme Court rejected a lawsuit seeking to annul Article 3 of Administrative Instruction No. 06/2014 of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, thereby upholding the Ministry’s authority to regulate student conduct, including dress codes, in public schools. The lawsuit, filed by the Women’s Network for Professional Development “Arrita,” argued that the prohibition on “religious uniforms” unlawfully restricted girls’ constitutional rights to freedom of belief and religious manifestation, citing multiple cases in which students were expelled or excluded from classes for wearing Islamic headscarves, including a documented incident at “Bedri Pejani” high school in Peja. The Court found the claim unfounded, reasoning that the contested administrative instruction was issued pursuant to explicit legislative authorization and was therefore compatible with higher legal norms, emphasizing that limitations on the manifestation of religion are permissible when prescribed by law and justified by considerations of public order and the rights of others, as provided under Articles 38 and 55 of the Constitution.¹⁶²

150. In 2025, religious conversions from Islam to Catholicism in Kosovo received international media attention, including coverage by The New York Times, which reported on baptism ceremonies in Lapušnik/Llapushnik and Podujevë/Podujevo and the emergence of a small activist movement framing conversion as a “return” to a pre-Ottoman Albanian Christian identity. This phenomenon has been portrayed less as a demographic shift and more as an identity-driven discourse linked to nationalism, and Kosovo’s European orientation, with political leaders particularly the Acting Prime Minister emphasizing the country’s secular character,¹⁶³ and religious officials warning against the politicisation of faith.¹⁶⁴

151. In August 2025, NGO BIRN Kosovo aired an exclusive “KALLXO Përnime” interview with Dr. Tarek Al-Jahari, an expert in Islamic studies.¹⁶⁵ In the interview, Dr. Al-Jahari discussed the phenomenon of violent extremism among young people from Kosovo, explaining the ideological, social, and economic factors that contributed to radicalization. He addressed the misuse of religious texts by extremist movements, including Wahhabi-influenced interpretations, and emphasized Islam’s principles of pluralism, coexistence, and respect for the state and rule of law. The interview also highlighted the challenges of prevention and rehabilitation, stressing the importance of inclusive

160 Prishtina Insight (2026), [How disinformation undermines interfaith tolerance in Kosovo](#).

161 Prishtina Insight (2026), [How disinformation undermines interfaith tolerance in Kosovo](#).

162 CNA (2025), [Supreme Court rejects lawsuit over Islamic veil in Kosovo schools](#).

163 Balkan web (2025), [Albin Kurti speaks to the New York Times: For Albanian identity, religion has never been primary](#).

164 Indeks Online (2025), [NYT për konvertimet në Kosovë](#).

165 Kallixo (2025), [Interview with Dr. Al-Jahari](#).

religious education, community engagement, and early identification of radical narratives.¹⁶⁶

152. NGO NSI reports that the year 2025 was marked by a series of incidents affecting Serbian Orthodox religious sites, cemeteries, and pilgrims in Kosovo. Reported incidents included break-ins and thefts at churches and chapels in the Gjilan/Gnjilane region, damage to the hermitage of Saint Peter of Koriša during nearby construction works, removal of Serbian Orthodox Church flags in Rahovec/Orahovac and Lipjan/Lipljan, repeated desecration of Orthodox cemeteries in Rahovec/Orahovac, Pristina, and Plemetina/Plementinë, as well as repeated unauthorized entries and religious rites carried out at the Church of St. Archangel Michael in Rakitnica/Rakinicë by an individual not recognized by the Serbian Orthodox Church. NGO NSI further reported the temporary detention of a group of Kosovo Serb pilgrims travelling to religious sites in Gjakovë/Đakovica and Prizren, including the pre-trial detention of four individuals later released following a Supreme Court ruling, and the suspension of renovation works at the Church of the Nativity of the Mother of God in Goraždevac/Gorazhdec following alleged pressure and threats.¹⁶⁷

153. Recommendations

- The AoK should adopt the Draft Law on Religious Freedom without further delay and clarify the legal status and rights of religious communities including property and institutional functioning;
- The Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports and the Kosovo Police should ensure that the Law on Special Protective Zones is effectively enforced by preventing unauthorized construction and investigating incidents of vandalism and desecration;
- The GoK should address the instrumentalization of religion in disinformation narratives that incite interethnic and interreligious tensions.

166 BIRN (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

167 NSI (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

6. SECTION B: ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

6.1 Labor rights

154. Labor rights are grounded in Article 23 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), which affirms the right to work, free choice of employment, just and favourable conditions of work, and protection against unemployment. These guarantees are codified in Articles 6–8 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), which protect the right to work, just and favourable working conditions, and the right to form and join trade unions. The prohibition of forced or compulsory labour is enshrined in Article 4 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and further reinforced by ILO Convention No. 29 (Forced Labour Convention, 1930) and ILO Convention No. 105 (Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957).

155. At the constitutional level, the right to work in Kosovo is anchored in Article 49.1 of the Constitution, which guarantees the right to work, freedom of association, the right to establish trade unions, and the prohibition of forced labour. Article 51 further provides for basic social protection in cases of unemployment, while Article 61 ensures equitable representation of communities in public employment. Although the ICESCR and relevant ILO Conventions have not been formally incorporated into the constitutional framework, they continue to constitute the applicable international standards. The statutory framework operationalising these guarantees includes Law No. 03/L-212 on Labour, Law No. 04/L-161 on Safety and Health at Work, and Law No. 04/L-011 on Trade Union Organization, which regulate employment relations and trade union rights in both the public and private sectors.

156. As of 2025, amendments to Law No. 03/L-212 on Labour have not been adopted, and the bill previously foreseen in the Government's 2023 legislative programme remains absent from subsequent agendas. The continued failure to revise the 2012 Labour Law despite prior advocacy by civil society leaves unaddressed longstanding concerns regarding worker protection, legal certainty, and alignment with European labour standards.¹⁶⁸ In addition to this, the GoK did not manage to meet to conclude the projected draft Law on Labour Inspectorate in 2025, as foreseen by the legislative program for 2024. Before 2021, the Ministry of Labour Social Welfare played an irreplaceable role in the design and implementation of social policies, the protection of workers' rights, social dialogue between employers and trade unions, as well as in providing social services to the most vulnerable groups of citizens. Through this ministry, the state managed numerous pension and social assistance schemes covering hundreds of thousands of citizens, from contributory pensioners to families receiving social assistance and persons with disabilities.¹⁶⁹ Moreover, it held direct responsibility for sensitive issues such as the care for war veterans, the families of martyrs, survivors of sexual violence during the war, and other categories affected by the 1998-19989 war. Fol-

¹⁶⁸ HRN (2025), [Civil Society Report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2024](#).

¹⁶⁹ KLI (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

lowing the dissolution of the MLSW and the transfer of its competences to the Ministry of Finance Labour and Transfers, a fundamental shift occurred in the approach of social issues.¹⁷⁰ Instead of long-term and inclusive policy development, the new approach has focused almost exclusively on the distribution of financial means. This technical and fiscal orientation has marginalized the social function of the state, reducing welfare to unilateral budgetary transfers made without consultation, impact analysis, or the inclusion of interest groups.¹⁷¹ The merger of the MLSW with the Ministry of Finance also contributed to the failure to fulfill the legislative agenda in the social field. Key draft laws such as the Law on Labor, the Law on Occupational Safety and Health, and the Law on Labor Inspectorate were either overlooked or withdrawn without explanation. Of the 12 draft laws planned for the 2021-2024 period, only four have been adopted, and even those were passed through expedited procedures without public consultation, resulting in legal challenges before the Constitutional Court.¹⁷²

157. At the institutional domain, the Labour Inspectorate of Kosovo functions as the primary administrative authority responsible for supervising the implementation and enforcement of labour legislation in practice. Its mandate extends to the oversight of employment relations, compliance with workplace standards, and occupational safety and health, in accordance with Law No. 04/L-161 on Safety and Health at Work. Beyond the core framework of labour regulation, the Inspectorate exercises supervisory authority under several sector-specific statutes, including Law No. 04/L-156 on Tobacco Control (as amended in 2022), Law No. 04/L-219 on Foreigners, Law No. 03/L-019 on Vocational Ability, Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities, and Law No. 02/L-81 on the Protection and Promotion of Breastfeeding. In this respect, the Labour Inspectorate operates as a cross-cutting enforcement body situated at the intersection of labour standards, public health regulation, migration-related employment controls, and social protection obligations. Legislation concerning labor, workplace safety and inspection remain outdated and misaligned with European union directives and International Labour Organization (ILO) conventions. This includes discrepancies in standards for short-term contracts, gender equality, effective inspection and protection against discrimination. Kosovo continues to operate under a Labor Inspectorate Law dating from the UNMIK period and a Law on Occupational Safety and Health from 2013, despite the fact that in 2024 there were 505 workplace injuries and 12 fatalities. With only 54 inspectors overseeing more than 70,000 active businesses, the situation poses a serious risk to workers's lives. The failure to operationalize the National Council for Occupational Safety and Health has deepened this crisis.¹⁷³

158. In 2025, the NGO KLI identified systemic failures in social dialogue and collective labour protection. The Economic and Social Council (ESC) has remained non-functional since April 2023 and throughout 2025 due to the failure of the Ministry of Finance, Labour and Transfers to reconstitute it, thereby obstructing lawful procedures for minimum wage determination and preventing the conclusion of a General Collective Agreement. NGO KLI also reported the failure to conclude collective agreements with major unions, including the termination of the education sector agreement with SBASHK and the non-signing of a health sector agreement. NGO KLI concluded that these omissions undermine labour protection, institutional accountability, and alignment with

170 KLI (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

171 KLI (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

172 KLI (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

173 KLI (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

European social dialogue standards.¹⁷⁴

159. From January 2025 onwards, the public sector wage increases projected ahead of the elections in 2024 were implemented, adding a first 55 EUR gross to the salaries of all budget-funded employees in the first phase.¹⁷⁵ An additional 55 EUR gross scheduled to enter into force in the second phase of the plan, which was foreseen for July 2025 came into force in August 2025 for public sector employees.¹⁷⁶

160. Despite the reported completion of the planned 110 EUR gross public sector salary increase in August 2025, however, the Union of Workers of the Tax Administration of Kosovo publicly disputed the claim, asserting that the majority of its members had not experienced an effective salary increase. The Union attributed this discrepancy to the non-adoption of the Regulation on Systematization of Jobs and to structural issues within the salary classification framework. This dispute reflects tensions between formal coefficient adjustments and their differentiated impact across public institutions.¹⁷⁷

161. In June 2025, the acting GoK adopted a decision increasing monthly maternity benefits from 170 EUR to 325.9 EUR, aligning the benefit with the net value of the revised minimum wage and representing a 91.7 percent increase. The benefit is payable for six months following childbirth, amounting to 1,955 EUR over that period; when combined with the universal child allowance of at least 20 EUR per month (120 EUR over six months), total state support during the first six months exceeds 2,000 EUR per child. The Government further announced the determination of a reference average wage to calculate an additional three-month benefit for employed mothers at 50 percent of the average salary (approximately 319.5 EUR per month), supplementing the statutory 70 percent maternity compensation provided by employers.¹⁷⁸

162. Throughout 2025, workers across multiple sectors in Kosovo engaged in repeated protests and strikes demanding higher wages, timely salary payments, and improved working conditions. Mobilisations were recorded in both the public and private sectors, including employees of the regional waste management company "Pastrimi," railway workers of Trainkos and Infracos, physical security workers at the University Clinical Centre of Kosovo (QKUK), employees of KOSTT, technical workers in the private sector, staff of the Municipality of Pristina, workers of the public broadcaster RTK, Urban Traffic employees in Pristina, and workers of KEK.¹⁷⁹ Core grievances included low wages relative to inflation, delays in salary execution, non-payment of overtime and night shifts, job insecurity linked to contract terminations, and demands for structural adjustments such as a 13th salary and increases in the minimum wage. Several protests resulted in temporary work stoppages affecting public services, including railway operations and urban transport, while prolonged demonstrations such as the four-month protest of QKUK security staff concluded with reinstatement.

174 Telegrafi (2025), [:KLI Labor Day finds Kosovo with old problems, workplace deaths, outdated laws and dysfunctional institutions.](#)

175 Reporteri (2025), [Public sector wage increases are being implemented, 55 euros more.](#)

176 Koha (2025), [The ATK union calls Murat's statements about a 110 euro salary increase untrue.](#)

177 Koha (2025), [The ATK union calls Murat's statements about a 110 euro salary increase untrue.](#)

178 Koha.net (2025), <https://www.koha.net/arberi/rriten-shtesat-per-lehona>

179 Tëvë (2026), [Punëtorët në Kosovë edhe në vitin 2025 protestuan për paga më të larta.](#)

ment of affected workers.¹⁸⁰ As mentioned in the section on the right to free assembly, a notable protest in this respect was the cleaners' strike of May 2025 in front of the municipal building of Pristina. Workers of the Regional Waste Company "Pastrimi" cited in part the blocking of financial resources as the reason for the protest. According to the workers, the lack of funding led to a complete halt of operations, with some stating that they were unable to work due to the absence of basic resources such as fuel for the collection vehicles.¹⁸¹

163. Against the context of ongoing structural dissatisfaction regarding wage adequacy, the GoK approved the draft 2026 budget in October 2025, foreseeing a phased increase of the minimum wage (to 425 EUR from January 2026 and 500 EUR from July 2026), pension adjustments, and higher child allowances.¹⁸²

164. According to the EU Standard Eurobarometer (Spring 2025), economic insecurity remains the dominant public concern in Kosovo. Sixty percent of respondents assessed the national economic situation as "very bad," while only 18 percent expressed optimism regarding economic improvement during 2025.¹⁸³ In addition to Kosovo's fragile socio-economic conditions in 2025 exacerbated by the political deadlock, this may in part have to do with the unemployment rate. In reality, unemployment rates in Kosovo continue to hover around 10.9 per cent among the age category of 15-64.¹⁸⁴ The burden was not equally distributed as women continued to face markedly higher unemployment rates reaching 18.5 percent compared with 7.5 percent among men.¹⁸⁵

165. In 2025 (between January and September), the Kosovo Tax Administration (ATK) received 331 reports of undeclared employment through its anonymous online platform. However, the limited utilization of the online tool for enforcing labor rights is reflected in the numbers: Only 14 cases of the 331 concerned employees who reported their own employers.¹⁸⁶ It should be noted that around 35 percent of total employment remains informal.¹⁸⁷

166. The implementation of Law No. 03/L-019 on Vocational Ability, Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities remains structurally deficient in 2025. Although the law obliges both public and private sector employers to reserve one position for a person with disabilities for every 50 employees, compliance continues to be limited and largely formalistic. The NGO HANDIKOS indicates in its 2025 inputs for this report that employers frequently disregard professional qualifications, while enforcement by the Labour Inspectorate has not resulted in systematic adherence. The quota obligation under the Law on Public Officials is similarly under-implemented within public institutions, which fail to fulfil their exemplary role. According to HANDIKOS, even where employment occurs, persons with disabilities are often deprived of adequate working conditions.¹⁸⁸

180 Tëvë (2026), [Punëtorët në Kosovë edhe në vitin 2025 protestuan për paga më të larta.](#)

181 Kosova Post (2025), [Punëtorët e "Pastrimit" protestojnë para Komunës së Prishtinës.](#)

182 Tëvë (2026), [Punëtorët në Kosovë edhe në vitin 2025 protestuan për paga më të larta.](#)

183 Indeks online (2025), [EU Barometer: Economy, unemployment and cost of living, the main concerns of Kosovars.](#)

184 ASK (2026), [Papunësia dhe shkalla e papunësisë sipas gjinisë, grup moshë 15-64 2024/TM4.](#)

185 ASK (2026), [Papunësia dhe shkalla e papunësisë sipas gjinisë, grup moshë 15-64 2024/TM4.](#)

186 Prishtina Insight (2025), [Kosovo's Tax Administration tackles informal economy via online tools.](#)

187 Prishtina Insight (2025), [Kosovo's Tax Administration tackles informal economy via online tools.](#)

188 HANDIKOS (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

167. In October 2025, the Centre for Strategic Litigation (CSL), a platform of the NGO GLPS, filed a lawsuit seeking the annulment of Administrative Instruction (MLSW) No. 05/2015 on procedures for reporting, suspension of payments, and recovery of funds in cases of pension misuse. CSL assessed that this Instruction, in force for over a decade, had continuously infringed upon the rights of thousands of pensioners across the country. Although the matter was ultimately addressed through an individual case, the Supreme Court of Kosovo confirmed these claims and issued a decision annulling the provisions of the sub-legal act that were not in compliance with Law No. 04/L-131 on State-Funded Pension Schemes.¹⁸⁹

168. In 2025, workplace fatalities in Kosovo remained alarmingly high, with multiple construction-related deaths recorded amid broader occupational safety concerns. Between January and October 2025, union sources reported 26 workplace deaths, 68 percent of which occurred in the private construction sector, while official Labour Inspectorate figures cited at least 13 fatalities and approximately 412 workplace accidents in the same period, many of them serious. At specific sites, clusters of deaths were documented, including cases in Gjakova and Istog in July 2025 when three construction workers died in separate incidents, contributing to an upward trend compared with previous years. These figures underscore persistent regulatory and enforcement gaps in ensuring legally mandated contracts, safety training, and protective measures for construction workers.¹⁹⁰

169. The Centre for Strategic Litigation (CSL) published the report “Occupational Safety and Health – An Analysis of the (In)Efficiency of the Central Labour Inspectorate,” which highlights persistent concerns regarding workplace safety in Kosovo. Despite an increase in the number of inspectors and a significant rise in inspection activities, workplace accidents, including minor injuries, serious injuries, and fatalities, remain at concerning levels. The report emphasizes that a substantial proportion of these incidents occur in the construction sector, which continues to present the highest risk to workers. However, it notes a misalignment in inspection priorities, as the Central Labour Inspectorate appears to focus more on sectors with comparatively lower risk, rather than adequately targeting the construction industry where the need for oversight is most critical.¹⁹¹

170. In its 2025 inputs for the current report, NGO BIRN notes its prioritization of labour rights through sustained investigative reporting on violations across sectors. By means of evidence-based journalism and institutional monitoring, it has both illuminated the situation on the ground while simultaneously providing a platform for workers and trade unions. Complementing its reporting, NGO BIRN has conducted targeted awareness campaigns, produced over 35 television reports and debates, and delivered journalist training, while collecting more than 480 citizen complaints on labour rights violations through its reporting platform. These complaints resulted in fines against over 50 companies and the review of employment contracts affecting more than 1,000 workers. Several in-depth investigations have also triggered institutional follow-up, including actions by the State Prosecutor’s Office, thereby reinforcing accountability and the enforcement of labour standards in Kosovo.¹⁹²

189 GLPS (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

190 Telegrafi (2025), [This year 26 workers have died at work](#).

191 GLPS (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

192 BIRN (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

171. The NGO ATRC in partnership with the Jahjaga Foundation and NGO Birn Kosovo have implemented the project “Labor Rights for All” as a coordinated initiative to strengthen institutional accountability and compliance with labour rights legislation in Kosovo. The project combines a number of undertakings to increase reporting of labour rights violations and improve institutional responses to workplace abuses. These include policy advocacy, research on informal employment and vulnerable workers, joint inspections with oversight institutions, investigative journalism and public awareness campaigns.¹⁹³

172. Recommendations

- The Ministry of Finance, Labour and Transfers should reconstitute and operationalize the Economic and Social Council;
- The GoK should prioritize the amendment of the Labor Law by reinstating it in the 2026 legislative agenda and ensuring broad consultations with stakeholders to align it with European standards and labor market needs;
- The Labour Inspectorate should carry out regular inspections in high-risk sectors and enforce mandatory safety standards through immediate sanctions to prevent workplace fatalities;
- The Ministry of Finance, Labour and Transfers should strengthen mechanisms against undeclared work by increasing inspections and protecting whistleblowers in reporting cases of informal employment.

6.2 The right to education

173. The right to education is anchored in Article 26 of the UDHR, which guarantees that everyone has the right to education and requires that elementary education be free. Article 13 of the ICESCR provides the most comprehensive treaty framework, establishing compulsory and free primary education and mandating that secondary and higher education be made progressively accessible and free. At the regional level, Article 2 of Protocol No. 1 to the ECHR prohibits denial of the right to education and requires respect for parents’ religious and philosophical convictions. In *Kjeldsen, Busk Madsen and Pedersen v. Denmark* (1976), the ECtHR clarified that while states must respect parental convictions, education must remain objective, critical, and pluralistic. Complementary guarantees are provided by Articles 28 and 29 of the CRC, which emphasize free primary education and education directed toward the full development of the child’s personality and respect for human rights; Article 10 of CEDAW, which secures women’s equal rights in education; and Article 5(d)(v) of CERD, which prohibits racial discrimination in access to education.

174. In Kosovo’s legislative framework, the right to education is constitutionally guaranteed. Article 47 of the Constitution secures the right to free basic education and equal access to education for all individuals, in accordance with their specific needs and abilities. Article 59, within the chapter on the Rights of Communities and Their Members, further guarantees non-majority communities the right to receive education in their own mother tongue where that language is officially in use. This guarantee is reiterated and operationalised in Law No. 03/L-047 on the Protection and

193 ATRC (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

Promotion of the Rights of Communities and their Members in Kosovo, which safeguards the use of community languages as languages of instruction in primary and secondary education. The broader institutional organisation of primary and secondary public education is regulated by Law No. 03/L-068 on Education in the Municipalities of the Republic of Kosovo, while the tertiary education framework is governed by Law No. 04/L-037 on Higher Education.

175. The implementation of the Law No. 08/L-153 on Early Childhood Education commenced with the piloting of new curricula for the 2023/2024 academic year. Notably, this Law regulates the provision of quality education standards and renders preschool education mandatory from 2024. According to the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation (MESTI) the law “lays the foundation for the growth and development of the youngest.” Thus far, UNICEF Kosovo reports that access to preschool education in Kosovo is far below the European standard of 96 percent, and lower than regional averages.

176. The education sector experienced significant budgetary constraints and financial strain in 2025. In Pristina, the Directorate of Education described the financial situation for municipalities in terms of a “budgetary blockade” by the Ministry of Finance, restricting access to the approved municipal education budget of 37 million EUR.¹⁹⁴ In reverberation of this, education experts note that no substantive systemic reforms were made in the education sector in 2025 despite extensive public debate. Ongoing issues continue to characterize teacher recruitment accountability, stalled digitalization efforts and limited practical skill development among students.¹⁹⁵

177. Notwithstanding the financial constraints faced in 2025, in the capital of Pristina full-day education was expanded from five schools to seven schools including 5 villages. This has increased the student coverage from 3,100 to over 5,000 pupils.¹⁹⁶ In the subsequent year, this number is expected to expand significantly.

178. Notwithstanding the gradually expanded access to full-day schooling, the overall architecture of educational opportunity in 2025 continues to lag behind comparable systems in Europe. According to UNICEF, a child born in Kosovo today is expected to reach only 57 percent of their full productivity potential, largely due to gaps in education and health. Learning outcomes remain weak with Kosovo’s PISA results consistently below the OECD average, and only 15 percent of students demonstrating basic proficiency in mathematics, indicating substantial deficits in foundational skills.¹⁹⁷

179. In addition to regional differences, educational divides persist along ethnic lines in Kosovo with long-term social and economic implications, particularly for children from K-Roma, K-Ashkali and K-Egyptian backgrounds. While primary school enrolment reaches 96 percent in Kosovo, attendance declines with age and is markedly lower among these ethnic communities. Among K-Roma, K-Ashkali, and K-Egyptian children, only 84 percent are enrolled in primary education

194 Telegrafi (2025), [Parital successes and major challenges. The balance of education in Kosovo for 2025.](#)

195 *ibid.*

196 Telegrafi (2025), [Parital successes and major challenges. The balance of education in Kosovo for 2025.](#)

197 UNICEF (2025), [Education in Kosovo: Towards Inclusion, Equity, and Digital Readiness.](#)

with secondary-level enrollment dropping to 31 percent in comparison with the total 87 percent in the whole of Kosovo.¹⁹⁸

180. Educational access is also limited for children with disabilities. A recent Op-ed organized in May 2025 in conversation with the head of UNICEF and the Finnish Ambassador stressed that 8 percent of children in Kosovo aged 2–17 experience functional difficulties, exacerbated by the education system, which continues to lack adequate inclusive support mechanisms. This ranges from adapted infrastructure to specialized services, and individualized learning assistance that constrains equal participation in education.¹⁹⁹

181. A report from Deutsche Welle brought to the fore the systematic problem that children with hearing impairments in Kosovo continue to face when accessing inclusive education in 2025. The report documents the absence of sign language as a language of instruction in public schools with two main issues: Limited institutional support and the persistence of social stigma surrounding deafness. First, despite an estimated 5,000 deaf persons and 4,500 persons with hearing impairments in Kosovo sign language remains outside the formal curriculum. Thus far, only 16 certified sign language interpreters are employed in public institutions, three of whom also work within the education system. At an institutional level, regardless of Kosovo’s inclusive education and the development of appropriate teaching material by the Kosovar Association of the Deaf (KAD) as well as a Sign Language Dictionary (2012) Kosovo lacks a comprehensive plan to integrate sign language into mainstream education. Secondly, social stigma surrounds sign language. Educational opportunities for children are especially impeded by parental resistance following the misconception that sign language can impede on speech development. Yet, the Kosovar Association of the Deaf underscores that the lack of sign language instruction can underlie poor academic performance and social integration.²⁰⁰

182. Despite high internet permeation, Kosovo ranked second to last among 35 participating education systems in the International Computer and Information Literacy Study (ICILS). Kosovo’s average performance contrasts sharply with the 520-point average of top-performing countries, reflecting severe deficits in digital competencies. The digital divide disproportionately affects students from lower-income households, limiting their access to skills increasingly essential for labour market participation.²⁰¹ In this regard, the NGO Kosovo Education Center (KEC) also noted disparities in meaningful digital access for vulnerable communities in rural and socio-economically disadvantaged households.²⁰²

183. A monitoring study by NGO BIRN in 2025 showed that schools struggle with the ineffective implementation of the longstanding ban on smartphones. The prohibition is widely flouted with municipal directors acknowledging the limitations of schools to enforce the ban, and the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation, maintaining that its enforcement lies with municipalities and school inspectorates. In 2025, the debate has also shifted attention from prohibition towards regulatory reform. Education experts, including representatives of the NGO ETEA and the University of Pristina, have called for replacing the blanket ban with structured media and re-

198 UNICEF (2025), [Education in Kosovo: Towards Inclusion, Equity, and Digital Readiness](#).

199 UNICEF (2025), [Education in Kosovo: Towards inclusion, equity and digital readiness](#).

200 DW (2025), [Kosovo: Children with hearing impairments struggle at school](#).

201 UNICEF (2025), [Education in Kosovo: Towards inclusion, equity and digital readiness](#).

202 KEC (2025), [Policy brief: digital inclusion in Kosovo](#).

sponsible digital-use policies. They argue that the widespread use of smartphones among pupils, which lasts three hours daily, does not correspond with daily discussions on media-related topics in schools, as only 30 percent of teachers engage in digital literacy.²⁰³

184. Both structural and content-related issues with textbooks persisted in 2025, and have been reported by certain municipal authorities. In this respect, in Prizren, notable shortcomings concerned textbook distribution and quality in schools operating in three languages of instruction (Albanian, Turkish and Bosnian). Substantive content errors included in the textbooks and in misalignment with contemporary pedagogical methodologies are illustrative of inadequate government action to revise the textbooks despite the textbook revision project started in 2023.²⁰⁴

185. The implementation of the Child Protection Policy in pre-university institutions is supported by Save the Children Kosova/o through its partner, the NGO Syri i Vizionit. NGO Syri i Vizionit supported the implementation of the Child Protection Policy by strengthening the capacities of 35 child protection focal points in schools through an accredited 36-hour training endorsed by the MESTI. The training enhanced participants' ability to identify, prevent, and respond to child rights violations, and each participant developed a school-level action plan to operationalize the policy. In addition, coordination meetings among school directors, Centres for Social Work (CSWs), and the police were held in eight municipalities, engaging over 200 participants and fostering inter-institutional dialogue and accountability for child protection.²⁰⁵

186. Despite attempts by civil society, as stated above, the effectiveness of child protection mechanisms and oversight structures in educational settings remains worrisome. More particularly, in 2025, additional allegations against speech therapist Iljasa Faziu emerged following the investigative reporting of Betimi për Drejtësi (Oath for Justice). Multiple written complaints from both interns and parents concerning his conduct at the Speech Therapy Service within the University Clinical Hospital Service of Kosovo (SHSKUK). Complaints dated throughout February, March, June and September 2025 describe repeated absences from scheduled therapy sessions and delegations of therapeutic responsibilities to unsupervised interns, and inappropriate conduct towards child patients. These developments occurred despite the prior 2024 case in the criminal proceedings related to the mistreatment of a three-year-old autistic child.²⁰⁶

187. Following a KALLXO.com investigation of physical violence and mistreatment of at least two children by an educator in a private kindergarten in Ferizaj/Uroševac, the General Inspectorate of Education carried out an investigation, and issued a decision ordering its closure as the kindergarten was also operating without a license.²⁰⁷ The case of alleged mistreatment had been reported to the Kosovo Police by parents with the detainment for 48 hours as a result. Subsequently, the Basic Prosecution in Ferizaj/Uroševac initiated investigations on suspicion of the criminal offences of "Mistreatment or Abandonment of a Child" and "Light Bodily Injury" and requested pre-trial de-

203 BIRN (2025), [Kosovo school smartphone ban flouted, calls for reform](#).

204 Telegrafi (2025), [Parital successes and major challenges. The balance of education in Kosovo for 2025](#).

205 BIRN (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

206 Koha (2025), Oath for Justice. [Iljasa Fazliu – the untouchable speech therapist](#).

207 BIRN (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

tention; however, the Basic Court imposed one month of house arrest instead.²⁰⁸

188. Concerns about the right to education also pertained to the equal and non-discriminatory access to merit-based public scholarships at university level in Kosovo. On 3 February 2025, two students from the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Prishtina, who had initially been excluded from the Ministry of Education’s “elite scholarship” despite fulfilling all eligibility criteria, were awarded the scholarship following formal complaints and public reporting from KALLXO.com.²⁰⁹ The students had been omitted from the December 2024 list; however, subsequent verification of their academic records confirmed their eligibility, resulting in their inclusion in the final list approved in late January 2025. Furthermore, on 22 December 2025, an additional 18 medical students at the University of Prishtina were granted the same scholarship after public scrutiny and case verification demonstrated that they too had met the prescribed criteria but had initially been excluded.²¹⁰

189. Recommendations

- The GoK and MESTI should ensure the full implementation of inclusive education policies by allocating sufficient funding for support services, specialized teachers, and assistive technologies to enhance accessibility for children with disabilities and those from marginalized communities;
- The MESTI should expand access to early childhood education by ensuring the full implementation of mandatory preschool education including children from marginalized communities;
- The MESTI should ensure the effective protection of children within educational institutions by strengthening inspection and oversight mechanisms, enforcing licensing requirements, and taking immediate action in cases of violence, abuse, or negligence by educational staff.

208 KALLXO (2025), [Pas raportimit të KALLXO.com, Inspektorati e mbyll kopshtin privat të fëmijëve në Ferizaj](#).
209 KALLXO (2025), [Pas raportimit të KALLXO.com, MASHTI ua ndan 18 studentëve të Mjekësisë bursën elitare](#).
210 BIRN (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

6.3 The right to health

190. The international human rights framework for the right to health is grounded in Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), which affirms the right to an adequate standard of living necessary for health and well-being, including access to food, clothing, housing, and medical care. This normative foundation is further elaborated in Article 12 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), which recognizes the right of everyone to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health and obliges States to adopt measures aimed at the prevention, treatment, and control of diseases, as well as the creation of conditions ensuring access to medical services for all. The World Health Organization (WHO) has further shaped the conceptual understanding of this right by defining health as “a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity,” a definition that has significantly influenced international human rights discourse. Although the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) does not explicitly enshrine a standalone right to health, the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) has interpreted health-related protections through its jurisprudence under Article 2 (right to life), Article 3 (prohibition of torture and inhuman or degrading treatment), and Article 8 (right to respect for private and family life), thereby imposing positive obligations on States to safeguard individuals’ physical and mental integrity.

191. The legislative framework governing the right to health in Kosovo is anchored in Article 51 of the Constitution of Kosovo, which guarantees health and social protection. The framework was significantly advanced with the adoption in May 2022 of the Law on Amending and Supplementing Law No. 04/L-249 on Health Insurance, which further regulates the establishment and functioning of public health insurance under the Government of Kosovo. The broader legislative architecture is complemented by Law No. 04/L-125 on Health, Law No. 02/L-78 on Public Health, Law No. 02/L-76 on Reproductive Health, Law No. 06/L-042 on Blood and Blood Components, and Law No. 02/L-200 on the Prevention and Control of Infectious Diseases, collectively structuring the institutional and substantive dimensions of health governance in Kosovo. The Draft Law for Suicide Prevention and the Draft Law on Mental health have not been adopted in the reporting period of 2025.

192. The solid legislative foundations of Kosovo have yet to be translated into a reality that upholds all segments of the public health sector. In this respect, however, it is notable that data published in 2025 by the American analytics organization Gallup demonstrate a substantial increase in self-reported life evaluation over the past decade in Kosovo. The number of respondents stating that they were “living well” or “making progress” has risen over the past decade from 11 percent of respondents in 2014 to 51 percent in 2024. Yet, it should be highlighted that the index is based on subjective self-assessment rather than objective macroeconomic indicators such as GDP growth, employment rates, or institutional performance.

193. With respect to the institutional performance mentioned above, the NGO Group for Legal and Political Studies (GLPS) published a health budget transparency report in 2025 to examine Kosovo’s health allocations for 2025. Compared to the 2024 health sector allocation of 345 million EUR, the 2025 central-level health budget increased only modestly to approximately 352 million

EUR. This has reflected a continued nominal growth for several years, it does not indicate a significant structural shift in spending priorities or accountability mechanisms.²¹¹ In this regard, the NGO GLPS report also reveals persistent deficiencies in budget transparency with processes remaining internal rather than subject to public consultations. As a result, outcome-based performance is difficult to measure and conversely, institutional accountability substantively unaddressed.²¹²

194. Efforts continued in 2025 to develop an integrated National Health Information System as foreseen in the 2025-2030 Health Sector Strategy. However, the system remains only partially operational as it has yet to reach full interoperability across different levels of care. As a result, health-care providers continue to rely significantly on paper-based records and fragmented reporting mechanisms which impede on real-time data collection and the delivery of coordinated services to public health needs.²¹³

195. Related to the previous paragraph, in February 2025, the Ministry of Health (MoH) approved of a Health Security Action Plan, which it integrated into the 2025–2030 Health Sector Strategy following a Joint External Evaluation conducted under the auspices of the WHO.²¹⁴ The plan adopts an intersectoral coordination approach among health, agriculture, environment, and emergency management authorities. Its focus is on communicable disease surveillance, antimicrobial resistance, cross-border threat detection, and emergency preparedness.

196. The Law on Compulsory Health Insurance adopted by the AoK in 2024 has been stalled in 2025 due to a referral by the political party PDK to the Constitutional Court on alleged procedural violations in mid-December 2024, blocking its effective adoption until a decision is issued. Consequently, throughout 2025, Kosovo continued to operate without a functional public health insurance scheme leaving the vast majority of citizens to fend for their own healthcare costs.²¹⁵

197. The continued outflow of healthcare professionals impacts the right to health within Kosovo's borders. In 2025, a noted 90 doctors requested certificates of good standing from the Kosovo Chamber of Physicians, a document needed for employment abroad, and 192 nurses applied for professional documentation to the Chamber of Nurses of Kosovo. While the numbers show a slight decline to the previous years,²¹⁶ the sustained departure of medical personnel, while in itself a reflection of structural dissatisfaction with working conditions and remuneration, affects healthcare services and exacerbates the quality of care in Kosovo.²¹⁷

198. According to data from the National Institute for Public Health (NIPH), cardiovascular diseases remained the leading cause of death in Kosovo in 2025, followed by cancer. Respiratory diseases ranked third and fourth among mortality causes.²¹⁸ Cardiology services at the University Clinical Center of Kosovo reportedly continue to operate at full capacity, reflecting sustained pressure on tertiary care, and oncology specialists note that although cancer incidence had increased over the past decade, recent years show signs of stabilization, with breast cancer remaining the most

211 GLPS (2025), [Public funds, public health: Review of Kosovo's Health Budget Transparency](#).

212 GLPS (2025), [Public funds, public health: Review of Kosovo's Health Budget Transparency](#).

213 Prishtina Insight (2025), [From Paper to Algorithms: Can Artificial Intelligence Heal Kosovo's Healthcare System?](#)

214 WHO (2025), [Kosovo strengthens health security through intersectoral collaboration](#).

215 Reporter (2025), [The long and complicated story of health insurance in Kosovo, the law blocked in the Constitutional Court](#).

216 HRN (2025), [Civil Society Report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2024](#).

217 Gazeta Express (2025), [Over 90 doctors and 192 nurses left Kosovo in 2025](#).

218 Indeks online (2025), [Heart disease and cancer top the list of deaths in Kosovo](#).

prevalent form. Both cardiovascular diseases and cancer increasingly affect younger age groups, indicating shifting epidemiological patterns and heightened public health risks. The implications from the perspective of the right to health are straightforward: adequate healthcare infrastructure and workforce capacity must respond effectively to the growing burden of chronic disease.

199. In 2025, Kosovo recorded 31 new HIV/AIDS cases and six AIDS-related deaths. This is a rise in cases in Kosovo despite remaining formally classified as low-prevalence with overall infection rates below 1 percent in the general population. Epidemiological data presented by the MoH and the NIPH indicate that the most affected group remains men (82 percent), particularly those aged 25–34, with transmission occurring primarily through heterosexual and homosexual contact. While authorities have announced continued implementation of the digital communicable disease surveillance system (SMSN) and the planned piloting of pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) distribution in primary healthcare institutions in 2026, officials have simultaneously acknowledged funding constraints affecting HIV programming.²¹⁹

200. The public mental health system remained under-resourced in 2025. Official numbers from the Ministry of Health show that state human resources in mental health services are well below European averages, as they total just 49 psychiatrists, 9 psychologists, 1 social worker, 281 nurses, and seven psychosocial counselors. Resultantly, many individuals seeking mental help are compelled to turn to the private health care system which is more costly, and makes access to mental health a privilege reserved for citizens with financial means.²²⁰

201. Physical accessibility and adequate infrastructure constitutes a key obligation to safeguard the right to health. In this respect, after KALLXO.com reported on an unfinished road leading to the newly built “Nexhat Çuni” Primary Healthcare Center (QKMF) in South Mitrovicë/Mitrovica, repair works began on 23 January 2025. The center, which cost about 6,016,953 EUR was inaugurated on 6 January 2025, but its access road was not yet complete. The municipal health director, Fahri Shabani, explained that the road, parking, and surrounding infrastructure project had started even before the inauguration but had been paused due to poor weather conditions.²²¹

202. Physical accessibility of healthcare infrastructure remains a significant barrier for persons with disabilities. In 2018, a discrimination lawsuit was filed against the University Clinical Hospital Service of Kosovo (SHSKUK) on the grounds of architectural inaccessibility; as of 2025, the case remains unresolved, reflecting prolonged judicial delay in addressing structural barriers. Beyond physical access, persons with disabilities continue to encounter systemic obstacles in obtaining necessary medicines and specialized services, largely due to the absence of a functional health insurance scheme and gaps in service provision. According to the NGO Handikos and other disability rights advocates, these shortcomings have compelled some families to seek healthcare abroad, effectively externalizing the State’s obligation to ensure accessible and adequate healthcare within its own system.²²²

219 Kosova Press (2025), [Six deaths this year due to HIV, and 31 new cases.](#)

220 Kosovo 2.0 (2025), [Political parties’ pledges on mental health.](#)

221 BIRN (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

222 HANDIKOS (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

203. In 2025, concerns persist regarding the sustainability and effective implementation of the government-funded program for assistive devices for persons with disabilities, originally allocated in 2023 under the responsibility of the University Clinical Hospital Service of Kosovo (SHSKUK). Although a dedicated budget line was introduced in 2025, reported challenges in procurement procedures and distribution have limited the timely delivery of assistive technologies to beneficiaries. Moreover, the allocation was designed as a temporary two-year measure, creating uncertainty about continued financing beyond its initial timeframe.²²³

204. In addition to infrastructure, access to safe water and adequate sanitation constitutes a core component of obligations under the right to health. In 2025, a report by Prishtina Insight documented the continued pollution of the river Drini i Bardhë/Beli Drim. The pollution of the river is compounded by untreated municipal wastewater from multiple municipalities, industrial discharge, agricultural runoff, and illegal gravel extraction. Furthermore, around 125,000 households and businesses in the river basin discharge wastewater into streams feeding the river, affecting the water quality of an estimated 400,000 residents. Despite partial municipal investments in wastewater treatment facilities, coverage remains with limited enforcement capacities and most cases of violation resulting in fines or suspended sentences.²²⁴ In addition to the river, a recurring drinking water crisis affected the capital of Pristina and surrounding municipalities in 2025. For the third consecutive year, the primary water source for over 100,000 residents, Badovc Lake, was contaminated with elevated manganese concentrations. Against the permitted limit of 0.05 mg/L, measured levels reached between 0.117 mg/L and 0.250 mg/L, forcing residents to rely on other drinking sources.²²⁵

205. Recommendations

- The AoK should ensure the resolution of the constitutional review and adoption of the Law on Compulsory Health Insurance to establish a functional public health insurance scheme and reduce out-of-pocket healthcare costs for citizens;
- The Ministry of Health (MoH) should operationalize a fully integrated Health Information System and strengthen the healthcare workforce by introducing targeted retention measures;
- The Ministry of Environment, Spatial Planning and Infrastructure and the MoH should ensure access to safe water by enforcing wastewater treatment obligations addressing the contamination of drinking water sources and imposing sanctions for environmental violations affecting public health.

6.4 Property rights

206. International standards on housing and property rights are grounded in Articles 17 and 25 of the UDHR and Article 11 of the ICESCR, which recognize the right to property and the right to adequate housing as part of the right to an adequate standard of living. In General Comment No. 4 (1991), the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights clarified that adequate housing

223 HANDIKOS (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

224 Prishtina Insight (2025), [A flowing landfill: Once Pristine, Kosovo river turned into Pollution Exporter](#).

225 Prishtina Insight (2025), [Don't Drink it': Prishtina Searches for Long-Term Water Supply Solutions After High Manganese Levels](#).

extends beyond shelter to include security of tenure, habitability, affordability, accessibility, appropriate location, and cultural adequacy. In General Comment No. 7 (1997), it further affirmed that forced evictions are *prima facie* incompatible with the ICESCR unless justified by exceptional circumstances and accompanied by strict procedural safeguards. At the regional level, Article 1 of Protocol No. 1 to the ECHR protects the peaceful enjoyment of possessions, which the ECtHR has interpreted broadly to include assets, entitlements, and legitimate expectations of ownership, requiring that any interference pursue a legitimate aim and maintain a fair balance between public and individual interests, as established in *Sporrong and Lönnroth v. Sweden* (1982) and *James and Others v. United Kingdom* (1986). Although the ECHR does not expressly guarantee a right to housing, the Court has extended protection through Articles 3 and 8, holding in *Yordanova v. Bulgaria* (2012) and *Winterstein v. France* (2013) that evictions of long-settled Roma and Traveller communities without adequate justification or safeguards violate the right to respect for private and family life.

207. Property rights in Kosovo are constitutionally protected under Articles 46 and 156 of the Constitution, which guarantee the right to own property and prohibit arbitrary deprivation of property rights. The Constitution further obliges the GoK to facilitate the lawful reclamation of property, particularly in relation to Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and returnees. The broader legislative framework is defined by the Law No. 03/L-154 on Property and Other Real Rights; the Law No. 08/L-052 amending and supplementing Law No. 05/L-010 on the Kosovo Property Comparison and Verification Agency (KPCVA); Law No. 05/L-010 on the KPCVA; the Law No. 2002/5 on the Establishment of the Immovable Property Rights Register; the Law No. 03/L-007 on Non-Contentious Procedure; the Law No. 2004/26 on Inheritance; the Law No. 05/L-020 on Gender Equality; the Law No. 2004/32 on Family; the Law No. 03/L-139 on Expropriation of Immovable Property; and Regulation No. 01/2018 on the Return of Displaced Persons and Durable Solutions. Together, these instruments constitute the formal legal architecture governing property ownership, registration, restitution, inheritance, gender equality in property relations, and expropriation in Kosovo.

208. The Kosovo Property Comparison and Verification Agency (KPCVA) serves as the central supervisory body responsible for the implementation and enforcement of the property rights legislation. It adjudicates property claims and verifies rights of use over immovable property, including residential and commercial assets. Its mandate extends to resolving ownership disputes arising from the 1998–1999 conflict, particularly claims involving IDPs and returnees.

209. The Constitutional Court of Kosovo annulled, for the second time, the Law on the State Bureau for the Verification and Confiscation of Unjustified Assets, invalidating the Assembly's decision of 5 December 2024 by which the revised law had been adopted. The Court, by a majority decision, held that the law had been enacted through expedited legislative procedures that bypassed ordinary parliamentary scrutiny, including committee review and procedural safeguards, thereby violating constitutional standards. While the earlier 2024 ruling had focused on substantive concerns—particularly retroactive application and insufficient safeguards related to the burden of proof in matters affecting property rights under Article 46 of the Constitution and Article 1 of Protocol No. 1 to the ECHR—the 2026 judgment centered on procedural unconstitutionality,

emphasizing that legislation expanding state authority over private property must adhere strictly to constitutional lawmaking requirements. The ruling does not preclude future asset verification mechanisms but reinforces that anti-corruption measures must comply with due process and constitutional guarantees protecting the peaceful enjoyment of property.²²⁶

210. In December 2025, the Pristina Municipal Assembly adopted a decision approving a special list of municipal immovable properties designated for allocation in the subsequent year. On 31 December 2025, the Ministry of Local Government Administration initiated a mandatory legality review of the act, citing concerns regarding compliance with legislation. The review focused on procedural deficiencies, including the failure to publish both the general and special property lists and the absence of required cadastral and usage data. The initiation of legality control before the end of the calendar year reflects ongoing institutional oversight of municipal property management and underscores the importance of procedural compliance in the allocation of public immovable assets.²²⁷ During 2024, the NGO Kosovo Law Institute (KLI) filed an administrative lawsuit against the Municipal Assembly of Pristina, challenging the legality of a decision on the exchange of municipal property. The contested decision involved the transfer of a large public land parcel in Çagllavicë to private individuals in exchange for significantly smaller privately owned parcels. NGO KLI requested the annulment of the decision and the suspension of its execution, arguing that the process was marred by serious legal violations, including failure to apply relevant legal provisions, procedural irregularities, and incorrect assessment of facts. The Basic Court ordered the suspension of the execution of the contested decision, finding that its implementation could result in irreparable harm and that suspension served to protect the public interest.²²⁸ In parallel, the legality review by the central authorities resulted in the suspension of the decision's execution and the return of the case to the Municipal Assembly for reconsideration. These developments highlight the importance of judicial and administrative safeguards in preventing potentially unlawful disposal of public assets. The case illustrates the role of strategic litigation and institutional oversight in strengthening accountability, ensuring compliance with the rule of law, and safeguarding public property and the broader public interest in local governance.²²⁹

211. The Centre for Strategic Litigation (CSL), a platform of NGO GLPS, filed a lawsuit seeking the annulment of a sub-legal normative act, namely the Regulation on the Organization and Use of Parking in the Municipality of Pristina. The regulation contained unlawful provisions that continuously infringed upon the constitutional guarantees of property rights and freedom of movement. Furthermore, the issue directly affected the right to equal and effective public services, as well as the right to fair administrative treatment, as protected under domestic legislation and international human rights standards. The case initiated by CSL resulted in a favorable judgment by the Supreme Court of Kosovo, which annulled the provisions of the regulation that were not in line with the principle of legality.²³⁰

212. According to the OSCE Property Rights Monitor (Edition 12, January–June 2025), no new cases of illegal occupation of immovable property affecting vulnerable communities were recorded during the reporting period. However, the report states that 11 expropriation cases affecting

226 The Kosovo Dispatch (2026), [Constitutional Court Again Halts Asset Verification Bureau Law, Warning Against Rushed Lawmaking.](#)

227 KALLXO (2026), [MAPL shpall të paligjshëm vendimin e komunës së Prishtinës për Listen e pronave për dhënie në shfrytëzim.](#)

228 KLI (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025

229 KLI (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025

230 GLPS (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

parcels owned by members of the K-Serb community were identified in the Gjilan/Gnjilane region, which indicates the continued state intervention in property rights through expropriation mechanisms. In addition, the report shows that thirty-six families (34 K-Serb families, and 2 K-Roma families) benefited from social housing in 2025, while 2,120 applications for legalization of unpermitted constructions were filed Kosovo-wide, with no reported legalization of constructions on illegally occupied land belonging to non-majority communities.²³¹

213. In mid-2025, the enforcement of final property adjudication decisions in North Mitrovicë/Mitrovica resulted in several evictions. On 23 July 2025, Kosovo Police assisted in the eviction of the Janjićijević family from an apartment in North Mitrovica, acting on an enforcement order issued by the Kosovo Property Comparison and Verification Agency (KPCVA) in favor of another claimant. According to media reporting, the family had purchased the apartment decades earlier from the Trepça company and had resided there for nearly 30 years. The family stated that they possessed documentation evidencing the transaction and were unaware of any final adverse judicial determination at the time enforcement was executed. Although a 30-day notice had reportedly been issued in March 2025, the family indicated that serious health circumstances prevented voluntary compliance within that period.²³²

214. On 8 August 2025, a second eviction was carried out in North Mitrovicë/Mitrovica involving the Kuprešanin family, pursuant to an enforcement order issued by the Kosovo Property Comparison and Verification Agency (KPCVA), with operational assistance from Kosovo Police. The family, including a single mother of three children, was removed from an apartment in the Rudarske čete/Rudarske Çete area. According to statements provided to the media, the apartment had been allocated to the family in 2003 by local authorities during the UNMIK administration, and the occupants reported receiving only a brief period to vacate once enforcement commenced.²³³ As in the July 2025 case, the eviction arose from competing property claims adjudicated through the post-conflict property verification mechanism.

215. Housing affordability in Kosovo has been a structural concern despite continued expansion of the housing stock. In 2025, in Prishtina, rental prices for one-bedroom apartments range from approximately 225 EUR to over 300 EUR per month, against an average net salary of 552 EUR, which places significant pressure on young workers and middle-income households. Real estate prices have reportedly increased by 20–30 percent in recent years, with some neighbourhoods seeing prices rise from 720/m² EUR in 2014 to over 1,300/m² EUR today.²³⁴

216. A recently published report by the NGO GLPS examining women's challenges in realizing property rights in Kosovo and carried out from the perspective of judicial monitoring between late 2024 and mid-2025 shows that women remain significantly underrepresented in property ownership in Kosovo.²³⁵ Numerically speaking, they co-hold approximately 19.8 percent of regis-

231 OSCE (2025), [Property rights monitor](#).

232 NSI (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

233 NSI (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

234 Kosovo 2.0 (2025), [The not-so-affordable housing in the Balkans](#).

235 GLPS (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

tered properties Kosovo-wide. With regards to ownership disputes including inheritance, marital property and other related cases, NGO GLPS monitoring demonstrates procedural inefficiencies affecting women's ability to enjoy timely judicial outcomes.²³⁶ The report highlights that inheritance practices continue to be shaped by patriarchal norms and discriminatory practices, with women frequently relinquishing their rights due to social pressure, exclusion from procedures, or being offered only symbolic shares instead of their full legal entitlement. It further identifies structural deficiencies within the judiciary, including limited institutional capacities, staff shortages, and case backlogs, which contribute to delays and reduced transparency, particularly through the limited publication of judgments. Out of 172 monitored hearings, a significant number were postponed or cancelled due to the absence of judges, experts, or parties, and several cases remained unresolved for years. In 24 cases where the duration of proceedings was measured, it took on average approximately four years (1,454 days) for a claim to begin being addressed by the court, a delay that risks undermining trust in the judiciary and discouraging women from pursuing their property rights.²³⁷

217. Throughout 2025, a number of incidents affecting K-Serb households raised concerns regarding the effective protection of property rights and the security of tenure. In particular, on 2 January 2025, auxiliary agricultural buildings belonging to the five-member Đokić family in Radevë/Radevo (Lipjan/Lipljan municipality) were destroyed in a fire reportedly caused by unknown perpetrators. On 6 February 2025, Serb List campaign posters were defaced on the wall of a private home owned by Nikola Janković in Bushincë/Bušince (Kamenicë/Kamenica municipality), and on 9 February 2025, the Đorić family's house in Lipjan/Lipljan was stoned during post-election celebrations, resulting in material damage. On 17 June 2025, in Leposavić/Leposaviq, a municipal employee reportedly changed the lock on the apartment of Slobodan Spajić, who had been residing there under an allocation through a Serbian Commissariat programme for displaced persons. Further incidents included the detonation of an explosive device on 17 August 2025 outside premises owned by Miloš Perović in Zubin Potok, causing significant material damage, and a reported break-in on 14 December 2025 at the Gačić family home in Uglare/Ugljare near Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje.²³⁸

218. Recommendations

- The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and the Kosovo Judicial Council (KJC) should ensure the effective enforcement of women's property rights by introducing mandatory verification of women's inclusion in property proceedings and publishing disaggregated data on ownership;
- The Kosovo Police and the Prosecution should investigate and prosecute all incidents affecting the property and security of non-majority communities including damage, and unlawful interference with property;
- The Kosovo Property Comparison and Verification Agency should ensure that all eviction decisions are accompanied by verified ownership documentation, minimum 30-day notice, and written justification addressing the circumstances of occupants, particularly in cases involving long-term residence and vulnerable families.

236 GLPS (2025), [Women's Challenges in Realizing Property Rights in Kosovo: A Perspective from Judicial Monitoring](#)

237 GLPS (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

238 NSI (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

6.5 Cultural Rights

219. International standards recognize cultural rights as integral to human dignity and personal development. Articles 22 and 27 of the UDHR affirm the entitlement of everyone to economic, social, and cultural rights necessary for dignity and to freely participate in cultural life, enjoy the arts, and benefit from scientific progress, while protecting authors' moral and material interests. At treaty level, Article 15 of the ICESCR guarantees the right to take part in cultural life and benefit from scientific advancement, and Article 27 of the ICCPR protects the cultural, religious, and linguistic rights of minorities. The UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities (1992) reinforces these collective dimensions. Complementary UNESCO instruments, including the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2001) and the Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003), underscore States' obligations to preserve and promote cultural heritage. Most recently, Human Rights Council Resolution 58/4 (2025) reaffirmed that restrictions on participation in cultural life and access to cultural heritage may undermine social cohesion, dialogue, and peace. Cultural rights are further consolidated through jurisprudence and customary law. In the 2013 *Temple of Preah Vihear (Cambodia v. Thailand)* judgment, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) underscored States' obligations to protect cultural heritage linked to World Heritage sites, affirming its legal significance under international law. The International Law Commission's 2022 Draft Principles on the Protection of the Environment in Relation to Armed Conflicts likewise recognize the protection of cultural heritage as part of binding international obligations, some reflecting customary international law. In parallel, the International Committee of the Red Cross's Customary International Humanitarian Law Study (Rules 38–40) identifies the protection of cultural property as an established customary norm.

220. Kosovo is not a member of UNESCO. On 4 August 2015, Kosovo applied for membership and declared its acceptance of the UNESCO Constitution. Although the Executive Board recommended admission on 22 September 2015, the General Conference rejected the application on 9 November 2015, as it failed to secure the required two-thirds majority (92 votes in favor, 50 against, and 29 abstentions). Consequently, UNESCO conventions and declarations are not directly binding in Kosovo. In spite of this, however, they constitute authoritative international standards, with which Kosovo in general chooses to align its domestic legal and policy framework.

221. In line with the international standards outlined above, Kosovo's constitutional and legislative framework provides explicit protection for cultural rights and heritage. Article 59 of the Constitution guarantees members of communities the right to express, maintain, and develop their culture, and to preserve the essential elements of their identity, including religion, language, traditions, and culture, as well as the right to establish cultural, artistic, scientific, and educational associations. Article 9 further recognizes cultural and religious heritage as an integral part of Kosovo's heritage and imposes a special duty on the State to ensure effective protection of sites and monuments of cultural and religious significance to communities. This constitutional mandate is implemented through Law No. 02/L-88 on Cultural Heritage, which adopts a broad definition that encompasses heritage in the architectural, archaeological, movable, and spiritual sense. Moreover in 2024, Kosovo also adopted Law No. 08/L-245 on Art and Culture. This law defines cultural policy

in Kosovo and regulates the conditions for the establishment and administration of public institutions of art and culture.

222. During the reporting period, an ongoing Creative Industries Project implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in cooperation with relevant Kosovo ministries supported the development of Kosovo's creative economy through measures aimed at strengthening the legal and policy framework and expanding employment opportunities in the creative sector. The project also sought to enhance the skills of young women and men through formal and informal education, improve access to finance and research opportunities for creative industries, and support municipal development through strategic planning, local creative initiatives, and cultural tourism.²³⁹

223. In 2025, the EU Ambassador to Kosovo, Aivo Orav, reiterated the significance of preservation and protection of cultural and religious heritage of all communities and emphasized the existing institutional mechanisms, including the Kosovo Police Unit for the Protection of Religious and Cultural Heritage Sites, which provides continuous physical security to Serbian Orthodox churches and monasteries. In this regard, it should be highlighted that KFOR also continues to provide round-the-clock security for the Visoki Dečani Monastery as part of its mandate to protect cultural heritage in coordination with Kosovo Police and EULEX.²⁴⁰ Orav also highlighted the role of the Law on Special Protective Zones for the establishment of the Implementation and Monitoring Council (IMC). Notably, the IMC is co-chaired by the EU and serves as a dispute-resolution mechanism between central and local authorities and the Serbian Orthodox Church. According to Orav, renewed efforts were made in 2025 to reactivate the work of the IMC.²⁴¹

224. On 23 July 2025, a Roman Catholic religious rite was reportedly conducted at the archaeological site of the medieval Serbian Orthodox monastery Bogorodica Hvostanska in Studenica village, Istok/Istog municipality. According to an official statement by the Diocese of Raška and Prizren, the rite was carried out without the knowledge, consent, or involvement of the Serbian Orthodox Church, which regards the site as part of its canonical heritage. The Diocese raised concern that the act took place in a protected cultural and religious heritage zone and emphasised that no prior coordination with the rightful ecclesiastical authority was made. The statement noted that the site's status as a special protective zone under applicable heritage law was potentially undermined by unauthorised religious activity.²⁴²

225. In 2025, several incidents affecting symbols of Serbian cultural and historical identity were reported in Kosovo, raising concerns regarding the protection of cultural expression and community heritage. On 18 August 2025, a Cyrillic sign displaying the Ten Commandments, which had stood at the entrance to North Mitrovicë/Mitrovica for over two decades, was found removed. On 21 August 2025, the Serbian flag was reportedly taken down and cut from a memorial complex in Goraždevac dedicated to local victims, including those killed during the 1999 NATO bombing and the 2003 Bistrica river attack. Later, on 3 December 2025, the bust of Bogdan Radenković, an early

239 UNDP (2026), [Creative industries project](#).

240 KFOR (2025), [Italian soldiers protecting the cultural heritage of Visoki Decani Monastery](#).

241 European Union Office in Kosovo European Union Special Representative in Kosovo (2025), [Orav: The EU wants to see a sustainable solution for the Serbian community in Kosovo](#).

242 NSI (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

twentieth-century Serbian political and cultural activist born near Zvečan/Zveçan, was removed from its longstanding location in the centre of Zvečan/Zveçan, where it had been displayed for more than twenty years. Together, these events illustrate the continued sensitivity surrounding symbolic cultural markers and their implications for the enjoyment of cultural rights by the K-Serb community.

226. Recommendations

- The Ministry of Culture and Tourism should ensure strict adherence to protection measures in the Special Protective Zones through the prior authorization for any religious or cultural activity and sanctioning unauthorized interventions at protected sites;
- The Kosovo Police should investigate and publicly report on incidents involving the removal or damage of cultural and religious symbols, ensuring accountability and protection of cultural expression for all communities.

7. SECTION C: RIGHTS OF SPECIFIC PERSONS AND GROUPS

7.1 Women's rights and gender equality

227. The protection of women's rights in Kosovo is anchored in international human rights law and its constitutional incorporation. Pursuant to Article 22 of the Constitution, directly applicable international agreements take precedence over domestic legislation. These include CEDAW and the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention), both directly applicable, as well as the ICCPR (Articles 2, 3, 23 and 26) and the ECHR (Article 14 and Protocol No. 12). Although not expressly cited in the Constitution, UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security informs the legislative framework by emphasizing women's participation in peacebuilding and protection in conflict settings. Beyond binding treaties, women's rights are further reinforced through political commitments. The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995), together with its periodic review processes, most recently Beijing +30 (2025), establishes a comprehensive policy framework across twelve critical areas, including violence against women, armed conflict and decision-making. Additional normative guidance derives from the UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (1993) and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular SDG 5 on gender equality and women's empowerment.

228. At constitutional level, Article 24 guarantees equality before the law and prohibits discrimination on any ground, including race, color, gender, language, religion, political or other belief, national or social origin, association with any community, property, economic or social status, sexual orientation, birth, disability, or any other personal status. This constitutional guarantee is operationalized through a set of specific legislative acts reflecting international standards on gender equality and women's rights. These include Law No. 05/L-020 on Gender Equality, Law No. 05/L-021 on Protection from Discrimination, and Law No. 08/L-185 on Prevention and Protection from Domestic Violence, Violence against Women, and Gender-based Violence, which replaced Law No. 03/L-182 on the Protection against Domestic Violence in October 2023. Furthermore, the Criminal Code No. 06/L-074 protects women by criminalizing rape on the basis of lack of consent (Article 227), domestic violence (Article 248), forced marriage (Article 239), human trafficking and exploitation (Article 165), and sexual harassment, thereby establishing a legal framework against gender-based violence and coercion.

229. In terms of institutional governance, the Agency of Gender Equality (AGE) comprises the main mechanism tasked with overseeing the rightful implementation of gender-related policies in the GoK. While in this regard the AGE, within the Office of the Prime Minister, has been engaged with drafting the Program for Gender Equality 2025-2035, this document has yet to be completed at the time of the CSO report. The AGE is key to addressing challenges and promoting progress towards gender equality at a policy level.²⁴³

243 KGSC (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

230. Shelters in Kosovo constitute the primary institutional mechanism for the protection of women survivors of domestic violence and trafficking in human beings. Currently, eight shelters for domestic violence and one shelter for victims of trafficking provide a total capacity of 97 available places.²⁴⁴ According to Ministry of Justice statistics for January–December 2025, seven shelters accommodated 160 women and 181 children during that period, indicating sustained demand for protection services, although capacity remains below international standards and recommendations.²⁴⁵ In terms of accessibility, shelters are open to women with uncertain residence status and without documentation, women with physical disabilities, and older women. One specialized shelter for survivors of trafficking has a capacity of 10 beds, while another facility supporting child survivors of abuse and domestic violence provides 12 beds. Finally, a separate shelter operates for high-risk victims of trafficking, and offers 25 beds.²⁴⁶

231. According to Kosovo police data, from January to December 2025 the total number of domestic violence cases was 2,815 reported to the Kosovo Police.²⁴⁷ The majority of the victims in these cases were women. As the table below indicates, the past four years have been characterized by an increase in reported cases, which has ostensibly plateaued in 2025. This upward trend may reflect a range of factors, including greater willingness or improved access to reporting mechanisms, enhanced institutional identification of cases, or a substantive increase in the incidence of violence.

Year	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
DV cases	1915	2069	2200	2273	2638	2959	2815

Figure 2. Domestic violence cases as per the Kosovo Police

232. Notably, concerning the recording of gender-based, and domestic violence by institutional authorities, as illustrated above, a recently published report by NGO Kosova Women’s Network (KWN) titled *Zero Tolerance*, monitoring institutional response to gender-based violence (GBV) demonstrates shortcomings in institutional understanding.²⁴⁸ The report finds that police officers frequently conflate GBV with domestic violence, thereby not only conflating numbers of cases but also delimiting the conceptual scope and institutional response to both violations.²⁴⁹ In their 2025 commentary on the European Commission Country Report, the NGO Kosovo Gender Studies Center (KGSC) and the NGO KWN similarly highlight insufficient survivor-centered support.²⁵⁰ In regard to the institutional response, the annual report of NGO GLPS titled *Performance and Gaps: Institutional Treatment of Domestic Violence in 2025* examines the handling of domestic violence cases by the Kosovo Police, the Prosecution, and the judiciary throughout 2025. The report finds that while 1,901 indictments were filed, courts resolved only 56 percent of cases, with an average

244 KWN (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

245 Ministry of Justice (2026), [Databaza për evidentimin e rasteve të dhunës në familje](#).

246 KGSC (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

247 Ministria e Drejtësisë (2026), [Databaza për evidentimin e rasteve të dhunës në familje](#).

248 KWN (2025), [Zero tolerance, monitoring institutional response to gender-based violence](#).

249 KWN (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

250 KGSC (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

duration of 281 days per case. In 87 percent of resolved cases, courts issued convictions; however, only one-third resulted in effective imprisonment, and 85 percent of defendants pleaded guilty. The monitoring of 830 court hearings further revealed that 260 were postponed, primarily due to the absence of parties. The report also identifies a range of procedural violations and shortcomings, including inaccurate recording of proceedings, failure to appoint ex officio legal representation despite requests, non-disclosure of case files to parties by the prosecution, continuation of hearings without fulfilling legal obligations, and inadequate treatment of victims when appearing as witnesses.²⁵¹

233. Notably the same NGO KWN report (2025) demonstrates how despite better response mechanisms over time, victim-blaming, breaches of confidentiality and efforts to reconcile survivors with perpetrators continue to be widespread phenomena in institutional settings.²⁵² A September audio recording published by KALLXO.com in September 2025 illustrates these structural concerns. The recording revealed a private discussion between a judge and a prosecutor in a domestic violence case, in which they engaged in strategies to limit the victim’s participation in court proceedings. The Kosovo Judicial Council (KJC) subsequently suspended the judge, initiating a disciplinary review.²⁵³

234. Another serious attempted femicide case in November 2025 lays bare the persistent failure of protective measures intended to safeguard individuals in domestic violence cases. A man with the initials K.E. was arrested in Gadime, Lipjan/Lipljan on suspicion of aggravated murder in an attempt under Article 183 of the Criminal Code after allegedly attacking his former wife with an axe; critically, the suspect was subject to an active Protection Order at the time of the assault. The victim was transported for medical treatment and the prosecution confirmed the classification of the offense. According to NGO KWN, the case raises significant concerns regarding the monitoring and effective implementation of Protection Orders particularly given that such measures are intended to prevent precisely this type of lethal violence.²⁵⁴ In addition, in Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje a woman was stabbed and critically injured in what authorities also classified as “Aggravated murder in Attempt.” The police arrested the victim’s fiancé with whom she was cohabiting on suspicion of involvement in the attack.²⁵⁵

235. In early 2025, the Ministry of Justice introduced a specialized emergency telephone line aimed at providing immediate assistance to victims of domestic violence and gender-based violence. On 29 January 2025, the Minister of Justice signed the Draft Instructions establishing the hotline, designed to offer rapid, confidential, and safe support. Subsequently, on 26 February 2025, the Government approved the Administrative Instruction, formalizing the hotline’s institutional implementation as part of the State’s victim support infrastructure.

236. The 2025 Trafficking in Persons Report for Kosovo identified 14 victims of trafficking with 7 exploited for sexual purposes and 7 for labor exploitation.²⁵⁶ Experts and civil society representatives highlight the continued exploitation of individuals for sexual exploitation in private apart-

251 GLPS (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

252 KWN (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

253 Prishtina Insight (2025), [Don't let her speak: Judge suspended after KALLXO.com revealed plot to silence abuse victim.](#)

254 Betimi për Drejtësi (2025), [Arrestohet i dyshuari se tentoi me sëpatë ta privonte nga jeta bashkëshorten e tij.](#)

255 Betimi për Drejtësi (2025), [Therret me thikë një grua në Fushë-Kosovë, arrestohet i fejuari i saj.](#)

256 KGSC (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

ments and motels, and criticize institutional weaknesses in victim identification and protection mechanisms. Vulnerable groups most at risk include women, children, migrants, and persons living in severe economic conditions with Kosovo often functioning both as a place of transit and a site of internal exploitation.²⁵⁷

237. In 2025, a case involving alleged sexual harassment by a Kosovo Police employee has been the subject of investigation by the Kosovo Police Inspectorate (PIK). The Kosovo Police employee was detained following suspicion of sexually harassing a minor female student over a two-week period near a school building. Acting in coordination with the Basic Prosecution Office in Prizren, authorities ordered 48-hour detention for the suspect, and PIK recommended his suspension pending further proceedings.²⁵⁸ The case also reflects wider institutional concerns identified by the NGO KWN in its 2025 Zero Tolerance report, which found that police officers frequently minimized sexual harassment, tended to justify perpetrators' conduct, and often failed to recognise the power dynamics, psychological abuse, and coercive control inherent in such cases. The report further noted a tendency to downplay survivors' experiences, particularly in the absence of visible physical injuries, pointing to persistent gaps in institutional understanding and response to gender-based violence.²⁵⁹

238. In 2025, misogynistic online discourse remained a significant obstacle to women's political participation in Kosovo. Monitoring by the NGO Democracy for Development Institute (D4D) during the election period in February 2025 documented systematic sexist attacks against women candidates and MPs, including humiliation, delegitimization, and coordinated efforts to damage credibility. Such patterns demonstrate that women in politics continue to face forms of exclusion extending beyond institutions and into the digital public sphere.²⁶⁰

239. Women in the north of Kosovo generally did not report cases due to distrust in the police, pointing directly to significant underreporting, as per NGO ACDC. An informal group of women collected around 30 testimonies during 2024 and submitted a letter with 415 signatures to KFOR. In contrast, a police official stated that only three cases of sexual harassment were officially initiated in 2025 (by the end of May) — highlighting a stark discrepancy between lived experiences and formal records. At the broader societal level, one regional/expert report indicates that 29 percent of women reported experiencing sexual harassment, suggesting a wide base of unreported or informally reported incidents compared to administrative data. Official institutional statistics at the Kosovo level exist but are not systematically disaggregated for northern municipalities in publicly available sources. For example, a 2023 official reporting document notes 33 reported cases of sexual harassment and 25 resolved cases at the Kosovo level, without municipal breakdown.²⁶¹

240. Access to comprehensive post-rape medical care in Kosovo remains limited and insufficiently institutionalized as of 2025. While abortion is legally permitted under reproductive health laws

257 Bota Sot (2025), [Mbi 60 raste të trafikimit me njerëz. Arrestohen 120 persona.](#)

258 Telegrafi (2025), [A civilian police officer is arrested, suspected of sexually harassing a minor near a school.](#)

259 KWN (2025), [Zero tolerance? Monitoring the institutional response to gender-based violence.](#)

260 D4D (2025), [Gender-based disinformation and misogynistic language in online media.](#)

261 ACDC (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

and general health services provide initial medical treatment and STI testing, there is no fully operational, dedicated state programme ensuring systematic referral, long-term psycho-social rehabilitation, or standardized provision of emergency contraception and STI prophylaxis for rape survivors. Notably, post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) for HIV—an international standard component of post-assault care—is not available within the public health system, and the planned referral center for sexual violence cases at the Institute of Forensic Medicine had not yet become fully functional in 2025.²⁶²

241. Public attitudes toward gender equality provide an important lens through which to assess the social foundations of legal and institutional reforms. A June 2025 survey conducted by the NGO Social Impact Think-Tank (SIT), in collaboration with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), examined perspectives of 305 men and women across urban and rural Kosovo on gender equality, gender roles, stereotypes, and gender-based violence. While more than 90 per cent of respondents rejected the notion that women should endure domestic violence to maintain the family unit, the findings also revealed the persistence of victim-blaming attitudes and tendencies to justify perpetrators, thereby underlining the distance between overt formal rejections of violence and deeply embedded gender norms.²⁶³

242. In June 2025, the Ministry of Health (MoH) adopted a decision increasing maternity and child allowances with the measure applying immediately to all new mothers regardless of employment status. For unemployed mothers, the maternity allowance amounts to 1,955.4 EUR, disbursed at 315.9 EUR per month over six months, in addition to a child allowance of 240 EUR paid at 20 EUR per month for twelve months, totaling 2,195.4 EUR in the first year per child. For employed mothers, in addition to receiving 70 percent of their regular salary during maternity leave, the state provides supplementary payments of 325.9 EUR per month for the first three months and 319.5 EUR per month for the following three months, alongside the same 240 EUR annual child allowance, amounting to 2,176.2 EUR in total first-year state support per child.²⁶⁴ Notably, the Labour Law had still not been amended during the reporting period despite continued concerns related to maternity leave provisions.²⁶⁵

243. Notwithstanding the increase in social security for mothers, gender disparities continue to characterize the labour market of Kosovo. A recent report of the IMF examining the labor market and gender in Kosovo documents the persistence of low female labor force participation, which ranks below 20 percent and as such, is among the lowest in Europe. In addition to structural disparities, the report partially attributes the consistently low female labor force participation rate to unpaid care work in the home.²⁶⁶ Additionally, gender wage gaps have been identified as well with women earning 0.74 EUR for every 1 EUR earned by men.²⁶⁷

244. Gender inequality is also spatially stratified with a marked urban-rural divide. Rural women in Kosovo continue to face structural barriers in exercising land and property rights, despite for-

262 KGSC (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

263 SIT (2025), [Intergenerational research report. Public opinions on gender themes: gender stereotypes, gender-based violence and gender equality.](#)

264 GoK (2025), [Vendimet e mbledhjes së 261 të të Qeverisë.](#)

265 KDI (2024), [Liqji i ri i punës. Në mes të nevojave dhe kërkesave për ndryshim.](#)

266 IMF (2025), [Labor market and Gender. The Republic of Kosovo.](#)

267 The Borgen Project (2025), [Fighting the gender wage gap in Kosovo: efforts and initiatives.](#)

mal guarantees of gender equality within the legal framework. In May and June 2025, three legal advisory workshops were held in Pristina, Prizren, and Istog under a rural women's empowerment project jointly implemented by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and UN Women bringing together over 130 licensed notaries and municipal cadastral officials. The initiative aimed to strengthen gender-responsive interpretation and implementation of property and inheritance laws, promote co-ownership, and address persistent challenges linked to discriminatory inheritance practices, limited legal literacy, and restricted access to legal assistance in rural communities.²⁶⁸

245. In addition to urban-rural contexts, women from non-Albanian ethnic communities face deeper structural constraints in all segments of society. This includes their limited participation in decision-making structures including memberships in political parties, as noted by NGO KWN.²⁶⁹ Discrimination in health care services, and employment opportunities disproportionately deprive women from K-Roma, K-Ashkali and K-Egyptian communities from the socio-economic rights enjoyed by other communities.²⁷⁰

246. In June 2025, the 3rd International Women, Peace and Security Forum was held in Pristina under the theme "The Security Code for Our Generation." The forum brought together different actors to discuss women's role in peacebuilding, justice, and collective security. Discussions focused on strengthening women's participation in decision-making, advancing justice for survivors of conflict-related sexual violence, and promoting inclusive approaches to peace and security.²⁷¹

247. Recommendations

- The Kosovo Police should enforce protection orders in all domestic violence cases by introducing mandatory electronic monitoring for high-risk perpetrators and conducting documented compliance checks within 48 hours of issuance;
- The AoK should criminalize femicide as a distinct and aggravated criminal offence, with mandatory minimum sentencing guidelines and enhanced penalties;
- The Kosovo Judicial Council (KJC) should ensure the proper handling of domestic violence cases by requiring that all hearings include legal representation for victims, prohibit reconciliation practices, and publish quarterly data on case duration, postponements, and sentencing outcomes;
- The Ministry of Justice should operationalize the national emergency hotline for gender-based violence by ensuring 24/7 coverage, standardized referral procedures, and public reporting on the number of calls received and cases referred to institutions;
- The Ministry of Health should establish a fully functional post-rape care system by ensuring the availability of emergency contraception, STI treatment, and HIV post-exposure prophylaxis.

268 FAO (2025), [Strengthening legal pathways to land and property rights for Kosovan rural women](#).

269 KWN (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

270 KGSC (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

271 Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (2025), [Reimagining collective security: Highlights from the third international Women, Peace and Security Forum](#).

laxis (PEP) in all public hospitals, alongside standardized referral to psychosocial support services.

7.2 Children's rights

248. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), defining a child as any person under 18, is directly applicable in Kosovo pursuant to Article 22 of the Constitution and prevails over domestic legislation. The Committee on the Rights of the Child, in General Comment No. 13 (2011), requires States to adopt effective legislative, administrative, social, and educational measures to protect children from all forms of violence, while General Comment No. 5 (2003) emphasizes the necessity of national action plans, adequate resources, and professional training to ensure full implementation. Additional instruments incorporated under Article 22 reinforce these obligations, including the ICCPR (Article 24), which guarantees special protection for children, and CEDAW, which addresses the heightened risks faced by girls in contexts of discrimination and gender-based violence. At the UN level, General Assembly Resolution 73/155 (2018) and Human Rights Council Resolution 34/16 (2017) further call for the integration of children's rights into national development frameworks and the effective realization of their rights in practice.

249. In addition to the international instruments listed above, the protection of children's rights is guaranteed under Article 50 of the Constitution of Kosovo, which affirms children's well-being, equality, and protection from violence, maltreatment, and exploitation. This constitutional framework is complemented by Law No. 06/L-084 on Child Protection, which provides safeguards against physical, psychological, and emotional abuse, neglect, and exploitation across institutional and private settings. Although Kosovo's legal framework is broadly aligned with EU acquis and international standards, implementation remains weak.²⁷²

250. Institutional mechanisms established under Law No. 06/L-084 include the Inter-Ministerial Committee for the Rights of the Child within the Office of the Prime Minister, alongside central and local coordination structures. Save the Children Kosova/o underscores the delayed formation of Parliament and the GoK as a significant impediment to institutional engagement concerning children's rights and participation in 2025.²⁷³ In spite of the institutional instability, two main institutional developments were initiated to an extent. These are detailed in the paragraphs below.

251. The first notable development concerning Kosovo's child and social protection system in 2025 is the ex-post evaluation of Law No. 06/L-084 on Child Protection. Its findings remain to be published, as per Save the Children Kosova/Kosovo, who partook in the working group, and contributed to data and recommendations.²⁷⁴ On the other hand, the Law No. 08/L-255 on Social and Family Services adopted in 2024 remains only partially implemented to date with just six administrative instructions approved. Save the Children Kosova/o is currently supporting the development of an additional six, of which three are still in draft format.²⁷⁵

272 UNICEF (2025), [Assessment of the effectiveness of measures for the protection of child victims or witnesses of violence](#).

273 Save the Children Kosova/a (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

274 Save the Children Kosova/a (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

275 Save the Children Kosova/o (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

252. The second notable development at an institutional domain concerns the drafting process for the new Strategy on Child Rights (2026-2031) by the Office of Good Governance, Office of the Prime Minister (OGG) and its accompanying Action Plan (2026-2028). Save the Children Kosova/o notes participation from the very early stages of the drafting process with consultations with child-led groups during which children articulated key concerns and priorities related to their well-being, participation and protection. This approach represents an important step towards embedding children's participation more systematically in national decision-making processes.

253. With respect to strengthening child participation structures, Save the Children Kosovo/a published a Manual on the Functioning of Child-led Municipal Assemblies (see also the section above on the right to Assembly).²⁷⁶ The manual is significant in part because it draws on more than a decade of experience supporting children's participation in collaboration with civil society organizations and municipalities. It serves a dual purpose, first as a practical resource for municipalities, schools and other local actors to strengthen children's inclusion in local decision-making while secondly, also providing guidance for municipalities seeking such structures.

254. In 2025, implementation of the Child Protection Policy in pre-university education was strengthened through targeted capacity-building measures. Save the Children in Kosovo (SCIK), in partnership with Syri i Vizionit, supported 35 designated child protection focal points through an accredited 36-hour training endorsed by the Ministry of Education, enhancing their capacity to identify, prevent, and respond to child rights violations. Each participant developed a school-level action plan to facilitate policy implementation. In parallel, coordination meetings were convened in eight municipalities between school directors, Centres for Social Work, and the police, engaging over 200 participants and reinforcing inter-institutional cooperation and accountability mechanisms within the child protection system.²⁷⁷

255. Also notable in terms of social protection is a 50 percent increase in monthly child allowances announced by the GoK in November 2025. The measure was introduced within the framework of the 2026 state budget package approved in October 2025 and was presented as an effort to strengthen social protection and enhance support for families, particularly those with lower incomes.

256. Despite these efforts in 2025, the NGO KOMF underlines the persistence of structural deficiencies that undermine the protection of the child across domains in social services, health and education. This holds especially true at the municipal level. Ahead of the mayoral elections, KOMF noted that Social Work Centers remain critically overloaded with one officer in charge of large municipalities handling 350 active cases annually. Furthermore, accessible infrastructure for children with disabilities is lacking in over half of the Social Work Centers.²⁷⁸

²⁷⁶ Save the Children Kosova/o (2025), [Manual on the Functioning of Child-Led Municipalities](#).

²⁷⁷ Save the Children Kosova/o (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

²⁷⁸ Gazeta Express (2025), [KOMF addresses proposals to mayoral candidates for child protection](#).

257. Likewise, in the health sector breastfeeding and immunization indicators are low, according to KOMF, with just 32 percent of newborns breastfed within their first hour of birth and exclusive breastfeeding only practiced by 29 percent of infants under six months. Furthermore, by 2025, the immunization coverage has not returned to pre-pandemic levels.²⁷⁹ These findings should also be viewed in the context of social and structural barriers, including persistent stigma surrounding breastfeeding, limited workplace support, and challenges in the practical realization of labour rights related to breastfeeding breaks under Kosovo’s Labour Law.²⁸⁰

258. In 2025, healthcare accessibility for children with disabilities remains severely constrained, as reported by NGO HANDIKOS. Persistent gaps in health insurance coverage, limited availability of specialized services, and difficulties in accessing essential medicines continue to undermine adequate care. These systemic barriers place disproportionate pressure on families, some of whom seek treatment abroad due to the absence of comprehensive and accessible healthcare services within Kosovo.²⁸¹

259. In early childhood education, only 15 percent of children aged 3–4 are enrolled in preschool programs. Access barriers persist for marginalized children and children with disabilities (see also the section above on the right to education). Out of 1,044 educational institutions, only 609 are physically accessible to children with disabilities. The number of classroom support assistants remains insufficient, forcing some families to privately finance assistance.²⁸²

260. Reports of child abuse, including sexual violence and domestic violence within families, continued to be recorded and investigated by the Kosovo Police in 2025. Following referral, cases are assessed by Centres for Social Work and reviewed through the Case Management Roundtable (CMR). The CMR system, supported and strengthened by NGO Terre des Hommes, aims to improve inter-institutional coordination and service quality.²⁸³

261. In May 2025, a first-grade teacher at a private school in Pristina recorded a six-year-old pupil in an allegedly sexually degrading way using her personal mobile phone and transmitted the footage to the child’s parents, who subsequently reported the matter to the police. Criminal proceedings were initiated, and the suspect was released pending further investigation under regular procedural conditions.²⁸⁴

262. Furthermore, findings from an NGO BIRN survey in 2025 indicate insufficient protection of children’s rights in the digital sphere. Limited parental control applications along with harmful online content expose children to vulnerable situations and tangible risks. In December 2025, a 13-year old girl in Istog/Istok sustained injuries during a Superman Challenge, a self-harm trend leading to school-aged children injuring themselves. In addition to this, children are increasingly more exposed to harmful content in the digital realm such as bullying, inappropriate language use and images. As a result, CSO actors call for more focused digital safety education and potentially

279 Gazeta Express (2025), [KOMF addresses proposals to mayoral candidates for child protection](#).

280 KWN (2022), [Gender-based discrimination and labour in Kosovo](#).

281 HANDIKOS (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

282 Gazeta Express (2025), [KOMF addresses proposals to mayoral candidates for child protection](#).

283 Tdh (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo.

284 Sinjali (2025), [Ekskluzive: Skandal në shkollën ISP në lagjen Marigona – mësuesja incizon nxënësin 6-vjeçar duke prekur organin gjental](#).

state-supervised parental control systems in Kosovo.²⁸⁵

263. Children from K-Roma, K-Ashkali and K-Egyptian communities remain structurally positioned at the margins of Kosovo's socio-economic and cultural sphere. While school participation rates at the national level approach universality, educational trajectories within these communities reveal a marked pattern of dropouts across successive levels of schooling: attendance declines from 84 percent in primary education to 63 percent in secondary education, and falls dramatically to 31 percent in higher education. Beyond education, children from these communities continue to encounter systemic discrimination across key domains of social life, including schooling, health care and eventual access to employment opportunities later in life.²⁸⁶

264. The non-payment of child benefits to members of non-majority communities has emerged as a significant concern, prompting a formal recommendation letter from the Ombudsperson. Approximately 400 families, with more than 800 children, have been affected by this arbitrary administrative practice. Families were required to report to the Agency of Statistics in order to be registered, a requirement that the Ombudsperson deemed unjustified in the recommendation. In addition, families were asked to submit various documents, including proof of school attendance, vaccination records, and other personal data. It is important to note that these figures do not represent the total number of affected individuals, but only those who have formally reported the issue.²⁸⁷

265. In addition to entrenched structural discrimination and exclusion from participation in social life, the cultural phenomenon of early marriage among K-Roma, K-Ashkali and K-Egyptian communities constrains the societal development of children. In this respect, a report published in June 2025 by the Office on Good Governance (OGG), in cooperation with NGO Voice of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians (VoRAE), NGO Terre des hommes and HEKS/EPER, has provided the most updated empirical data on early marriages. Titled National Survey on Early Marriages among the K-Roma, K-Ashkali and K-Egyptian Communities in Kosovo, the study surveyed 196 minors (aged 13–18) and 178 adults (aged 18–40) across 19 municipalities in order to assess the scope and characteristics of informal early marriage practices. The findings confirm the continued persistence of early marriage despite its explicit prohibition under Kosovo law, and crucially, underlines the unregistered nature of these unions. As a result, they deprive institutions from a thorough understanding of its occurrence, and appropriate enforcement mechanisms ending early marriage.²⁸⁸

266. Recommendations

- The GoK should finalize and adopt the Strategy on Child Rights (2026–2031) and its Action Plan (2026–2028) by mid-2026, and publish annual progress reports with measurable indicators on implementation;
- The Ministry of Finance, Labour and Transfers should increase staffing in Centers for Social

285 BIRN (2025), [Digital playground: Online parental guidance still not the norm in Kosovo](#).

286 UNICEF (2025), [Assessment of the effectiveness of measures for the protection of child victims or witnesses of violence](#).

287 ACDC (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

288 Tdh (2025), [National survey on early marriages among the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in Kosovo](#).

Work to ensure a maximum caseload per officer and allocate budget for accessible infrastructure for children with disabilities in all municipalities;

- The Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation (MESTI) should ensure child protection in educational settings by mandating reporting protocols for abuse and conducting regular inspections of public and private schools as well as introducing digital safety education in all primary schools.

7.3 Youth rights

267. The Constitution of Kosovo does not explicitly recognize youth as a distinct rights-bearing category, limiting its reference to the eligibility to vote at the age of 18 in local and national elections. Yet, in August 2024, Law No. 08/L-264 on Youth entered into force, establishing a formal inter-institutional and inter-sectoral framework intended to position youth at the centre of state priorities. The Law creates the State Commission for Youth, chaired by the Prime Minister and established by Government decision, as the highest coordinating mechanism for youth policy implementation. The Commission is mandated to meet twice annually to determine priority areas, propose cross-sectoral working groups, coordinate relevant institutions and report on the implementation of youth policies, including oversight of the State Strategy for Youth and its annual plans, with participation of the Central Youth Council in an advisory, advocacy and monitoring capacity.

268. Concurrently, the Strategy for Youth 2024–2032 commits the Government to empowering young people and integrating them into an inclusive and sustainable society. The Law further formalizes the Central Youth Council as a platform for cooperation between central institutions, local councils, youth organisations and informal youth groups.

269. On International Youth Day 2025, the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports and UNICEF Kosovo co-hosted a roundtable focusing on empowering youth, underscoring reforms including youth councils and a new Law on Youth as part of the institutional agenda for youth participation. Young changemakers and institutional representatives discussed the importance of creating pathways for youth to influence policy and decision-making. Despite policy structures, meaningful youth involvement in decision-making remained limited in many municipal and national processes in 2025, with many young people reporting it as a consultative rather than decision-shaping engagement.²⁸⁹

270. In its April 2025 report *Emigration and the Labor Market in Kosovo: The Untapped Potential of the Inactive Workforce*, NGO GAP Institute highlights youth as a central fault line in Kosovo's emerging labor crisis. While large-scale emigration is depleting the active workforce, the domestic youth cohort remains structurally underemployed. Of approximately 1.1 million working-age individuals, 57 percent (613,000) are economically inactive, and among them are 78,000 young people classified as NEET (not in education, employment or training), representing 30 percent of youth — the highest rate in the Western Balkans and significantly above the EU average of 9.9

289 Kosovo Young Lawyers (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

percent. GAP's report draws attention to youth at a higher risk of leaving and simultaneously as an under-integrated domestic labor reserve whose exclusion if left unaddressed will deepen labor shortages.²⁹⁰ The Kosovo Fact Sheet 2025 notes that youth unemployment remained elevated at 19.5 percent, with a notable share of insecure and informal jobs, further contributing to youth economic insecurity and limiting stable work opportunities.²⁹¹

271. In continuation of the GAP report, youth unemployment in Kosovo remains structurally high in 2025 despite the implementation of the Government's wage-subsidy scheme "SuperPuna," launched in February 2023 and later extended to youth up to age 29. The government statements indicate that over 9,300 youth benefited from "SuperPuna" with by December 2025, 448 active employment posts available.²⁹² In 2025, social protection in Kosovo continued to play a critical role in supporting families and youth, but structural gaps persisted that affected the socioeconomic security of young people, especially those transitioning into independent adulthood.²⁹³

272. Under the project Youth Empowerment for Inclusive Employment, the NGO Terre des homme (Tdh) Kosovo conducted a mapping and needs assessment on the economic inclusion of vulnerable youth in the Municipality of Prizren in 2025. The report analyses structural barriers to employment among vulnerable youth and incorporates direct input from young people to identify priority intervention areas. While the assessment focuses primarily on economic inclusion, broader contextual factors remain relevant.²⁹⁴

273. In Kosovo, youth vulnerability continues to intersect with psychosocial stressors linked to post-conflict legacies and the socio-economic effects of the COVID-19 period, as per the NGO Tdh in 2025. Although Kosovo's overall suicide rate remains comparatively low to other regions, available evidence indicates ongoing concerns regarding adolescent mental health, including increased reporting of anxiety, depression and suicide ideation. These structural and psychosocial factors reinforce the need for integrated employment policies that address both economic activation and youth well-being.²⁹⁵ In addition, there is limited access to formal youth-focused services especially outside of Kosovo's urban centers. Kosovo's healthcare system overall continued to face constraints in meeting youth mental health needs, and there was no comprehensive, national youth mental health strategy implemented during the reporting period.²⁹⁶

274. In 2025, the Kosovo Police Spring 2025 operational plan included tactical actions to identify children and youth in street situations as potential victims of trafficking or exploitation, including street outreach and joint inspections of premises with other authorities. Civil society reactions in 2025 included formal complaints by human rights organizations requesting opinions from the Ombudsperson and UNICEF regarding police conduct in youth-related incidents, highlighting

290 GAP (2025), [Migration and the Labor Market in Kosovo: The Untapped Potential of the Inactive Workforce](#).

291 Kosovo Young Lawyers (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

292 Kosovo 2.0 (2025), [Superpuna: Qysh po shkon?](#)

293 Kosovo Young Lawyers (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.o

294 Tdh Kosovo (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

295 Tdh Kosovo (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

296 Kosovo Young Lawyers (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

concerns about privacy and dignity protections for young adults.²⁹⁷

275. The readiness assessment identified positive aspects of the system such as broad eligibility criteria and clear procedural frameworks for benefit delivery. However, it also concluded that coverage remains limited relative to the population in need, and that existing policies may not fully reach youth transitioning out of dependent care or those not covered by household-based benefits.²⁹⁸

276. The same 2025 UNICEF readiness assessment found that while major social transfer schemes are in place, coordination mechanisms between programs (e.g., SAS and CAS) and emergency responsiveness are underdeveloped, potentially reducing effectiveness during shocks and socioeconomic stress periods. This affects young adults directly when they lose family support or encounter joblessness or crisis situations. The report further noted that restrictive eligibility and flat-rate benefits contribute to limited impact on poverty alleviation and youth economic security, particularly where families with young adults face multi-dimensional vulnerability (e.g., large households or those in rural areas).²⁹⁹

277. Furthermore, in 2025, the Ombudsperson issued recommendations concerning suspension of child allowance payments for some beneficiaries due to documentation verification procedures, noting administrative irregularities that caused delayed or unequal access to benefits. Throughout 2025, the child allowance scheme has reportedly not been reinstated following its suspension in September 2024, with continued implications for vulnerable groups. Available information indicates that non-majority communities, particularly K-Serb, K-Roma, and K-Gorani residents in northern municipalities, remain disproportionately affected.³⁰⁰ These concerns were reflected in a roundtable held on 12 June 2025, organized by NGO ACDC and attended by the Kosovo Agency of Statistics, the Ombudsperson Institution, and affected community members.³⁰¹

278. Lastly, unaddressed gaps in social protection design and implementation, including coverage limitations, eligibility barriers, and inconsistent responsiveness to shocks, widen the socioeconomic vulnerability of young people, especially those who have left formal education or are unemployed. These gaps limit youth's access to stable income, health, and education services and increase the risk of poverty and marginalization.³⁰²

279. Recommendations

- The State Commission for Youth should be operationalized through at least two formal sessions annually and youth representation in decision-making processes;
- The Ministry of Health (MoH) should develop a national youth mental health program that includes the establishment of accessible community-based services in all municipalities;
- The Ministry of Finance, Labour and Transfers should ensure equal and uninterrupted access to child and youth-related social benefits by eliminating administrative barriers and reinstating suspended child allowance payments including in non-majority communities.

297 Kosovo Young Lawyers (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

298 Kosovo Young Lawyers (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

299 Kosovo Young Lawyers (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

300 ACDC (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

301 Kosovo Young Lawyers (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

302 Kosovo Young Lawyers (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

7.4 The rights of persons with disabilities

280. The protection of the rights of persons with disabilities in Kosovo is framed within a broader system of international and regional human rights instruments. At the international level, the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) establishes comprehensive standards on dignity, autonomy, non-discrimination and full participation; however, the CRPD has not been incorporated into Article 22 of the Constitution as a directly applicable international human rights instrument. Additional binding obligations arise from the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which prohibits discrimination (Article 2), guarantees equality before the law (Article 26), and protects political participation without discrimination, including on grounds of disability (Article 25), as well as from the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), whose Article 23 recognizes the right of children with disabilities to a full and decent life and requires States to provide special care and assistance. Regionally, although the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) does not explicitly reference disability, the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) has interpreted provisions such as Article 14 (non-discrimination), Article 5 (liberty and security), Article 8 (private and family life), and Article 3 (prohibition of inhuman or degrading treatment) to encompass disability-related protections. The European Social Charter (Revised), under Article 15, expressly guarantees the rights of persons with disabilities to independence, social integration and participation in community life.

281. At the domestic level, Kosovo's constitutional and legislative framework reflects these standards but lacks explicit and systematic harmonization. Article 22 of the Constitution incorporates several international human rights instruments as directly applicable law; however, the CRPD is not included among them. In Case KO 207/22, the Constitutional Court of Kosovo unanimously held that the proposed constitutional amendment to add the CRPD to Article 22 was compatible with Chapters II and III of the Constitution and did not diminish existing fundamental rights, emphasizing the Convention's principles of dignity, autonomy, non-discrimination and positive obligations. Nevertheless, the Assembly of Kosovo failed in October 2023 to secure the necessary votes to amend the Constitution, and no renewed attempt was made in 2025 despite the Court's clearance.³⁰³ Parallel to this constitutional gap, disability rights are regulated through sector-specific legislation, including Law No. 2003/23 on Disability Pensions; Law No. 03/L-022 on the Material Support for Families of Children with a Permanent Disability; Law No. 05/L-067 on the Status and Rights of Persons with Paraplegia and Tetraplegia; and Law No. 04/L-092 for Blind Persons, which collectively provide a fragmented but operational legal basis for the protection of persons with disabilities.

282. At the policy level, a new Strategy on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2025-2030) has been adopted in 2025 along with its Action Plan (2025-2027). The Strategy posits three overarching strategic objectives, which include (1) improving the quality and effectiveness of social services, (2) the advancement of inclusive education and professional development opportunities and (3) improving accessibility to infrastructure. Aligned with the National Development Strategy 2030,

303 HANDIKOS (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

it remains to be evaluated how these objectives will be met in the five-year period it lays out.³⁰⁴

283. In 2025, the Ministry of Finance, Labour and Transfers adopted Regulation No. 01/2025 on the Functioning of the Medical-Social Commission which introduces structural modifications to the disability status recognition system. The most significant change is the elimination of mandatory periodic reassessment for blind persons. Previously, individuals with permanent and irreversible visual impairment were required to undergo repeated medical re-evaluations to maintain their legal status and access to benefits. In the new regulation, this requirement is removed and responds finally to the longstanding advocacy from CSOs who argued that the reassessment was medically redundant and burdensome.³⁰⁵

284. In parallel to this, procedures for paraplegic and tetraplegic persons have been modernized, including the introduction of electronic application mechanisms which mark a shift towards the digitalization of disability assessment processes. Whether the reform improves consistency and accelerates access to benefits will depend on implementation and oversight. But on paper, this is one of the more substantive procedural improvements adopted in 2025 in the disability rights field.

285. A particularly noteworthy observation was raised by the NGO HANDIKOS, which reported that institutional instability throughout 2025, compounded by successive electoral periods, significantly disrupted communication with key government stakeholders. According to HANDIKOS, the prolonged political transition and shifting administrative responsibilities limited consistent engagement with ministries and decision-makers responsible for disability policy implementation. This instability reportedly affected consultation processes, delayed coordination on strategic initiatives, and weakened follow-up on pending commitments.³⁰⁶

286. Challenges regarding equitable access of persons with disabilities persisted during the election periods.³⁰⁷ A particularly notable case regarding the refusal of a person with Down Syndrome to vote was noted in the November 2025 local elections. On 9 November 2025, the Director of the NGO Down Syndrome Kosova, expressed concerns about some persons with disabilities being prevented from exercising their right to vote during the local elections. In a specific case reported at a polling station in the Ulpiana neighborhood (Hasan Prishtina school), a person with Down syndrome was denied the opportunity to vote despite having previously participated in national elections on 9 February 2024 and local elections on 12 October 2025 and possessing legal capacity. According to the statement, the denial was based on the application of a newly drafted “official guide for voters requiring assistance” (November 2025).³⁰⁸

287. The situation in Kosovo remains particularly difficult for persons with disabilities, who continue to comprise one of the poorest and most marginalized groups in society.³⁰⁹ Notably, the number of beneficiaries of work-related disability pensions declined by 26.8 percent in September 2025 compared to September 2024, representing a substantial reduction within a single year. At

304 OGG – Office of the Prime Minister (2025), [Strategy for the rights for persons with disabilities 2025-2030](#).

305 Indeks Online (2025), [Regulation eliminating the reassessment procedure for blind people is approved](#).

306 HANDIKOS (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

307 HANDIKOS (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

308 KQZ (2025), [Votimi me asistencë](#).

309 Prishtina Insight (2025), [Beyond Empty Speeches: Kosovo Lags Behind Standards in Integrating People with Disabilities](#).

the same time, however, increases were recorded in other disability-related schemes, including pensions for persons with paraplegia and tetraplegia (+9.0 percent), financial support for families with children with disabilities (+8.5 percent), general disability pensions (+4.0 percent), and compensation for blind persons (+1.9 percent).³¹⁰

288. Following the international day of persons with disabilities in December 2025, a number of interviews and awareness-raising campaigns circulated on television and social media with discussions about disability-inclusive employment in Kosovo.³¹¹ The discussions highlighted the deficient employment conditions in Kosovo which limit access to individuals with disabilities to partake meaningfully in employment. NGO HANDIKOS confirms that the legislation is systematically ignored with institutional facilitation for both employers and employees particularly difficult. Key obstacles identified include insufficient monitoring and sanctions, low institutional awareness in both public and private sectors, and persistent social stigma, all of which contribute to the exclusion of a large number of persons with disabilities from meaningful employment.³¹² This holds especially true for women with disabilities in Kosovo, who face added barriers due to both disability and gender bias.³¹³

289. In addition to systematic exclusion from employment opportunities, persons with disabilities are insufficiently integrated into the educational system. Only 12 percent of school-age children with disabilities, which is approximately 5,300 out of an estimated 43,000 children, are enrolled in school, placing Kosovo well below international standards on inclusive education. As noted above in the section on the rights to education, the situation is compounded for deaf children in particular. According to the most recent study of the Council of Europe (2023), almost 100 percent of deaf children in Kosovo lack basic literacy skills. Although a concept document on Sign Language has been drafted in cooperation with the Prime Minister's Office for Good Governance under the Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2025–2030, it remains at the conceptual stage.³¹⁴

290. In addition to the education sector, previous research has shown that the coverage and quality of disability-specific health services provided by public institutions have not improved at scale in recent years with weak professional capacity among medical personnel in working with persons with disabilities as well as the frequent misdiagnosis of physical and intellectual disabilities.³¹⁵

291. In 2025, a 13-year-old severely assaulted an individual with mental disabilities in Ferizaj/Uros-evac, raising serious concerns about the safety, protection, and broader social security of persons with disabilities in Kosovo.³¹⁶ This is not an isolated incident, but a recurrent pattern of violence against this individual.

310 Gazeta Blic (2025), [Rënie dramatike e pensioneve invalidore në Kosovë, 26.8% më pak përfitues.](#)

311 Klan Kosova (2025), [Punësimi, sfida kryesore e personave me aftësi të kufizuara.](#)

312 Katrori info (2025), [Sa po respektohet e drejta për punësim për personat me aftësi të kufizuara?](#)

313 UN Kosovo (2025), [social media post.](#)

314 Prishtina Insight (2025), [Beyond Empty Speeches: Kosovo Lags Behind Standards in Integrating People with Disabilities.](#)

315 Global Disability Fund (2024), [Situational analysis on the rights of persons with disabilities in Kosovo.](#)

316 Klan Kosova (2025), [13 vjeçari rrah brutalisht personin me aftësi të kufizuara.](#)

292. Recommendations

- The Assembly of Kosovo (AoK) should reinitiate and adopt the constitutional amendment to incorporate the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) into Article 22 by the end of 2026;
- THE Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation (MESTI) should ensure inclusive education by increasing enrollment of children with disabilities, adopting sign language as a language of instruction, and publishing annual data on school participation and support services;
- The GoK should ensure equal access to voting for persons with disabilities by revising voter assistance guidelines, training polling staff, and documenting and publicly reporting all complaints of denied voting rights.

7.5 Non-majority communities' rights

293. Kosovo has well-established institutions at the central and municipal levels, as well as an adequate legislative framework, to guarantee the rights of non-majority communities. The Constitution of Kosovo declares in Article 3.1 (Equality before the Law) that Kosovo "is a multi-ethnic society consisting of Albanian and other Communities". The non-majority communities of Kosovo include the K-Serb, K-Turkish, K-Roma, K-Ashkali, K-Egyptian, K-Bosniak, and K-Goran communities and other communities.

294. In addition to the Constitution, the rights of non-majority communities are guaranteed in Law No. 03/L-047 on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of the Communities and their Members in Kosovo. In this Law, the "national, ethnic and religious diversity" of Kosovo is defined as "a source of strength and wealth for the further development of a democratic society." In light of this understanding, the law stipulates special measures that can ensure the implementation of the equal status and integration of the communities and their members in Kosovo society. Furthermore, in Law No. 02/L-37 on the Use of Languages (the Language Law) both Albanian and Serbian have the status of official languages.

295. At the municipality level, the language of any non-majority communities shall have the status of a language in official use if a municipality is inhabited by a community whose mother tongue is not an official language, and which constitutes at least 3 percent of the total population of the respective municipality. The official use of Turkish and Roma language in the Municipality of Prizren is an illustrative case of this Law in practice. The same is the case with the Roma language in Graçanicë/Gračanica.

296. The institutional mechanisms tasked with safeguarding the rights of the non-majority communities in Kosovo partially fall within the Community Consultative Council of the Office of the President of Kosovo, Municipal Offices for Communities and Return but also with the Ombudsperson and the Ministry for Communities and Returns. The Community Consultative Council bridges the gap between the public institutions of Kosovo and the communities. Its central role is to articulate the views of the communities on the legislation, policies, and programs relevant to

non-majority communities, to guarantee the efficient functioning of community representative organizations, and to provide communities with the opportunity to participate in legal and policy initiatives.

297. In 2025, the process of drafting the new Strategy for the Inclusion of K-Roma and K-Ashkali Communities 2027–2031, together with the Action Plan 2027–2029, was formally initiated in cooperation with the Office for Good Governance (OGG) within the Office of the Prime Minister. As part of this process, the NGO Voice of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians (VoRAE) played a substantive role by supporting the design and implementation of the first drafting phase. In December 2025, NGO VoRAE and OGG co-organized a comprehensive consultative workshop to assess the implementation of the existing strategy and define priorities for the forthcoming framework. The workshop brought together representatives of central institutions, civil society, and thematic experts, focusing on five key areas of socio-economic inclusion: education, employment, housing, health, and protection from discrimination. The consultations identified structural gaps in the current framework, including the lack of measurable indicators, weak interinstitutional coordination, and persistent barriers in access to public services.³¹⁷

298. As in previous reporting periods, the implementation of the Law No. 02/L-37 on the Use of Languages continues to raise structural concerns, particularly within institutional settings and the judicial domain. A July 2025 report published by NGO KLI titled *Judicial Efficiency in Practice and Linguistic Rights in the Judicial System* examined 226 hearings conducted over a seven-month period in the Special Department of the Basic Court in Pristina and the Basic Court branch in Gračanica/Graçanica. As we have already noted in the section on the rights to a fair trial and effective remedy, the findings demonstrate that linguistic deficiencies significantly affect procedural efficiency and equality before the law. Multiple hearings were postponed due to the absence or delayed translation of case files, confirming that inadequate language implementation directly disrupts judicial timelines and undermines effective access to justice. Beyond postponements, the report identifies persistent weaknesses in the quality of Serbian translations, rooted in long-term educational and institutional capacity deficits, raising concerns regarding legal certainty and fair trial guarantees.³¹⁸

299. Following the completion of the notary appointment process in May 2025, data from the Ministry of Justice indicates that there are currently 137 active notaries in Kosovo, distributed across 38 municipalities. However, representation of non-majority communities remains extremely limited. Out of the total number of notaries, only one notary belongs to the K-Serb community. This notary was appointed during the initial phase of establishing the notary system and operates in the municipality of Novo Brdo. The NGO ACDC analysis indicates that in municipalities with a K-Serb majority, notary services are predominantly provided by members of the K-Albanian community, often with limited provision of services in the Serbian language.³¹⁹

317 VoRAE (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

318 KLI (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

319 ACDC (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

300. In the police sector, non-Albanian staff account for 55 percent of personnel, of which 35 percent are K-Serbs. However, concerns persist regarding the level of inclusion, as Serbian staff, while present within the workforce, remain underrepresented in decision-making roles and are largely excluded from the chain of command. Notably, the position of Commander for the Northern Police Region remains vacant.³²⁰

301. These systemic shortcomings are compounded by a significant institutional gap: throughout most of 2025, the Government failed to appoint a Language Commissioner.³²¹ The absence of an active Commissioner created an enforcement vacuum within the Office mandated to oversee compliance with Law No. 02/L-37. With the Commissioner's mandate expired, the Office's ability to respond to violations, issue binding recommendations, and conduct systematic oversight was materially constrained. In effect, the combination of judicial-level deficiencies and weakened supervisory capacity further entrenched the implementation gap, rendering formal language guarantees increasingly fragile in practice.³²²

302. Findings from NGO CASA's public survey among the K-Serb community indicate that the most frequently cited obstacle to accessing local-level services is the language barrier, identified as the primary concern by 35.4 percent of respondents. This reflects persistent inconsistencies in the implementation of the constitutional guarantee of Serbian as an official language, as well as shortcomings in the enforcement of the Law on the Use of Languages. While these deficiencies are evident across institutions, they are reportedly less pronounced in Serb-majority municipalities than at the central level. The second most commonly identified obstacle, discrimination or favoritism (29.1 percent), is significantly more pronounced among respondents in northern Kosovo (41.2 percent compared to 19.8 percent elsewhere), suggesting that political and institutional marginalization, rather than language alone, is perceived in the north as the principal barrier to equal access to services.³²³ At the central level, respondents report a cumulative effect of structural barriers, including discrimination, language obstacles, lack of information, bureaucratic complexity, corruption, and geographic distance. Discrimination emerges as the most frequently identified primary barrier in the overall sample (35.9 percent), underscoring persistent perceptions of unequal treatment in interactions with state institutions and highlighting the need for strengthened institutional accountability and effective enforcement of anti-discrimination safeguards.

303. In 2025, the security environment in the north of Kosovo continued to be shaped by escalating contestation with direct implications for interethnic relations, mistrust and the everyday governance landscape in Serb-majority areas. NGO NSI notes that across the year, Kosovo Police and other Kosovo authorities reportedly undertook a series of operational interventions targeting Serbia-run or Serbia-linked structures and services. These actions included reported entries into offices, orders for staff to leave workplaces, confiscation of documents and materials, and the sealing or closure of facilities, affecting entities such as tax administration premises, insurance offices, social welfare centres, the National Employment Service, Serbian public enterprises, sports and youth institutions, and the City Library "Vuk Karadžić."³²⁴

320 ACDC (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

321 AKTIV (2025), [Report on language use in Kosovo: implementation of the law in institutions](#).

322 CASA (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

323 CASA (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

324 NSI (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

304. Similar closures were reported by NGO NSI to have occurred throughout the year. They report that on 15 January 2025 approximately 35 Serbia-run institutions south of the Ibar were entered and closed, including temporary municipal bodies, municipal offices, social welfare centres, and branches of “Pošta” (Post Office). These closures may have profound effects on the socio-economic rights of residents. Additional reported actions continued through May 2025, including interventions at waterworks facilities, sports halls (including during children’s training sessions), and the Red Cross of Kosovo, culminating later in the year with the reported takeover/closure of premises associated with “Službeni glasnik” in September 2025.³²⁵

305. Survey data collected in 2025 indicate that members of the K-Serb community in northern Kosovo identify the restoration of ethnic representation within the Kosovo Police at municipal level as a priority security concern. The current imbalance followed the collective resignation of K-Serb police officers and other institutional representatives in November 2022, a politically coordinated withdrawal linked to disputes over license plates and the establishment of the Association of Serb-Majority Municipalities. Legal obstacles complicate potential reinstatement, notably Administrative Instruction No. 02/2023, which bars the return of officers who voluntarily resigned; however, given that the resignations predated the Instruction and may have occurred under political pressure, its strict applicability remains legally debatable. Any return would require compliance with existing legislation, including security vetting, while also addressing concerns related to political influence. Article 128 of the Constitution mandates that the ethnic composition of municipal police reflect local demographics, yet implementation remains constrained by broader Kosovo–Serbia tensions.³²⁶

306. Parallel developments have further affected community perceptions of security and institutional access. Since 2022, Kosovo institutions have undertaken measures to close Serbia-administered institutions across the territory, with at least 59 entities reportedly shut down by 2025. Polling conducted among K-Serbs shows strong support, approximately three quarters of respondents, for returning to the institutions left in 2022, including police, municipal administrations, and judicial bodies. In this context, proposals for restoring trust emphasize a hybrid approach combining voluntary return of vetted officers, targeted recruitment of non-majority communities, and strengthened oversight and human rights safeguards, alongside broader governance reforms necessary for sustainable, multi-ethnic policing.³²⁷

307. Members of the K-Serb community and other non-majority groups continue to face structural barriers in accessing personal documentation, which significantly restricts their ability to exercise fundamental rights and access public services, including social assistance, pensions, property registration, marriage registration, banking services, and freedom of movement. These challenges are partly linked to the inconsistent implementation of agreements reached within the EU-facilitated dialogue, particularly regarding the recognition of Serbian-issued documents and court decisions. While a November 2024 decision by the Ministry of Internal Affairs temporarily allowed individuals

325 NSI (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

326 CASA (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

327 CASA (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

registered in Serbian civil registries to apply for registration of birth, marriage, and death records in Kosovo's central civil registry between February and April 2025, this measure did not establish a sustainable long-term solution. As noted in an EU assessment, Kosovo's non-recognition of passports issued by the Serbian Coordination Centre continues to prevent certain displaced persons from obtaining temporary residence ID cards and registering their civil status. Inconsistent practices across civil registration offices, limited institutional guidance, and reported discriminatory treatment further undermine equal access to documentation, highlighting the need for harmonized administrative procedures, full implementation of technical agreements, and strengthened safeguards against discrimination to ensure effective access to legal identity and equal enjoyment of rights.³²⁸

308. Furthermore with respect to the K-Serb community, a recent NGO CASA survey notes that issues with access to documentation limits their ability to travel³²⁹ (44.7 percent in the north, and 32.5 percent in the south); access pensions and social allowances (36.8 percent in the north, and 27.8 percent in the south); limits employment opportunities (32.9 percent in the north and 36.4 percent), limits starting a private business (22.4 percent in the north, and 25.8 percent in the south); affects their ability to take out bank loans and mortgages (23.7 percent in the north, and 28.5 percent in the south); and affects property rights (24.3 percent in the north, and 16.6 percent in the south).³³⁰ Adverse security, economic, political, and other factors have led 25.3 percent of respondents to plan to permanently leave Kosovo in the next three years. Additionally, research findings indicate that more than one-third of respondents (34.5 percent) are uncertain about whether they will leave Kosovo in the next three years, while 40.1 percent of respondents are clear in stating that they do not plan to leave Kosovo.³³¹

309. Ensuring the inclusion of K-Roma, K-Ashkali, and K-Egyptian communities in the public administration through employment quotas remains a critical measure for advancing equality, fair representation, and institutional accountability. Effective implementation of these quotas is essential to guarantee that the perspectives and needs of these communities are reflected in public decision-making and service delivery. In 2025, NGO VoRAE undertook a series of targeted activities to support quota implementation, including the drafting of the Work Plan of the Interinstitutional Employment Team (Office of the Prime Minister) and the organization of roundtables and presentations of an employment database for non-majority communities at both central and municipal levels. These activities brought together representatives of central and local institutions, partner organizations, and members of K-Roma, K-Ashkali, and K-Egyptian communities. The initiative focused on the systematic collection, updating, and analysis of employment data concerning these communities, thereby strengthening monitoring, transparency, and reporting mechanisms. By identifying gaps and tracking progress, the database serves as an institutional tool to advance equality in the civil service. The fulfillment of employment quotas with concrete participation from K-Roma, K-Ashkali, and K-Egyptian individuals is indispensable to ensure that inclusion policies move beyond formal legal obligations and translate into measurable representation and diversity within public institutions.³³²

328 CASA (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

329 CASA (2025), [Policy Report: K-Serbs access to documentation and legal identity](#).

330 CASA (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

331 VoRAE (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

332 VoRAE (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

310. In 2025, the National Platform for Reporting Discrimination continued to function as a formal mechanism for documenting and addressing cases of unequal treatment and antigypsyism affecting K-Roma, K-Ashkali, and K-Egyptian communities. By December 2025, a total of 69 cases had been reported through the platform, including 20 submissions from K-Roma individuals, 14 from K-Ashkali, and 9 from K-Egyptian community members, while 23 cases did not specify ethnicity and 3 were classified as “other.” Of the reported cases, 35 were determined not to constitute discrimination following institutional review, 33 were concluded with a formal decision or finding, and 9 remained under examination before competent authorities. These figures indicate that the platform is operational and being actively utilized; however, challenges remain in strengthening protection, referral pathways, and procedural closure to enhance institutional efficiency and public trust in anti-discrimination mechanisms.³³³

311. In 2025, the draft amendments to the Law on Protection from Discrimination entered the phase of preliminary public consultations, following the Government of Kosovo’s 2024 decision to initiate revisions based on an ex post evaluation that identified limited effectiveness and gaps in implementation. The reform process aims to strengthen enforceability and align the legal framework more closely with European standards. Upon completion of consultations and the formation of a new Government in 2026, the working group is expected to reconvene to review and harmonize submitted comments before forwarding the revised draft to the Government for approval and subsequently to the Assembly for parliamentary review and final vote. Notably, the NGO VoRAE contributed to the consultation process by engaging an external expert to gather and consolidate inputs from civil society and K-Roma, K-Ashkali, and K-Egyptian communities.³³⁴

312. In the context of strengthening protection against discrimination and advancing the rights of K-Roma, K-Ashkali, and K-Egyptian communities, NGO VoRAE developed an Anti-Gypsyism Manual as a practical guidance tool for public institutions in the Republic of Kosovo. The Manual is designed to enhance the capacities of civil servants and public officials at both central and local levels to identify, prevent, address, and report anti-gypsyism as a specific form of racial discrimination. It provides clear operational guidance for use in day-to-day institutional practice, particularly in situations where discriminatory treatment may arise in the delivery of public services, institutional communication, or decision-making processes. The document outlines institutional response procedures, reporting mechanisms, and the relevant legal frameworks, including competent bodies and official channels for addressing discrimination cases in Kosovo. To support its implementation, discussion roundtables were organized with public officials at central and municipal levels, serving as platforms to present the Manual, clarify institutional roles and responsibilities, and exchange practical experiences related to handling discrimination cases. Overall, the Manual and its accompanying activities represent a structured intervention aimed at strengthening institutional capacity to combat racial discrimination and reinforce equality and non-discrimination principles in public service delivery.³³⁵

333 VoRAE(2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

334 VoRAE (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

335 VoRAE (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

313. Addressing anti-gypsyism and strengthening legal awareness within K-Roma, K-Ashkali, and K-Egyptian communities remained a central priority of civil society engagement in 2025. In this context, the NGO VoRAE organized 60 informational sessions on anti-gypsyism and anti-discrimination rights, reaching more than 1,200 participants across different municipalities.³³⁶

314. Violence against members of K-Roma, K-Ashkali, and K-Egyptian communities continued to surface in 2025, raising concerns not only about discrimination but also about institutional response mechanisms. On 20 October 2025, a physical assault was reported near SHMU “Yll Morina” in Gjakovë/Đakovica, where a young person from the K-Roma, K-Ashkali, and K-Egyptian communities was attacked. A network of NGOs publicly condemned the incident, denouncing both the violence and its discriminatory dimension. According to the victim’s parents, concerns were raised regarding possible institutional negligence by the Kosovo Police, including the alleged failure to conduct a thorough investigation and verify available surveillance footage. The parent also expressed concern about the medical treatment provided, stating that the child continued to experience pain and psychological distress following the assault.

315. Ethnically motivated violence against members of K-Roma, K-Ashkali, and K-Egyptian communities remained a serious human rights concern in 2025. On 9 June 2025, a member of the K-Roma community (M.M.) was subjected to a brutal and inhumane assault in Prizren while on his way to work to provide for his family. The attack, reported as having ethnic motives, underscored the continued vulnerability of K-Roma individuals in public spaces. On 17 June 2025, a network of NGOs, including VoRAE and local community organizations in Prizren, publicly reacted to the incident, bringing the case to the attention of media and institutions and calling for an effective institutional response to ethnically based violence.³³⁷

316. Discrimination continued to raise serious concern in Kosovo in 2025, particularly where children and adolescents from non-majority communities are targeted. On 23 April 2025, a network of civil society organizations reacted to an incident during a U15 football match between SHF Arsenali and SHF Fushë Kosova, in which a relative of a player entered the field and verbally and physically assaulted a minor (B.J.), a member of the K-Ashkali community. The reaction emphasized the urgent need to protect children and young people from discrimination and violence in sporting environments and called for preventive institutional measures to ensure accountability and safe participation in youth sports.³³⁸

317. Hate speech and interethnic intolerance targeting K-Roma, K-Ashkali, and K-Egyptian communities continued to manifest in Kosovo’s public sphere in 2025. On 17 March 2025, a network of civil society organizations (including VoRAE and partner NGOs) publicly condemned an interview posted on YouTube by Robert Berisha in which pejorative and offensive terminology was used toward K-Roma, K-Ashkali, and K-Egyptian communities. According to local media coverage, the reaction sought to address the normalization of discriminatory language in the public domain and to demand accountability for the use of hate speech.³³⁹

336 VoRAE(2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

337 VoRAE (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

338 VoRAE(2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

339 VoRAE (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

318. K-Roma, K-Ashkali and K-Egyptian communities in several municipalities continue to face structural barriers in exercising property rights, mainly due to informal settlements, lack of cadastral registration and restrictive legalization procedures. Many families have lived for decades on the same land but cannot obtain ownership certificates because they lack historical documentation or construction permits which they are objectively unable to provide. Consequently, they cannot legalize homes, access reconstruction or housing programs, register inheritance or obtain utility connections and remain exposed to eviction risks. This situation interferes with the right to peaceful enjoyment of possessions guaranteed by Article 46 of the Constitution of Kosovo and Article 1 of Protocol No. 1 of the European Convention on Human Rights, and may amount to indirect discrimination under the Law on Protection from Discrimination given its disproportionate impact on K-Roma, K-Ashkali and K-Egyptian communities and its effect on the right to adequate housing.³⁴⁰

319. Women from K-Roma, K-Ashkali and K-Egyptian communities continue to face obstacles in exercising inheritance and property rights despite an adequate legal framework guaranteeing equality. Monitoring indicates that property is frequently registered only in the name of male family members and women often renounce inheritance due to family pressure, lack of awareness and administrative barriers. As a result, many women remain economically dependent and unable to access housing programs, social protection schemes or financial services. The practice undermines equality guarantees under Article 24 of the Constitution, the Law on Gender Equality and the Law on Inheritance, and is inconsistent with international human rights standards, including the European Convention on Human Rights and CEDAW.

320. The NGO Advancing Together (AT) documented cases in Kamenicë/Kamenica where five K-Roma returnee families are excluded from the social assistance scheme due to lack of Kosovo identification documents. Reportedly, a total of 15 K-Roma families in Kamenicë/Kamenica are similarly affected. Most of the K-Roma returnee families are unable to obtain Kosovo documentation due to the absence of relevant Serbian documentation required to acquire Kosovo citizenship. The inability to access such documentation prevents these families from accessing social assistance. This raises concerns under equality guarantees in the Constitution and international human rights law, particularly the prohibition of discrimination and the right to recognition before the law.³⁴¹

321. Returnee K-Roma and K-Ashkali families in Ferizaj/Uroševac and Obiliq/Obilić continue to face serious housing insecurity. Some families live in rented accommodation without long-term guarantees, while others risk eviction. NGO AT documented a case of a family forced to relocate after eviction and obliged to pay a significant portion of its income for rent. The absence of durable housing solutions forces returnees into continuous economic vulnerability and dependence on humanitarian support. The lack of stable housing interferes with the right to respect for home and family life under Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights and with the right to adequate housing under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. It also undermines

340 AT (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

341 AT (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

reintegration policies and affects access to employment, education and social services.³⁴²

322. The case of a K-Roma returnee family in Gjilan/Gnjilane municipality whose request for a construction permit for a house to be built through a return housing assistance program has remained unresolved for several years. The municipality refused to issue the construction permit based on an urban plan foreseeing a public facility in the area, yet it neither initiated expropriation nor provided an alternative housing solution. The Ministry of Environment, Spatial Planning and Infrastructure failed to review the appeal within the legal deadlines established by the Law on General Administrative Procedure. Repeated submissions, including urgency requests, have remained unanswered. Due to continued administrative silence, NGO AT filed a claim on the behalf of the family before the Basic Court in Prishtina seeking issuance of the required administrative decision. However, no procedural action has been undertaken by the court. The prolonged inaction effectively prevents the family from accessing adequate housing and disproportionately affects a K-Roma returnee household, raising concerns of indirect discrimination contrary to Article 24 of the Constitution and the Law on Protection from Discrimination. The inability to build a house on registered land further interferes with the right to adequate housing under Article 11 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and undermines the sustainability of return.³⁴³

323. In Klinë/Klina municipality, expropriation linked to the Pejë/Peć–Prishtinë/Priština highway expansion affects eleven K-Serb returnee families. Official notifications were issued only in Albanian and property assessments were conducted without prior notification or participation of property owners. Several families permanently reside outside Kosovo and were unable to collect notifications within the 30-day appeal deadline. In addition, some property evaluations reportedly excluded agricultural elements such as fruit trees, which directly affects the level of compensation. The failure to provide documents in both official languages violate constitutional guarantees on language use and community rights. The lack of prior notification and participation raises serious concerns under the right to fair procedure and peaceful enjoyment of property protected by the European Convention on Human Rights.³⁴⁴

324. Recommendations

- The GoK should ensure the full and impartial implementation of language rights as stipulated in Law No. 02/L-37 on the Use Languages by allocating sufficient resources for translation services in public institutions and ensuring compliance across all municipalities;
- The Ministry of Environment, Spatial Planning and Infrastructure should decide all pending appeals within statutory deadlines and ensure that expropriation procedures are initiated promptly where permits are denied, including compensation in accordance with the law;
- The Basic Court in Pristina should prioritize cases of administrative silence affecting fundamental rights and ensure expedited adjudication within legally prescribed timeframes;
- The Ombudsperson Institution (OIK) should initiate ex officio investigations into cases of maladministration and discrimination, including failures in property procedures and access to rights for vulnerable groups;

342 AT (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

343 AT (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

344 AT (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

- The Ministry of Communities and Returns and municipalities should ensure access to housing and civil registration for returnees and marginalized communities by introducing emergency housing support, simplified procedures, and temporary access to social assistance pending documentation;
- The MoJ should ensure the effective provision of free legal aid in discrimination cases by increasing funding, expanding eligibility, and monitoring access and outcomes through annual public reporting.

7.6 LGBTI+ rights

325. The rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI+) persons are grounded in the universal principles of equality and non-discrimination enshrined in international human rights law. The UDHR affirms in Articles 2 and 7 that all persons are entitled to equal protection before the law without discrimination. At the treaty level, the ICCPR provides important protections through Article 2 (non-discrimination), Article 17 (protection of privacy), and Article 26 (equality before the law). The Human Rights Committee has applied these provisions in landmark cases such as *Toonen v. Australia* (1994), which held that the criminalization of consensual same-sex relations violates the right to privacy and the prohibition of discrimination, *Young v. Australia* (2003) and *X v. Colombia* (2007) on survivor pensions, and *G v. Australia* (2017) on legal gender recognition. Under the ICESCR, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights clarified in General Comment No. 20 (2009) that “other status” includes sexual orientation and gender identity, an interpretation reinforced in General Comment No. 14 (2000) and General Comment No. 22 (2016), which require equal access to health and sexual and reproductive health services without discrimination. Similar standards have been articulated by the Committee on the Rights of the Child (General Comments Nos. 13, 15 and 20), the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (General Recommendations Nos. 28 and 33), and the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities under Article 5. These binding norms are further elaborated through the Yogyakarta Principles (2006) and Yogyakarta Principles plus 10 (2017).

326. At the regional level, although the ECHR does not explicitly reference sexual orientation or gender identity, the ECtHR has developed extensive jurisprudence beginning with *Dudgeon v. United Kingdom* (1981), finding criminalization of consensual same-sex relations incompatible with Article 8. The Court has since extended protection to gender recognition (*Christine Goodwin v. United Kingdom*, 2002; *A.P., Garçon and Nicot v. France*, 2017), freedom of assembly (*Identoba v. Georgia*, 2015), freedom of expression (*Bayev v. Russia*, 2017), and recognition of same-sex families (*E.B. v. France*, 2008; *X and Others v. Austria*, 2013; *Pajić v. Croatia*, 2016; *Taddeucci and McCall v. Italy*, 2016). In *Oliari v. Italy* (2015) and *Fedotova and Others v. Russia* (2023), the Court confirmed that States must provide legal recognition and protection to same-sex couples, while Article 14 ECHR and Committee of Ministers Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)5 further reinforce obligations to combat discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity.

327. Article 24 of the Kosovo Constitution also makes specific mention of sexual orientation and gender expression. The Constitution of Kosovo does not envision gendered restrictions on the freedom to marry; article 37 of the Constitution of Kosovo recognizes that everyone has the right to marry and the right to have a family as provided by law. Despite the constitutional rights of the LGBTI+ persons, the requisite legislation necessary to recognize the community in terms equal to all members of society has not been adopted in the new draft Civil Code. This is because of the continued failure to vote in favor of same-sex unions by the AoK. It has also impeded on efforts of the LGBTI+ persons, civil society and the international community to provide the country with genuine forms of democracy. According to NGO CEL, the key structural concerns identified during the 2025 reporting period include the continued absence of a legal framework for gender recognition, the lack of specific regulation and protection for intersex persons, the failure to legally recognize same-sex partnerships, and persistent weaknesses in the implementation and enforcement of existing legal safeguards.³⁴⁵

328. During the February 2025 parliamentary elections, NGO CEL Kosova and NGO Dylberizm systematically monitored electoral campaigns, with a specific focus on hate speech and discriminatory rhetoric targeting LGBTI+ communities.³⁴⁶ As a result of this monitoring, eight complaints were filed before the Election Complaints and Appeals Panel (ECAP/PZAP). Seven complaints were initially upheld, leading to administrative fines totaling 44,100 EUR. Upon appeal, the Supreme Court reviewed four cases and overturned the respective PZAP decisions on grounds of freedom of expression. However, three PZAP rulings were fully upheld, confirming the existence of hate speech and maintaining fines amounting to 15,000 EUR. These final decisions constitute binding jurisprudence affirming that hate speech against LGBTI+ communities during electoral campaigns may attract legal sanctions under Kosovo law.³⁴⁷

329. Subsequent to the monitoring by NGO CEL and NGO Dylberizm in the different 2025 electoral processes, several candidates with homophobic and transphobic public positions have been identified.³⁴⁸ Despite the civil society list from Dylberizm and Cel “Mos i voto homofobat!” (Don’t vote for the homophobes!) aimed at informing the public about candidates whose discriminatory positions could translate into institutional power, numerous candidates from diverse political parties managed to secure seats in the AoK.³⁴⁹ The electoral support provided to these individuals demonstrates how society continues to be structured along homophobic and transphobic principles.³⁵⁰

330. The homophobia underlying the societal sphere in Kosovo continuously translates into violence and hate crimes against individuals from LGBTI+ communities. Resultantly, barriers to reporting undermines effective protection. NGO CEL notes that LGBTI+ individuals hesitate reporting discrimination and violence due to fear of secondary victimization and limited trust in institutions in maintaining confidentiality. Against this backdrop, a prior reported case involving the torture and degrading treatment of an LGBTI+ person in 2024 concluded in 2025 with three perpetrators sentenced to a total of 9.5 years’ imprisonment. Although this outcome comprises an important

345 CEL (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

346 Dylberizm (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

347 CEL (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

348 Dylberizm (2026), [Kush janë homofobat e Kuvendit të ri të Kosovës?](#)

349 Dylberizm (2025), [Mos i voto homofobat!](#)

350 CEL (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

instance of accountability, it is an isolated case against the context of fear and insecurity of LGBTI+ individuals vis-à-vis institutional responses.³⁵¹

331. The absence of a protective architecture for LGBTI+ individuals is further illustrated through the lack of a dedicated, government-funded shelter. Although previous reports indicated that the Municipality of Pristina has committed to establishing a publicly supported shelter for LGBTI+ victims of domestic violence, no concrete progress has been achieved³⁵² with no budget allocations for the creation of a shelter. Resultantly, NGO CEL continues to provide emergency accommodation for adults lacking access to a secure safety net.³⁵³

332. Public visibility of LGBTI+ persons in Kosovo has increased over the past decade; however, this visibility has not been matched by coherent and sustained institutional support.³⁵⁴ While the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports has financed awareness-raising activities for three consecutive years, these initiatives remain ad hoc and unanchored in a comprehensive, Kosovo-wide strategy.³⁵⁵ Institutional commitment appears contingent on individual officeholders rather than embedded policy frameworks. This fragility was evident in 2025, when the Queer Students' Movement attempted to mark Pride Week by displaying the Pride flag at the university rectorate of the University of Pristina despite the same action having been permitted in 2024 under a more supportive university leadership.³⁵⁶ The reversal underscores the absence of structural guarantees and reveals how symbolic recognition remains vulnerable to shifting political and administrative attitudes.

333. Against the situation described above, initiatives on LGBTI+ rights at the University of Pristina were driven primarily by student and civil society actors, rather than by institutional policy. NGO CEL Kosova, in cooperation with the University, organized a conference on university premises to present research on LGBTI+ issues conducted by students, alongside two public lectures on non-discrimination, social inclusion, and LGBTI+ rights in collaboration with the Department of Sociology. In parallel, the Queer Students' Movement convened a panel discussion on the lived experiences of queer students, revealing that LGBTI+ topics remain largely confined to isolated academic spaces, particularly within the Faculty of Philosophy. Across other faculties, engagement with these themes is minimal, and LGBTI+ perspectives are largely absent from curricula.³⁵⁷

334. In further continuation of visibility, Prishtina Pride Week was held from 9 to 14 June 2025 under the theme "No Step Back", marking its ninth annual celebration. The week featured a diverse program—including workshops, discussions, art exhibitions, a drag show, and concluded with a Pride parade and concert—demonstrating sustained civic engagement and visibility for LGBTI+ communities in Kosovo. The official opening of Pride Week took place at Kosovo's Government Building, hosted by the Office for Good Governance, Human Rights, Equal Opportunities, and Anti-Discrimi-

351 CEL (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

352 Kosovo 2.0 (2025), [Visible but not safe](#).

353 CEL (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

354 Dylberizm (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

355 CEL (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

356 Lëvizja Queer studentore (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

357 Lëvizja Queer studentore (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

nation, signaling institutional recognition. Acting Prime Minister Albin Kurti opened the event.

335. In spite of public campaigns organized by NGO CEL and other CSOs, an empirical gap remains in the understanding of societal attitudes and lived experiences. The most comprehensive national research on the social acceptance dates is more than a decade old, and dates back to 2015. In the absence of current longitudinal data, it is impossible to assess whether increased visibility has translated into substantive shifts in public attitudes. The lack of recent, disaggregated evidence both obscures the actual situation on the ground as well as weakens the capacity of institutions to design evidence-based policies aimed at reducing discrimination and transforming social norms.

336. A recent NGO ACDC report on the position and quality of life of the LGBTI+ community in northern Kosovo finds that invisibility, fear of discrimination and violence, and persistent social stigma remain the dominant challenges faced by LGBTI+ individuals, particularly in smaller and more conservative environments.³⁵⁸

337. Recommendations

- The AoK should adopt the Civil Code without further delay to ensure legal recognition of same-sex partnerships and establish a clear legal framework for gender recognition in line with constitutional guarantees;
- The Kosovo Police and the State Prosecutor should ensure effective investigation and prosecution of hate crimes and hate speech against LGBTI+ persons by prioritizing such cases and publishing annual data on reported incidents, prosecutions, and outcomes;
- The GoK should establish and fund a dedicated shelter and support services for LGBTI+ individuals facing violence and homelessness, including allocating a specific budget line.

358 ACDC (2025), [Invisibility, Fear, and Stigma Remain Key Challenges for the LGBTI+ Community in Northern Kosovo](#).

7.7 People on the move

338. The Stabilization and Association Agreement between the EU and Kosovo lays the foundations for cooperation between the EU and Kosovo concerning asylum and a view towards reflecting the standards contained within the 1951 Geneva Convention concerning the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol according to which the parties have agreed to further strengthen the cooperation and the functionality of the already established asylum system. This will include, among other things, adoption and implementation of legislation to meet the standards of the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its Protocol to ensure respect of the principle of non-refoulement and respect for asylum seekers and refugees. The parties will also focus the cooperation in the field of legal migration on admission rules and rights and status of the person admitted, in addition to which Kosovo will approximate its legislation with the EU acquis on legal migration.

339. The domestic legal framework covering the entire asylum sector is put in place. This legal framework foresees reception and initial treatment procedures of the applicants for international protection; procedures and standards of reviewing and ruling on the applications for international protection; the internal rules on the functioning of the Asylum Centre, the rules on the work of National Commission for Refugees (NCR), as the second administrative instance; as well as Regulation on the integration of foreigners respectively persons with International protection status in Kosovo. Considering the changes in the European Union legislation on foreigners and the need to address legal gaps encountered during its implementation, the Government of Kosovo drafted the new Law on Foreigners endorsed by the Government in early 2024. The draft Law was envisaged to undergo legal procedures in the Assembly of Kosovo but due to parliamentary elections in 2025 the process has been suspended. The draft Law foresees to introduce following: (i) legal basis for the temporary reception center for migrants inaugurated in August 2022 (ii) several new legal solutions amongst other, such as the “tolerated status”; provisions on identification, registration and referrals or triaging procedures that would enable differentiation in asylum case processing, and (iii) enhancing the legal provisions on the integration of the persons granted with the international protection. With introduction of these additional safeguards, authorities will enhance the overall protection environment safeguarding all asylum seekers and persons under international protection. Another important element is the integration of the refugees and stateless persons as beneficiaries of the draft Law on Social and Affordable Housing. This law is also pending approval. On the other hand, there have been no legislative changes in terms of children rights and other related social rights that might have affected refugees.

340. Kosovo continues to be a transit route for people on the move. In 2025, there were 181 applications for international protection (asylum requests) that have been submitted to the Department for Citizenship, Asylum and Migration within the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Legal aid during the asylum procedure was provided by the NGO Civil Rights Program Kosovo (CRP/K), through a UNHCR funded project. Most asylum requests have been suspended as applicants have moved forward without completing the refugee status determination procedure or have withdrawn the

application for international protection status.³⁵⁹

341. Developments in 2025 raise emerging concerns regarding the rights and treatment of third-country nationals transferred to Kosovo under external migration arrangements. On 21 October 2025, the acting Prime Minister announced that Kosovo is prepared to host rejected asylum seekers from the United Kingdom in exchange for security cooperation.³⁶⁰ On 11 December 2025 it was further confirmed that Kosovo had begun accepting individuals in deportation proceedings from the United States who are not originally from Kosovo. This follows a June 2025 agreement which enables the temporary reception of up to 50 migrants per year with the stated aim of facilitating their return to countries of origin.³⁶¹

342. NGO CRP/K has maintained the HELP webpage^{362[1]}, providing information on asylum and integration systems in eight languages. The HELP webpage offers information on how to seek asylum, where can be asked for help including integration prospects in Kosovo. The information in this website is general in nature and may not apply in all circumstances. For more assistance and advice, respective institutions or UNHCR and NGO CRP/K can be contacted regarding specific issues or needs people in need might have.³⁶³

343. There were 72 decisions issued by Department for Citizenship, Asylum and Migration within Ministry of Internal Affairs, out of which 18 decisions were positive, 1 is refugee status, 17 subsidiary protections, 15 extensions of subsidiary protection, while 39 negative decisions, out of which 11 negative decisions based on merits, 16 voluntary withdrawals and 12 due to procedural reasons. Persons granted subsidiary protection arrived from different countries of origin such as Ukraine, Jordan, Syria and Palestine. Ukrainian journalists who have been under temporary protection for nearly two years, duly submitted applications for international protection considering that temporary protection may be extended for a maximum period of two years as per Article 81 of the Law on Asylum. Authorities assured the journalists that they will continue to receive benefits according to the Government's decision. However, their legal status must align with the law's requirements. Their individual applications were duly considered by asylum authorities and granted subsidiary protection status. The physical and social security in the Asylum Centre in Magurë/Magura significantly improved during 2025.³⁶⁴

344. Considering the essential knowledge and skills of authorities gained throughout several years on refugee protection, including direct support and assistance provided by NGO CRP/K and other local and international organizations, persons with recognized international protection status have had more accessible access to integration schemes such as accommodation, social assistance, language courses and education, medical assistance, provision of food and non-food items, assistance provided for job opportunities as well as access to free legal aid. The Government assists with rented accommodation and social assistance while other assistance is provided by local and international organizations. However, there are still many challenges in terms of enjoying their rights. There is an ongoing financial dependency of persons with international protection status

359 CRP/K (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

360 The Guardian (2025), [Kosovo offers to become the first country to accept Britain's refused asylum seekers](#).

361 Reuters (2025), [Kosovo starts accepting third-party deportees from the US](#).

362 ^[1] CRP/K (2025), [Statistics – a free legal aid provider to applicants for international protections status in Kosovo](#).

363 CRP/K (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

364 CRP/K (2026), regular monitoring of the Asylum Centre in Magurë/Magura.

to Kosovo institutions and other supporting organizations due to the fact that they still have not found a self-reliance economic opportunity.³⁶⁵

345. In practice, financial access for refugees and asylum seekers is often determined by the discretion of individual banks, leading to inconsistencies and barriers beyond what is legally required. As part of the advocacy efforts, NGO CRP/K legal staff closely monitored and supported the implementation of the Central Bank of Kosovo's decision to enable access to essential banking services for individuals under international protection. In this context, support was provided to five (5) individuals with Subsidiary Protection status and 2 stateless individuals in opening personal bank accounts with basic services, without encountering any administrative obstacles. This marked a significant step in enhancing financial inclusion for a marginalized group often excluded from formal services.³⁶⁶

346. Furthermore, Law No. 04/219 on Foreigners and its amendments by the Law No. 06/L-036 stipulates that person granted subsidiary protection in Kosovo, after five years of uninterrupted stay have the right to apply for the permanent residency that paves their legal path towards the full legal integration according to the Citizenship Law. A bylaw addressing this matter provides no procedures for foreigners under the Article 86 of the Law No. 04-L-219 on Foreigners and the Law No. 06/L-036 on amending and supplementing the Law No. 04/L-219 on Foreigners, preventing holders of these statuses to apply for permanent residence although guaranteed by the applicable legislation.³⁶⁷

347. Persons granted Subsidiary Protection statuses are not entitled to obtain travel documents compared to those holding a Refugee status. According to Article 8 of the Administrative Instruction (MIA) No.02/2014 on Foreigners Travel Documents, persons under Subsidiary Protection status may be equipped with travel documents only for several reasons which limits their freedom of movement, such as: 1. in case of severe illness or death of a family member; 2. In case of sorting of important personal issues; 3. in case of transboundary journey from the educational institution frequented from the person up to 18 years or until the end of education; and 4. in case of participation in cultural or sports activities outside Kosovo.³⁶⁸

348. Despite the ongoing development of the government online platform for access to rights and services, such as of "e-Kosova", refugees have no access to this platform. The platform's data base system is linked only with the Civil Registration Agency that generates data for the Kosovo nationals only. Another barrier is the incompatibility of their temporary residence cards and personal identification numbers with the employment offices system, which prevents them from registering for job placement services, vocational training, or employment subsidies.³⁶⁹

365 CRP/K (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

366 CRP/K (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

367 CRP/K (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

368 CRP/K (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

369 CRP/K (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

349. Moreover, limited institutional capacities in terms of human resources dealing with integration of persons with international protection status, institutional funds and coordination between the central and local levels were identified as main challenges for efficient and effective response toward those in need. Taking into consideration that the process requires engaging many government sectors, both governmental and municipal i.e. legal registration, accommodation, education, language and integration courses, employment, GBV issues, LGBTI+, mental health issues etc. additional attention should be given towards the regular institutional coordination and cooperation. It is important to add that NGO CRP/K and other relevant organizations played catalytical role in assembling all responsible authorities to perform their public duties in responding toward people in need in a timely manner.³⁷⁰

350. Kosovo's institutions have continued demonstrating commitment to addressing and reducing statelessness. This commitment is reflected in strategic actions and legislative initiatives aimed at the identification, support, and legal recognition of persons at risk of statelessness.

351. The Civil Registration Agency (CRA) included specific measures in the Strategy for the Advancement of the Rights of Roma and Ashkali Communities committing to establish a mechanism for identifying, preventing, and protecting individuals whose births remain unregistered. Despite this strategic inclusion, the pledged mechanism has yet to be established.

352. Proposed amendments to the legislative framework, the draft Law on Civil Status, the draft Law on Citizenship, and the draft Law on Foreigners, aim to enhance protection safeguards, influenced by recommendations from UNHCR, the NGO CRP/K, and other experts. These amendments propose extended registration periods for children born abroad to Kosovo nationals, automatic birth registration via health institutions, waiver of penalties related to late birth registration, and expanded entitlements for stateless individuals. These amendments are not yet formally adopted by the Kosovo Assembly and the identified concerns continue to hinder full enjoyment of human rights by the affected individuals.

353. In addition to legislative initiatives, the Ministry of Internal Affairs has issued a decision permitting Kosovo citizens who recorded civil status events (birth, marriage, death) with parallel Serbian structures since June 10, 1999, to formally register these events in Kosovo's Central Registry. This initiative, managed by the Civil Registration Agency (CRA), aims to strengthen the rule of law and formalize citizens' legal statuses, with registrations scheduled between February 1 and April 30, 2025.

354. There is still limited availability of information and data on unregistered individuals, which is a challenge that particularly affects marginalized communities such as the K-Roma, K-Ashkali, and K-Egyptian communities. The CRA has no official baseline of the magnitude of the unregistered population. No official data is available yet to provide more information on persons at risk of statelessness.

355. Data-wise, according to the Department for Citizenship, Asylum and Migration there are 16 people with recognized statelessness status.

370 CRP/K (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

356. Efforts to promote birth registration in Kosovo are mostly undertaken by CSOs with the support of international partners and by the Ministry of Local Government Administration through removal of all financial implications for vulnerable communities.

357. The implementation of Article 32 of Law No. 04/L-215 on Citizenship of Kosovo remains challenging. CSOs refer cases involving adults born outside Kosovo to the Department for Citizenship, Asylum and Migration - Division for Citizenship under Article 16, irrespective of the applicant's permanent residence in Kosovo. Additionally, it creates barriers preventing individuals meeting the criteria under the Article 32 from fully exercising their citizenship rights, thereby increasing their risk of becoming stateless.

358. When it comes to challenges, legal and procedural barriers continue to affect persons at risk of statelessness and stateless individuals in Kosovo. Inconsistent interpretation and application of relevant legal provisions, especially regarding late birth registration and citizenship confirmation, have led to prolonged administrative procedures, leaving individuals without formal legal recognition. Furthermore, the Statelessness Status Determination Procedure (SSDP) requires additional strengthening and capacity building to ensure its effectiveness.

359. The renewal process for temporary residence permits for stateless persons remains problematic, primarily due to administrative barriers and the absence of a clear institutional mechanism for verifying and reaffirming stateless status. Currently, each renewal requires a formal administrative decision reconfirming an individual's unchanged stateless status. This requirement adds complexity to procedures, causing substantial delays in the renewal of residence permits and consequently hindering timely access to essential identification documents and services for stateless individuals.

360. Moreover, the 2025 EU progress report on Kosovo points out the judiciary system's developmental challenges. The system is still evolving, with a need for stronger mechanisms to ensure its integrity, accountability, independence, and efficiency. Legal disputes related to identity issues lack prioritization and can remain unresolved for many years. Additionally, when such cases are sent back for administrative review, the administrative bodies often disregard the recommendations, necessitating a re-initiation of the process. This further delayed the resolution, potentially leaving individuals without legal identity and access to fundamental rights and services for an extended period.

361. The situation regarding access to legal aid for individuals at risk of statelessness remains largely unchanged from 2023. These individuals continue to depend primarily on legal assistance provided by NGOs, as the eligibility criteria of the Agency for Free Legal Aid exclude unregistered adult persons who lack an identity document. Moreover, due to staffing shortages, the Agency for Free Legal Aid is unable to address all the legal aid needs in this area. The latter, within the framework of its agreement with organizations providing free legal aid, primarily relies on their support in areas aligned with their expertise. To enhance the capacities of Agency for Free Legal Aid staff in civil status registration and related procedures, UNHCR and NGO CRP/K are working closely with the Agency through targeted training sessions and ongoing cooperation. These efforts aim

to strengthen institutional responses and improve access to legal aid for those at risk of statelessness. Given this context, NGO CRP/K has been instrumental in providing free legal aid and court representation for unregistered individuals, ensuring their rights are recognized in administrative and judicial proceedings.

362. In 2025, NGO CRP/K assisted 100 people with late birth registration and citizenship acquisition and identified over 133 unregistered individuals in need of legal aid. This support has been crucial in addressing the complex challenges of statelessness, impacting diverse demographics, including women, men, children, and vulnerable groups such as the elderly.

363. Recommendations

- The Assembly of Kosovo should prioritize and adopt without delay the draft Law on Foreigners, the Law on Citizenship, and the Law on Civil Status to ensure a coherent legal framework for the protection of asylum seekers, refugees, and persons at risk of statelessness;
- The Ministry of Internal Affairs should align sub-legal acts with primary legislation and establish streamlined administrative procedures, including access to E-Kosova services and simplified residence permit renewal mechanisms, to ensure effective access to rights for refugees and stateless persons;
- The Ministry of Internal Affairs, municipalities, and the Civil Registration Agency should ensure the registration and legal identification of all individuals by introducing unified procedures for birth registration and citizenship determination, particularly targeting marginalized and at-risk communities;
- The Ministry of Finance, Labour and Transfers, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, municipalities, and the Kosovo Employment Agency should ensure the socio-economic integration of refugees and stateless persons by enabling access to employment services, vocational training, social housing schemes, and municipal support programmes;
- The Ministry of Justice should ensure access to free legal aid for refugees, asylum seekers, and persons at risk of statelessness by expanding eligibility under the Law on Free Legal Aid and increasing funding for legal aid providers.

8. Section D: CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES/SPECIFIC HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES

8.1 Transitional justice and human rights

364. Transitional justice is understood in this report in line with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), which frames it as a human rights–based process aimed at recognizing victims, strengthening trust in state institutions, reinforcing respect for human rights, and advancing the rule of law as foundations for reconciliation and the prevention of future violations. Within this framework, transitional justice is not limited to retrospective accountability; it constitutes a structural project of democratic consolidation. A comprehensive and rights-centered approach is therefore essential for fostering interethnic reconciliation and supporting the transformation of Kosovo into a more inclusive and institutionally credible state.

365. At the domestic level, the legislative framework addressing transitional justice in the aftermath of the Kosovo conflict consists of several sector-specific instruments. Law No. 05/L-060 on Forensic Medicine (in force since April 2016) established the Institute of Forensic Medicine and mandates it to locate, exhume, and determine the fate of missing persons. Law No. 04/L-172 amending and supplementing Law No. 04/L-054 regulates the status and rights of martyrs, veterans, civilian victims, and survivors of conflict-related sexual violence; however, its temporal limitations, particularly the restrictive recognition of incidents immediately following the 1998–1999 war, constrain its protective scope. More recently, Law No. 08/L-177 (2023) established the Institute of Crimes Committed during the War in Kosovo, tasked with researching and documenting crimes committed between 1 January 1998 and 20 June 1999. Collectively, these measures reflect incremental institutionalization of transitional justice. The Strategy on Transitional Justice, adopted in 2024 completes the institutional legislation along with the Action plan for 2024–2026. As of 2025, however, a new Action Plan is yet to be published.

366. As of 2025, following sustained advocacy efforts, the Law on Health Insurance guarantees free and unconditional health insurance coverage for survivors of wartime sexual violence. This represents a significant development in strengthening access to essential services and mitigating long-standing barriers faced by survivors. In parallel, NGO KRCT has documented approximately 1,400 cases of sexual violence committed during the war in Kosovo, underscoring both the scale of violations and the continued need for institutional responsiveness.³⁷¹

367. In 2025, nine cases concerning the right of war victims to receive dual pensions were represented and prepared by NGO KRCT in court proceedings, with several cases already confirmed by all three judicial instances in Kosovo. These confirmations reinforce an emerging line of jurisprudence recognizing that pensions derived from prior contributions constitute property rights, while pensions granted on the

371 KRCT (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

basis of victim status serve to acknowledge loss, contribution, and sacrifice endured during the war. This judicial consolidation builds upon earlier precedent affirming victims' entitlement to dual pensions.³⁷²

368. Advocacy by CSOs and the families of victims and missing persons in Kosovo have persistently and continuously sought an extension of the registration deadline for survivors beyond the current timeline. Although the GoK has agreed to postpone the deadline for victims of wartime sexual violence in Kosovo to apply for the recognition of victims status, NGO KRCT has continuously advocated that there should be no such deadline and that it should be within the discretion of the victims to decide when they wish to apply for such status. In April 2025 the deadline for application for status recognition was extended for another two years, but KRCT is still advocating to remove the deadline for CRSV survivors to apply for status recognition.³⁷³

369. In 2025, KRCT inaugurated the "Safe Room" at the Basic Court in Pristina, designed to provide enhanced security and psychosocial support to survivors participating in judicial proceedings related to wartime sexual violence. The Safe Room ensures a protected and trauma-sensitive environment and enables testimony via video link, thereby safeguarding survivors' privacy and reducing the risk of re-traumatization during court procedures.³⁷⁴

370. In the same period, the Basic Court in Pristina announced two additional convictions concerning wartime sexual violence, sentencing three perpetrators to 15 years' imprisonment each. With KRCT providing full legal and psychological support to the survivor, the cumulative prison sentences imposed in such cases have reached 58 years. Furthermore, two new indictments for wartime sexual violence were filed in 2025, bringing the total number of indictments to 12, the majority of which were documented and prepared with KRCT's involvement.³⁷⁵ It should be noted in this respect that thus far, According to the Government Commission for the Recognition and Verification of the Status of Sexual Violence Victims during the Kosovo Liberation War, since its establishment in February 2018, the survivor status is granted to 1,840 applicants (1,737 women and 103 men). It has rejected 351 applications (295 women and 56 men).³⁷⁶

371. In administrative proceedings, KRCT has represented over 50 beneficiaries and secured compensation exceeding 61,000 EUR in five cases. In matters concerning dual pensions, three survivors obtained retroactive compensation totaling 24,600 EUR.³⁷⁷

372. In 2025, the Institute for Crimes Committed During the War in Kosovo advanced the operationalization of its mandate; it organized an academic conference in February, and expanded its archival holdings with digitized materials and personal collections from regional donors. These steps mark a substantive consolidation of the Institute's institutional and research capacities. Established under Law No. 08/L-177, which was adopted in 2023, the Institute was created to document crimes committed during the war in Kosovo between 1 January 1998 and 20 June 1999, as well as war-related crimes committed up to 31 December 2000. Functioning as an Agency within the Office of the Prime Minister, it is mandated to conduct research, collect and manage data,

372 KRCT (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

373 KRCT (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

374 KRCT (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

375 KRCT (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

376 UNSG (2025), [Report of the Secretary General on Kosovo 2025](#).

377 KRCT (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

maintain war crimes databases, publish survivor testimonies, and prepare statistical analyses. The Institute received its first official documentation on 17 February 2024, consisting of testimonies concerning enforced disappearances submitted by the Head of the Association of Families of Missing Persons in Kosovo.

373. The Municipality of Pristina announced plans to launch a Peace Museum in summer 2025, envisioned as part of the soon-to-be-established Centre for Peace and Advocacy Studies. This new museum aims to highlight the long struggle for peace, documenting not only wartime atrocities but also post-conflict resilience, reconciliation, and peacebuilding efforts. The Centre itself, stated to open in August 2025, will cover areas such as diplomacy, mediation, and conflict resolution.

374. On 17 June 2025, Kosovo's Special Prosecution indicted 53 individuals in absentia, including high-profile figures such as Momir Stojanović, wartime commander of the Military Security for the Yugoslav Army's Pristina Corps, and Franko "Frenki" Simatović, a senior officer in Serbia's State Security Service. These indictments, among the largest in Kosovo's history, were filed for the Mejë/Meja massacre case, where over 370 K-Albanian civilians were killed.³⁷⁸

375. In early 2025, President Vjosa Osmani proposed establishing a Presidential Commission for Transitional Justice with a three-year mandate, extendable by one year. According to a draft statute obtained by NGO BIRN, the Commission would focus on the period from January 1998 to June 1999. The body would include eleven members: representatives of war victim organizations, civil society experts, external specialists, and mental health professionals. President Osmani has engaged with civil society representatives to discuss the Commission's preparation, with ongoing cooperation planned with victims' groups, civil society, and international partners. However, experts and civil society groups have raised concerns about the Commission's independence and transparency, given its establishment by presidential decree rather than parliamentary approval. Critics also note that the mandate excludes the post-conflict period after June 1999, when revenge attacks against minority Serbs and others took place. Additionally, reliance on the government's existing Transitional Justice Strategy, viewed by some as incomplete, has drawn criticism. Human rights organizations stress the need for clear provisions to support victims, especially survivors of sexual violence. While the Commission could promote reconciliation, its effectiveness will depend on broad societal engagement, strong safeguards, and a comprehensive approach to Kosovo's complex legacy.³⁷⁹

376. The debate on the transparency and integrity of the Kosovo Specialist Chambers continued throughout 2025, with experts and media reports claiming that holding the vast majority of sessions behind closed doors goes against the principle of publicity and transparency. According to legal experts that have spoken for NGO BIRN, around 60 percent of witnesses have testified in closed sessions for the public and lack of independent observers in the court hearings hinders reporting on the court's work, thus exacerbating the distrust of the public in the Kosovo Specialist

378 HLC (2025), Gjykimet në mungesë për krime lufte: midis statistikave dhe realitetit të drejtësisë.

379 BIRN (2026), [Analysis for Balkan Insight: Ignoring Warnings, Kosovo President Plans Transitional Justice Commission](#)

Chambers.³⁸⁰ In relation to the subject of transparency and integrity, the NGO HLCK published a brochure titled: “How Transparent are the Kosovo Specialist Chambers?” where it noted its key findings related to transparency challenges faced by this institution, namely the fact that: (i) a significant portion of court sessions are closed to the public, leading to serious question about the transparency of the court; (ii) closing sessions to the public and media access to judicial processes makes it difficult to maintain public oversight over judicial decisions; (iii) the public is being denied the right to hear witness statements by redacting the entire testimony in some cases and not just the information affecting the disclosure of the identities of the protected witnesses.³⁸¹

377. On 7 August 2025, thousands of KLA veterans and their supporters gathered in Pristina to protest against the Kosovo Specialist Chambers. The demonstrators, organized by the KLA Veterans’ Organization (OVL-UCK), marched under the slogan “Together against injustice. KLA is glory, not indictment,” expressing their opposition to the prosecution of former KLA leaders. The protesters accused the KSC of bias and of attempting to “rewrite history” by criminalizing the KLA’s role in Kosovo’s independence struggle. The protest highlighted the ongoing public dissatisfaction with the KSC’s work and its perceived impact on Kosovo’s historical narrative.³⁸²

378. A fund has been established in Kosovo to provide legal aid to individuals accused at the Kosovo Specialist Chambers along with financial assistance to their families.³⁸³ While initially recognized victims of war crimes and crimes against humanity had not received corresponding financial support, Kosovo confirmed in 2025 that victims can now file claims via its national Crime Victim Compensation Programme, with anonymity guaranteed. Addressing this imbalance in treatment has been a priority echoed by both the European Commission and numerous CSOs.³⁸⁴

379. In 2025, the Kosovo Specialist Chambers approved plea agreements in the cases of Sabit Januzi, Ismet Bahtijari, and Haxhi Shala on 4 February, and shortly thereafter, on 21 February, President Ekaterina Trendafilova granted sentence modifications to Januzi and Bahtijari, reducing their prison terms in recognition of their cooperation with the court. The Specialist Prosecutor’s Office then completed its presentation of evidence in the trial of Hashim Thaçi and co-defendants on 16 April, marking a significant procedural milestone in this complex case concerning alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity. The following day, on 17 April, the Specialist Chamber of the Constitutional Court ruled on a constitutional referral filed by Salih Mustafa, concluding that no violations of the Kosovo Constitution had occurred during the Specialist Chambers’ proceedings; however, this decision drew criticism from legal scholars Kushtrim Istrefi and Robert Muharremi, who questioned its legal basis and implications in their analysis titled *Lex Mitior* “on trial” before the Kosovo Specialist Chambers: *Whither Legality*. On 14 July, the Appeals Panel rendered its judgment in the Pjetër Shala case, affirming his convictions for war crimes—including arbitrary detention, torture, and murder—but reducing his sentence from 18 to 13 years imprisonment. Shortly thereafter, on 16 July, the Kosovo Specialist Chambers dismissed a joint defence motion seeking to exclude certain war crimes charges against Hashim Thaçi and three other former Kosovo Liberation Army leaders on the grounds that some alleged events fell outside the 1998–1999 Kosovo

380 Prishtina insight (2026), [Kosovo journalists face major obstacles in reporting wartime crimes](#).

381 HLC (2024), [Brochure: How transparent are the Kosovo Specialist Chambers?](#)

382 Balkan Insight (2026), [Kosovo war veterans stage protest against Hague Specialist Court](#).

383 Kosovo Specialist Chambers and Specialist Prosecutor’s Office (2025), *Legal Aid*.

384 Balkan Insight (2026), [Kosovo agrees to accept compensation claims from KLA war crime victims](#).

conflict timeframe; the court rejected this motion, allowing the trial to proceed on all charges.³⁸⁵

380. Throughout 2025, Kosovo's domestic courts have maintained a focused commitment to prosecuting alleged war crimes committed during the 1998–1999 war. Significant progress was made in several high-profile cases. On 28 April 2025, the Basic Court of Pristina issued arrest warrants for 20 Serbian nationals suspected of involvement in war crimes in Gjakovë/Đakovica, including the killing of 106 K-Albanian civilians. This action signals renewed judicial efforts to investigate and hold accountable perpetrators of mass atrocities from the war period.³⁸⁶

381. In July 2025, the Basic Court sentenced Muhamet Alidemaj, a former Serbian police officer, to 15 years imprisonment for his role in the March 1999 massacre of approximately 130 individuals in Izbicë/Izbica in March 1999. Alidemaj was found guilty of participating in the killings, which were part of a broader campaign of violence against Kosovo Albanians during the war. Additionally, in a partial retrial of the "Drenica 1" case, the Basic Court acquitted Sylejman Selimi and Jahir Demaku of charges related to the beating of a prisoner at a KLA detention center in Likovac in 1998. However, their other war crimes convictions remain intact, highlighting the complexities and challenges in prosecuting war crimes cases.³⁸⁷

382. On 31 July 2025, the Basic Court convicted Milos Pleskovic, a Serbian national, of war crimes for the killing of three Kosovo Albanians near Prizren in September 1998. Pleskovic was sentenced to 15 years' imprisonment. The court found that he and other uniformed individuals were stationed in the hills surrounding Prizren during the conflict and were responsible for the killings. Furthermore, on 28 July, the Pristina Basic Court convicted two former members of the Serbian police force, Dragan Denic and Ivica Rajkovic, in absentia for the wartime rape of a Kosovo Albanian woman in May 1999. Both were sentenced to 15 years in prison. The court found that they, along with other members of the police forces, committed sexual abuse and participated in the expulsion of K-Albanian civilians, looting their property, and committing other inhumane acts.

383. In August 2025, the Basic Court of Pristina ordered one-month pretrial detentions in two separate war crimes cases. On 14 August, the court ruled to detain Ramadan Morina, a K-Albanian suspected of involvement in the March 1999 massacre of 34 Kosovo Albanians in Burim. Morina, who had been residing in Serbia, was arrested upon entering Kosovo, with the court citing a well-founded suspicion of his participation in the killings and the risk of flight as grounds for detention.³⁸⁸ In a separate case, the court also ordered the detention of S.S., suspected of committing war crimes in Vushtrri/Vučitrn during the war. According to case documents, S.S. allegedly collaborated with other uniformed personnel as part of mobilized reservist units of Serbia's Ministry of Internal Affairs, participating in the killing of unarmed civilians. He is further accused of leading an operation on 6 April 1999 that involved looting and burning homes, as well as committing acts of physical and sexual violence against civilians.³⁸⁹

385 Kosovo Specialist Chambers and Specialist Prosecutor's Office (2025), [Trial panel approves plea agreements.](#)

386 Balkan Insight (2025), [Kosovo issues arrest warrant for fugitive Serb Kingpin Radojic.](#)

387 HLC (2025), Gjykime ne mungesë për krime lufte: midis statistikave dhe realitetit të drejtësisë.

388 HLC (2025), Gjykime ne mungesë për krime lufte: midis statistikave dhe realitetit të drejtësisë.

389 HLC (2025), Gjykime ne mungesë për krime lufte: midis statistikave dhe realitetit të drejtësisë.

384. Following its inauguration in November 2024, the Survivors’ Museum established by the Jahjaga Foundation consolidated its role in 2025 as a central memorial and advocacy space for survivors of conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) in Kosovo. Throughout 2025, the Museum continued its programming through public events, exhibitions, and commemorative activities, sustaining visibility for an estimated 20,000 survivors of wartime sexual violence. In 2025 reporting, the institution is increasingly referenced as a permanent memorial space contributing to the gradual dismantling of the long-standing culture of silence surrounding wartime rape and to the institutionalization of remembrance within Kosovo’s public sphere.³⁹⁰

385. In 2025, the Children of War Museum was opened by YIHR KS as an alternative space of remembrance dedicated to individuals whose childhoods were disrupted during the war in Kosovo. The initiative seeks to foreground marginalized war experiences and contribute to symbolic justice through the recognition and preservation of personal narratives. The inaugural exhibition, titled “Play Interrupted,” presents accounts of children who lived through the war, documenting experiences of displacement, fear, hiding, and disrupted everyday life. Developed over a five-year period, the museum aims to serve as a platform for reflection, acknowledgement, and reconciliation, emphasizing the importance of confronting past experiences to prevent their recurrence.³⁹¹

386. In 2025, the memorialization of children killed or reported missing during the 1998–1999 war remains formally scheduled for implementation under the Government’s Strategy on Transitional Justice 2024–2034. The corresponding Action Plan 2024–2026 continues to designate 2025–2026 as the target period for the establishment of the “Memorial for the children killed and disappeared during the war.”³⁹²

387. A procedural development concerning the Missing Persons framework occurred in January 2025, when Prishtina and Belgrade agreed on the Terms of Reference for the Dialogue’s Joint Commission on Missing Persons. However a scheduled meeting on January 15 2025 was cancelled and no public record indicates that the Law on Missing Persons has been amended in line with the Strategy’s commitments.³⁹³

388. In 2025, no public information indicates that the vacancy within the Government Commission on Missing Persons—specifically the seat reserved for a representative of non-majority communities—has been filled. The Commission’s composition therefore appears unchanged. The vacancy, first flagged in 2020 by the NGO MPRC, persists despite the Commission’s mandate to coordinate and oversee efforts to clarify the fate of missing persons without discrimination on the basis of ethnicity, religion, or other status.³⁹⁴

389. By December 2025, 267 cases had been concluded in favor of families of missing persons. Nevertheless, significant challenges remain, and there are still 1,590 missing persons resulting from the war. Although legislation recognizes the right of families to access pensions and social benefits, unresolved legal status and complex administrative procedures frequently impede the effective exercise of these rights. Delays in status determination and documentation continue to

390 YIHR (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

391 YIHR (2025), [Children of War Museum opening](#).

392 YIHR (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo 2025.

393 YIHR (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

394 YIHR (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

leave many families without consistent financial support.³⁹⁵

390. Families of missing persons are legally entitled to timely, accurate, and comprehensive information regarding investigative and forensic processes. In practice, however, information is frequently delayed, fragmented, or communicated inconsistently. Updates are often reactive rather than periodic, and families may rely on informal channels instead of structured institutional communication. This gap undermines trust in responsible authorities and weakens confidence in the integrity of the process.³⁹⁶

391. The legal framework clearly delineates the roles and responsibilities of institutions dealing with missing persons. Nonetheless, coordination among forensic services, investigative bodies, prosecution authorities, and policy institutions remains insufficient. Information-sharing mechanisms are fragmented, procedures lack harmonization, and parallel processes often operate without effective integration. These shortcomings contribute to delays, duplication of work, and reduced institutional efficiency in clarifying the fate of missing persons.³⁹⁷

392. Enforced disappearance and related crimes are criminalized under domestic law, and institutions formally commit to accountability. In practice, however, few cases result in indictments or convictions. Investigations are often protracted, under-resourced, or constrained by evidentiary challenges, reinforcing perceptions among families that justice remains largely declarative rather than operational and that impunity persists.³⁹⁸

393. Families of missing persons are formally recognized as rights-holders and key stakeholders in transitional justice processes. Their participation, however, is frequently limited to consultation without meaningful influence over decision-making. In many instances, families are informed of decisions after they have been made rather than actively involved in shaping investigative priorities, exhumation processes, or institutional strategies. As a result, participation risks remaining symbolic rather than substantive.³⁹⁹

394. Policies acknowledge the necessity of psycho-social support for families of missing persons. In implementation, services remain unevenly distributed, limited in scope, and insufficiently funded. Families in rural or remote areas face particular barriers to sustained and specialized support, reducing the practical effectiveness of policy commitments in this area.⁴⁰⁰

395. Recommendations

- The MoJ should ensure a clear legal distinction between pensions and reparations for war victims, so that survivors and family members are not forced to choose between social benefits and compensation for human rights violations. This distinction must be legally

395 MPRC (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

396 MPRC (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

397 MPRC (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

398 MPRC (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

399 MPRC (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

400 MPRC (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

enshrined to prevent discriminatory exclusions;

- The KJC must increase transparency in war crimes proceedings by ensuring public access to non-sensitive judicial processes and enhancing public reporting. Redactions and closed sessions should be limited to protecting victims and witnesses rather than restricting public oversight;
- The Institute for War Crimes and the MoJ should strengthen regional cooperation to document all war-related crimes and missing persons cases, ensuring cross-border judicial cooperation. Kosovo and Serbia must engage in meaningful legal agreements to facilitate prosecutions and extradition of war criminals;
- The GoK and relevant institutions should revise the official time frame concerning war victims to ensure that transitional justice processes reflect the experiences of all affected communities.

8.2 Corruption and human rights

396. Examining corruption through a human rights lens enables an assessment of how corrupt practices operate across institutional and structural levels, ultimately impairing the effective enjoyment of protected rights. In its 2025 report, the NGO Kosovo Law Institute (KLI) conceptualizes corruption not merely as a criminal offense, but as a phenomenon capable of constituting a human rights violation. In line with an international understanding, this frame understands corruption as a causal chain in which the act of corruption is linked in various ways to the impairment of a specific protected right. Accordingly, violations may be direct, indirect, or structural in nature, and as such, where corruption results in the denial or restriction of protected rights and the state fails to exercise due diligence in preventing, investigating, or sanctioning such conduct, responsibility may arise under human rights law.⁴⁰¹

397. Although international jurisprudence has not explicitly recognized a standalone “right to be free from corruption,” existing human rights guarantees provide a normative basis for addressing corruption as a rights-impairing phenomenon. The NGO KLI (2025) argues in this respect that international instrument, and constitutional guarantees reflect the interconnection as several offenses against human rights are aggravated when committed through abuse of official position while the core corruption offense of abuse of official authority includes the violation of another person’s rights as an element of the crime. Concurrently, although Kosovo has yet to sign the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC), due to its inability to adhere to UN conventions, the UNCAC Coalition of Civil Society considers that Kosovo has demonstrated a solid basis to build a legal and institutional infrastructure to combat corruption through legislative measures. In addition to this, Kosovo has established an Agency for the Prevention of Corruption in accordance with Article 142 of the Constitution. This Agency is responsible for overseeing the implementation of several key laws related to corruption prevention. This includes Law No. 06/L-011 on Prevention of Conflict of Interest in Discharge of a Public Function, Law No. 08/L-108 on Declaration, Origin and Control of Public of Assets and Gifts, Law No. 06/L-085 on the Protection of Whistleblowers,

401 KLI (2025), *Korrupsioni si shkelje e të drejtave të Njeriut*.

and Law No. 08/L-168 on the Special Prosecution Office.

398. In a report published in July 2025, the NGO GPLS noted that efforts were made in the drafting of the 2024-2027 National Anti-Corruption Strategy and Action Plan, but its adoption was significantly delayed and remained unapproved during the reporting mandate, despite earlier commitments to finalize it by December 2023.

399. Finally, 2025 saw the Agency for the Prevention of Corruption increase its international visibility and recognition. In February, it engaged in structured exchanges with Italy's Anti-Corruption Authority through the EU-CoE PECK III project, followed by an open lecture in May. In April, the Agency for the Prevention of Corruption presented its comprehensive corruption risk-mapping methodology, covering 159 public institutions and state-owned enterprises, at a Council of Europe workshop in Strasbourg.⁴⁰² These steps strengthened Kosovo's international standing in anti-corruption efforts and signaled an institutional shift toward greater transparency and capacity-building.

400. In February 2025, Transparency International reaffirmed Kosovo's ranking of 73rd, with a score of 44 (up from 41 in 2024), placing Kosovo second in the Balkans. However, this modest progress coincided with warnings about budget shortfalls in the Kosovo Prosecutorial Council (KPC), which received 17.3 million EUR out of a requested 19.8 million EUR, hindering the hiring of prosecutors and staff. Transparency International's March 2025 update also noted that several reform recommendations remained unimplemented, including the adoption of gender-sensitive public service protocols, stronger transparency in public recruitment, and enhanced oversight of electoral processes.⁴⁰³

401. In 2025, Kosovo also moved forward with the development of a digital corruption reporting mechanism, inspired by South Korea's "Clean Portal" model and implemented in cooperation with UNDP. This initiative aims to enable citizens to report corruption more easily and improve institutional responsiveness.

402. In early 2025, the Office of the Special Prosecutor summoned Prime Minister Albin Kurti in connection with a corruption inquiry into State reserves. While not formally accused, he declined to appear, insisting he could instead be interviewed at his office. On March 4, he again refused to testify despite a court order, publicly dismissing the summons as politically motivated. His criticism of prosecutors drew rebuke from media and legal experts, who warned of the risks to institutional credibility. On April 2, the Basic Court in Pristina fined him 250 EUR for non-compliance, a penalty he downplayed, further fueling debate about transparency.⁴⁰⁴

403. The Special Prosecution of Kosovo filed an indictment against Faruk Mujka, former Deputy Mayor of South Mitrovica, and Hysen Muzliuka, former Director of Geodesy, Cadastre, and Prop-

402 Agency for Prevention of Corruption (APC, 2025), [Kosovo showcases progress in corruption prevention at Strasbourg workshop](#).

403 YIHR (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

404 Balkan Insight (2025), [Kosovo Prime Minister refuses to testify in alleged misuse of Kosovo's reserves](#).

erty, on charges of corruption and abuse of official position. The indictment relates to a disputed property exchange involving a former municipal library building in Mitrovica. According to the prosecution, the defendants misrepresented the legal status of the city-owned property as municipal property, despite the Municipal Assembly having twice designated it as property of special public interest. The case originated from a 2022 investigative report by KALLXO.com, which revealed that the former public reading hall of the Mitrovica City Library had subsequently been converted into a privately owned café following the property transaction.⁴⁰⁵

404. In May 2025, a significant whistleblower case highlighted weaknesses in the enforcement of Kosovo’s whistleblower protection framework. Municipal auditor Shyqeri Krasniqi from Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje municipality was dismissed after uncovering serious procurement irregularities in contracts worth approximately 830,000 EUR for sports facilities. Despite the substantial investments, the facilities were rendered unusable due to structural defects such as leaking roofs and fungal contamination. His dismissal raised serious concerns about retaliation, reinforcing the vulnerability of whistleblowers and the lack of adequate safeguards for those exposing corruption.

405. In the first half of 2025, the Agency for the Prevention of Corruption intensified its oversight activities by filing 48 criminal complaints against public officials, including four Members of Parliament, for failure to declare assets. Several complaints related to undeclared apartments, income, and gifts. The Agency also prepared over 70 additional complaints for submission by mid-year. Whistleblower reports increased sharply, with more than 50 cases reported in the first half of the year alone—already surpassing the total number recorded in 2024. This surge reflects both rising public awareness and growing mistrust in the integrity of political elites.

406. Throughout 2025, civil society watchdogs continued to highlight judicial inertia in adjudicating high-level corruption cases. Reports by the NGO GPLS and other organizations revealed widespread delays, case dismissals, and limited enforcement in corruption trials involving senior officials. These findings reinforced public perceptions that high-level politicians and officials remain “untouchable,” while ordinary citizens face stricter legal consequences. The persistence of this double standard has contributed to declining public confidence in the judiciary’s impartiality and independence.

407. Recommendations

- Courts should develop a more consolidated practice of interpreting corruption cases through a human rights lens, assessing not only the formal elements of the offense but also the substantive impact;
- The Kosovo Prosecutorial Council should strengthen accountability in corruption cases by increasing prosecutorial capacity, ensuring timely adjudication of high-level corruption cases, and enforcing whistleblower protection measures, including reinstatement and legal remedies in cases of retaliation.

405 BIRN (2026), input for the joint CSO report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025.

8.3 The environment and human rights

408. Human rights and the environment are closely interlinked. Human rights cannot be enjoyed without a sustainable, safe and healthy environment. The adverse effects of climate change threaten the full enjoyment of human rights, including the rights to a sustainable, safe and healthy environment, the right to life, water, sanitation, food, health, housing, self-determination, culture and development. In July 2022, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution in which it is declared that “everyone on the planet has a right to a healthy environment.” The resolution is a landmark decision that explicitly declares access to a clean and healthy environment as a universal human right. It subsequently calls upon stakeholders to scale up their efforts to mitigate the effects of the climate crisis including states, international organizations and businesses. In July 2025, the International Court of Justice issued an Advisory Opinion on the Obligations of States in respect of Climate Change, recognizing climate change as an “urgent and existential” threat and confirming that States have binding obligations under international law to prevent significant harm to the climate system. The Court emphasized that failure to exercise due diligence or to take adequate measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and protect populations could amount to an internationally wrongful act, thereby affirming that environmental protection is a prerequisite for the enjoyment of human rights.

409. The Constitution of Kosovo does not recognize the right to a healthy environment. However, it states within Article 52 that “Nature and biodiversity, environment and national inheritance are everyone’s responsibility” and that “Everyone should be provided an opportunity to be heard by public institutions and have their opinions considered on issues that impact the environment in which they live.” The Law No. 08/L-181 on Environmental Impact Assessment, the Law No. 08/L-025 on Protection of Air from Pollution, and most recently the Law No. 08/L-250 on Climate Change are important legal instruments to protect the environment in Kosovo. The ECHR does not explicitly recognise the right to a healthy environment. However, a number of international legal standards developed by the Council of Europe, namely the ECHR, the European Social Charter and the Bern Convention on the conservation of European wildlife have been successfully invoked to make progress on environmental issues all around Europe.

410. The ECtHR has ruled on more than 300 environment-related cases, where it has applied concepts such as the right to life, family life, free speech to a wide range of environmental issues, including pollution, man-made or natural disasters, and access to environmental information. In 2024, the Grand Chamber issued its landmark judgment in *Verein KlimaSeniorinnen Schweiz and Others v. Switzerland*, finding that Switzerland had failed to comply with its positive obligations under the ECHR concerning climate change, marking the Court’s first recognition that inadequate mitigation action can amount to a breach of Convention rights. In 2025, the Court further advanced its jurisprudence by finding a violation of the right to life in *Cannavacciuolo and Others v. Italy* due to long-term exposure to toxic waste pollution, while the Committee of Ministers began supervising the implementation of *KlimaSeniorinnen*, receiving further submissions in July and scheduling continued review in September, highlighting ongoing international scrutiny of State climate action. Also in May 2025, the Court declared inadmissible two climate-related applications,

signaling how the principles set out in KlimaSeniorinnen are now being applied in streamlined decisions, while new filings in 2025, including challenges from United Kingdom applicants focusing on adaptation measures, show that litigants are beginning to test the Court's framework beyond mitigation into broader areas of climate responsibility. These developments provide important reference points for Kosovo citizens and civil society organizations working on environmental issues, as domestic courts are expected to take into account Strasbourg jurisprudence when adjudicating claims related to environmental protection and climate change.

411. In 2025, progress was made in operationalising the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans, with direct implications for Kosovo. The Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) launched the first revision of the Action Plan (2021–2030), which includes 58 priority actions covering decarbonisation, circular economy, de-pollution, sustainable agriculture, and biodiversity. Kosovo also stands to benefit from new regional projects launched in March 2025, notably ADAPT 2.0 and Greening the Western Balkans, which aim to strengthen biodiversity protection and climate resilience. These initiatives provide opportunities for Kosovo to advance implementation of its Law on Climate Change and complement national efforts on air quality, waste management, and environmental impact assessment.

412. Real-time monitoring of air quality is made possible through a network of 12 air monitoring stations positioned in geographically spread locations in the municipalities of Kosovo. This enables measuring the air quality in Kosovo in real time. Access from these 12 stations is accessible through the European Environment Agency (EEA's) European Air Quality Index platform. The air monitoring is done based on Law No. 08/L-025 on Protection of Air from Pollution and the secondary legislation enacted specifically for this purpose, namely Administrative Instruction No. 09/2023 on the method of air quality monitoring, data collection, criteria and methodology. In spite of some noted progress in improving air quality, it continues to represent a major health risk amid delays to fully implement appropriate remedial measures that would help curb air pollution.

413. The air quality in Kosovo is an enormous health concern, with an average PM2.5 concentration 2.4 times the WHO annual air quality guideline value. A key factor continuously contributing to the current situation is the dependence on coal power to provide the energy supply as well as the practice of burning solid fuels including firewood for domestic heating and cooking. A diachronic trend analysis covering the years 2018-2025 show that the air quality – shown here in micrograms per cubic meter of air – is consistently above the WHO air quality guidelines of 10 µg/m³. with the year 2025 climbing to unhealthy levels, and prompting the National Institute of Health to urge citizens, and particularly vulnerable groups, to limit their outdoor activity, avoid opening windows and use protective masks. In December 2025, Kosovo ranked among the 10 most polluted cities in the world.⁴⁰⁶ AQI levels in Pristina climbed to “unhealthy” levels (167) prompting the National Institute of Public Health to issue urgent advisories urging citizens—especially vulnerable groups—to limit outdoor activity, avoid opening windows, and use protective masks.

406 IQAir (2025), [10 December 2025: Kosovo among the ten most polluted cities in the world.](#)

Year	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	WHO guideline
Air quality index in µg/m ³	30.4	23.5	20.0	14.7	19.0	19.4	24	52 µg/m ³	10

Figure 3 Air quality in Kosovo in PM 2.5 between 2018 and 2025

414. The National Institute of Public Health emphasized in 2025 that prolonged exposure to fine particles (PM2.5) is linked to cardiovascular disease, lung cancer, and elevated mortality rates, underscoring the urgency of reducing dependence on coal and solid fuel use.⁴⁰⁷ Despite this understanding, the main sources of air pollution continue to derive from emissions by burning solid fuels including coal and wood both domestically and in the energy industry which uses coal fired power plants. The two existing power plants, Kosovo A and Kosovo B, are located in the town of Obiliq/Obilić, which is a neighbour of Prishtinë/Priština and is therefore responsible for much of the air pollution over the city. It should be underscored that the power plants rank as Europe's first and third most polluted power plants. Together, they emit four times more PM2.5 than the majority of other coal plants in the Balkan region. While they provide Kosovo with its energy infrastructure, the resulting air pollution is damaging to the natural environment and human health.

415. In addition to its risks to human health, air pollution is damaging to the natural environment. The chemical compounds nitrogen oxide and ammonia released into land and water results in chemical imbalanced spaces with significant dysregulations in the natural ecosystems and biodiversity. Other impacts include the erosion of buildings, and acidic rain contributing to the damage of plants, forests and crops. A particularly important source for global heating and climate change concerns greenhouse gas emissions.

416. The three hydropower projects on the Deçan/Dečani river, Lumbardhi/Bistrica and Belaja/Belica, have been the subject of a legal dispute between the Ministry of Environment, Spatial Planning and Infrastructure of Kosovo and the Austrian hydropower investor KelKos, since many years now. In July 2024, the Centre for Strategic Litigation in Kosovo operating under the NGO GLPS, jointly with the NGO "Pishtarët" and three citizens from Deçan/Dečani filed a case with the Constitutional Court of Kosovo arguing, among others, a violation of Article 52 (Responsibility for the Environment) of the Constitution. The applicants consider that the Court of Appeal and the Supreme Court have interpreted the Law No. 04/L-147 on Waters in an arbitrary manner and have neglected the evident environmental harm created by these three hydropower plants. So far, the Constitutional Court has only once found a violation of Article 52 of the Constitution in 2010. It remains to be seen what stance it will take in respect of the famous Deçan/Dečani hydropower plants.

407

IQAir (2025), [10 December 2025: Kosovo among the ten most polluted cities in the world.](#)

417. Kosovo’s new Energy Strategy (2022-2031) steers away from further hydropower development due to environmental concerns. This is an important step forward which makes Kosovo the first in the region to stop promoting new hydropower plants. The strategy plans ambitious growth in renewable energy, aiming for carbon neutrality by 2050. The signatories of the Green Agenda commit to decarbonization by 2050, thus ending the use of all fossil fuels: oil, gas, and coal.

418. In May 2025, the OECD released its report *Energy Prices and Subsidies in the Western Balkans: Reforms for a Fair and Green Future*, offering new insights into Kosovo’s energy landscape. The report confirms that between 2018 and 2023, Kosovo incurred roughly 2.2 billion EUR in implicit support to energy consumers, primarily through below-cost electricity tariffs that averaged 29.5/MWh EUR compared to market reference costs of 105.5/MWh EUR. It also documents 141 million EUR in intra-residential cross-subsidies and 608 million EUR in direct fiscal transfers to the energy sector during the same period—peaking in 2022, when these subsidies represented 2.8 percent of GDP. A substantial share of these transfers continued to support fossil fuel use via customs exemptions, tax waivers, and subsidies for coal-dependent heating and electricity. The OECD warns that maintaining such subsidies undermines public finances, distorts price signals, and delays investment in renewables. Nonetheless, it highlights that subsidy reform must be accompanied by strong social protection mechanisms to buffer vulnerable populations against price hikes. The suggested tools include targeted cash transfers or energy vouchers, which are more efficient than blanket subsidies and maintain incentives for energy-saving behaviors—thus aligning fiscal efficiency with environmental goals.⁴⁰⁸

419. Crucially, the OECD report integrates a gender-sensitive lens, recognizing that women disproportionately shoulder the hidden costs of inefficient energy systems. As primary household energy managers, they adjust usage, schedules, and budgets in response to price shifts. Single mothers, the elderly, and women-headed households often face compounded barriers: limited access to assistance, bureaucratic obstacles, and insufficient outreach. The OECD therefore recommends that energy and social policies be gender-responsive, for example: offering women-specific energy efficiency grants, ensuring women’s targeted inclusion in green job training, and reducing systemic obstacles to support, thereby aligning the energy transition with human rights and equality imperatives.⁴⁰⁹

420. In 2025, Kosovo’s energy sector underwent significant regulatory and market changes. In March, the Energy Regulatory Office (ERO) approved a new electricity tariff structure, resulting in an average increase of 16.1 percent. Effective from May 1, consumption up to 800 kWh per month was priced at 7.79 EUR cents per kWh, while usage above that threshold was charged at 14.45 EUR cents per kWh. The tariffs remain subject to ERO’s annual review cycle.⁴¹⁰ The increase followed ERO’s April 11 decision to raise the maximum permitted revenues for the Kosovo Electricity Supply Company (KESCO), the transmission system operator (KOSTT), and the distribution company (KEDS). ERO cited structural weaknesses in the energy sector, including reliance on lignite for over 77 percent of supply, limited flexibility of existing plants to cover peak demand, growing depen-

408 OECD (2025), [Energy prices and subsidies in the Western Balkans: Reforms for a fair and green future](#).

409 OECD (2025), [Energy prices and subsidies in the Western Balkans: Reforms for a fair and green future](#).

410 Prishtina Insight (2025), [Kosovo Energy Regulator determines electricity tariffs after detested price hike](#).

dence on imports, and regional grid congestion.⁴¹¹ The adjustment triggered strong public and institutional reactions. The Ministry of Economy urged ERO to exempt households consuming below 800 kWh per month, while the Office of the Presidency also voiced opposition. Civil society groups organized protests in Prishtina, with police arresting activists at different occasions on April 2, April 5 and April 11, the latter led by the group Asnjë Cent më Shumë (“Not a Cent More”). On April 30, the Ombudsperson recommended suspending implementation of the new tariffs pending legal review.⁴¹²

421. Additional reforms took effect on June 1, requiring large enterprises—defined as those with more than 50 employees or an annual turnover above 10 million EUR—to leave the regulated tariff system and purchase electricity directly from the open market. The Kosovo Chamber of Commerce contested the measure, arguing that the thresholds were disproportionate to local economic conditions, and requested a one-year delay.⁴¹³

422. The legal framework was clarified in mid-2025 when the Appellate Chamber of the Commercial Court upheld ERO’s liberalization process, reversing an earlier lower court ruling. Following the decision, ERO announced that from August 16, 2025, businesses without contracts with licensed electricity suppliers would face disconnection. The measure was expected to affect over 1,000 companies. Former Prime Minister Avdullah Hoti criticized the ruling, warning that around 1,300 businesses could face significantly higher costs and questioning the fairness of the process and the government’s response.⁴¹⁴ Resultantly, business associations reported growing strain. The Alliance of Kosovar Businesses (AKB) warned that hundreds of companies were at risk, citing cases of disconnection, layoffs, and plans to relocate. AKB described the impact on the private sector as unprecedented in both scale and severity.⁴¹⁵

423. Environmental issues were also prominent during the year. In February 2025, environmental organizations raised concerns about severe pollution along the White Drin River, as discussed in section A of this report. In addition, the Sitnica River remains the most polluted river in Kosovo. Investigative reporting and expert assessments confirm that along its 90-kilometer course, the river continues to receive untreated urban wastewater from major municipalities, including Prishtinë/Prishtina, Lipjan/Lipljan, Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje, Obiliq/Obilić, and Graçanicë/Gračanica.⁴¹⁶

424. International partners contributed to strengthening institutional capacity in this field. In March, the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency launched a three-year Environmental Protection Capacity-Building Project (2025–2027). The project includes the creation of a shared Metadata Portal for environmental data, improved management of national parks, and alignment with EU environmental directives under Chapter 27, including Natura 2000 and the Aarhus Convention.⁴¹⁷ In addition to the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, the EU Office in Kosovo

411 Balkan Insight (2025), [Kosovo Regulator Allows Big Electricity Price Rise Despite Protests](#).

412 Reporteri (2025), [The Ombudsman requests from ERO to suspend the decision to increase the price of electricity](#).

413 Prishtina Insight (2025), [Energy Market Reform Leaves Kosovo’s Big Businesses Sweating](#).

414 Periskopi (2025), [ERO: From August 16, electricity supply to customers without a contract will be interrupted](#).

415 Prishtina Insight (2025), [Energy Market Reform Leaves Kosovo’s Big Businesses Sweating](#).

416 Kosovo 2.0 (2025), [Sitnica: The poison that flows](#).

417 Natur Vards Verket (2025), [Kosovo – Activities strengthen environmental protection](#).

announced on August 19 2025 that an additional 7.5 million EUR was disbursed under the Energy Support Package (IPA 2023), bringing total EU energy assistance to 75 million EUR. According to the EU Office, the funding has supported more than 200,000 households with energy bills, enabled energy-efficiency renovations in over 3,600 homes, financed the renovation of 28 apartment buildings housing vulnerable families, and provided 40,000 households and 154 businesses with solar and energy-efficient equipment. The measure forms part of the EU's broader support for Kosovo's clean energy transition, decarbonisation, and energy security.⁴¹⁸

425. Recommendations

- The Ministry of Environment, Spatial Planning and Infrastructure and the Ministry of Economy should adopt and implement binding measures to reduce air pollution by setting annual PM2.5 reduction targets, enforcing emission limits on Kosovo A and B, and publishing monthly air quality data with corrective actions;
- The Ministry of Environment, Spatial Planning, and Infrastructure must strengthen enforcement mechanisms to curb industrial pollution, particularly from coal power plants Kosovo A and Kosovo B;
- The Ministry of Economy should redirect financial support toward targeted energy assistance for vulnerable households and investment in renewable energy, with annual public reporting on subsidy reductions and renewable capacity increases.

8.4 The right to equality and non-discrimination

426. The principle of non-discrimination constitutes a core norm of international human rights law and is embedded in key instruments, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). At the regional level, the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) provides protection through Article 14, which prohibits discrimination in the enjoyment of Convention rights. In addition, Article 1 of Protocol No. 12 to the ECHR establishes a broader, standalone prohibition of discrimination in relation to “any right set forth by law,” thereby extending protection beyond the scope of rights specifically guaranteed under the Convention. Within this framework, Kosovo is under a legal obligation to ensure protection against discrimination for all individuals within its jurisdiction, including on grounds such as race, ethnicity, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation, and other protected characteristics.

427. The Constitution of Kosovo embeds equality and non-discrimination as foundational constitutional principles. Article 3 establishes equality before the law as a guiding principle for the exercise of public authority. Article 24 explicitly guarantees equality before the law and prohibits discrimination. Furthermore, equality and non-discrimination are reaffirmed among the fundamental constitutional values in Article 6, which form the normative basis of the constitutional order.

428. In addition to this, the legislative framework consists of numerous laws and regulations. This includes Law No. 05/L-020 on Gender Equality, Law No. 05/L-021 on Protection from Discrimination

418 UNMIK Media observer (2025), [Morning Edition August 26 2025](#).

and Criminal Code No. 04/L-082. The Law No. 05/L-019 of the Ombudsperson Institution has authorized the OIK to promote and monitor equal treatment without discrimination on the grounds protected by the legislation. The OIK also appears as *amicus curiae* in judicial processes treating human rights and the protection from discrimination. Furthermore, the Administrative Instruction No. 2007/08 on the Establishment of Human Rights Units in Municipalities has foreseen the establishment of units in municipalities composed of at least three officials including the coordinator of the Human Rights Units. Finally, the OGG along with the Government Inter-Ministerial Working Group on Human Rights consists of another institutional mechanism aimed at coordinating anti-discrimination efforts across institutions.

429. In December 2025, the NGO Kosovar Centre for Gender Studies (KCGS) and the NGO Kosovo Stability Initiative (IKS) published a study titled “Prejudice at the Door,” applying situation testing to detect discrimination in the early stages of recruitment. Conducted in November 2025 across 18 companies and 25 vacancies in sectors such as hospitality, logistics, administration, and cleaning services, the study submitted matched applications differing only by one protected characteristic (gender, ethnicity, or sexual orientation) to assess differential treatment. The findings reveal consistent patterns of unequal treatment: K-Roma women faced heightened scrutiny, lower salary offers, and redirection to less favorable positions despite equal or superior qualifications; heterosexual men received faster and more concrete job offers compared to gay men; and women were steered toward lower-status roles and subjected to intrusive, non-professional questions not posed to male candidates. The research also identified structural weaknesses in recruitment practices, including reliance on informal communication channels and lack of transparency, which amplify discretionary decision-making and create conditions conducive to discriminatory filtering, demonstrating that discrimination in Kosovo’s labour market often operates at the threshold of employment rather than only within formal workplace relations.⁴¹⁹

430. In 2025, YIHR KS in partnership with the Agency for Free Legal Aid finalized the Guidelines for Handling Discrimination Cases, a new guideline designed to standardize procedures for identifying, processing, and resolving discrimination complaints, aiming to make remedies more accessible and effective.

431. Recommendations

- The Ministry of Finance, Labour and Transfers and the Labour Inspectorate should monitor and sanction discriminatory recruitment practices by introducing regular inspections, requiring transparent hiring procedures, and publishing annual reports on discrimination findings in the labour market;
- The Ministry of Justice and the Agency for Free Legal Aid should operationalize the Guidelines for Handling Discrimination Cases by ensuring their mandatory application across institutions, training relevant officials, and publishing annual data on discrimination complaints, outcomes, and access to remedies.

419

Europe House (2026), [Paragjykimi në derë: Zbulimi i diskriminimit përmes testimit të situatave në tregun e punës](#).

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