

Forum for Civic Initiatives and Saferworld

A matter of trust

**Public perceptions of safety
and security in Kosovo, 2009/2010**



November 2010



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Acronyms

CSAT	Community Safety Action Team
EU	European Union
EULEX	EU Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo
EUSR	EU Special Representative
FIQ	Forum for Civic Initiatives
ICITAP	Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program
ICO	International Civilian Office
INPO	Initiative for Progress
KCP-SG	Kosovo Community-Based Policing Steering Group
KFOR	Kosovo Force (NATO)
KIA	Kosovo Intelligence Agency
KP	Kosovo Police (previously Kosovo Police Service)
KPC	Kosovo Protection Corps
KPS	Kosovo Police Service
KSC	Kosovo Security Council
KSF	Kosovo Security Force
LPSC	Local Public Safety Council
MCSC	Municipal Community Safety Council
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe
SALW	small arms and light weapons
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNMIK	UN Mission in Kosovo
USDOJ	US Department of Justice

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Executive summary

THIS IS THE FIFTH POPULATION SURVEY conducted since 2006 by Saferworld and the Forum for Civic Initiatives (FIQ). The survey explores public attitudes towards safety and security, and towards the institutions responsible for security provision in Kosovo. It is intended as a contribution to the development of people-focused, effective and accountable institutions capable of providing security and justice services to all of Kosovo's population. The data-gathering methods (a population survey combined with 20 focus groups conducted in 2009/10 using a comparable questionnaire and sampling methods) help build up a longitudinal picture of changes in attitudes and perceptions over a turbulent period in Kosovo's recent history.

Overall, the picture is largely positive but mixed. A significant proportion of the population perceive that their security has improved, confirming a year-on-year positive change since 2006. Trust in security institutions continues to grow, although there are considerable disparities between different institutions. For instance, the Kosovo Police (KP) are widely trusted and the EU Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) is held in generally poor regard across the country. Both the public and policy makers can therefore take some encouragement from the manner in which security and security providers are perceived by the majority of the population.

However, as always, closer analysis of the data presents a more nuanced picture. While people feel that general levels of insecurity in their neighbourhoods have decreased, there remains a real and substantial fear of a return to violent conflict; while there is increased trust in institutions, this varies widely depending on gender, ethnicity and to some extent, age; and while the perception of small arms as a visible factor in fuelling insecurity remains low, it is clear that there are still a very substantial number of weapons held by civilians across the country that could be brought back into use if the need arose.

This report begins by introducing the post-war evolution of the institutional framework in Kosovo as it relates to security and security providers. It then describes the findings of the population survey and focus group discussions, first in terms of perceptions relating to safety and security, and then with regard to the institutions responsible for providing security. It concludes with a series of recommendations for consideration by Kosovo's governing institutions and relevant supporting international agencies, namely:

Recommendations for further enhancing the effectiveness of Kosovo's institutions

- **In the drafting of the National Strategy and Action Plan for Community Safety, the Government of Kosovo should ensure broad consultation**, and take into consideration the experiences of successful community-safety initiatives at the local and central level.
- **The Kosovo Government and other actors should continue their efforts to further improve the performance of the Kosovo Police.** In order to increase trust in the police as legitimate security providers, the capacity of the KP needs to be further increased. Special attention should be given to improving the ability of the police to respond quickly to incidents, and to ensuring the confidentiality of information received. The relationship between the KP and Kosovo Serbs in particular requires further improvement. Progress made with regards to police performance should be communicated to the public as a valuable means of building public trust and confidence in the KP as an institution.
- **A comprehensive approach should be applied to promoting community safety and security which involves key ministries as well as other actors in sectors such as infrastructure development, justice, health, local administration and economy.** As most public safety and security concerns do not directly relate to the core responsibilities of security providers, other key actors should be actively involved in the development of suitable policies and mechanisms at the national and municipal level, as well as in addressing safety and security concerns locally.

Recommendations for enhancing the understanding of, and engagement with, international agencies with an interest in security and public safety in Kosovo

- **To enhance public trust, EULEX should consider ways in which it can enhance its communication with local citizens** in order to clarify its role and responsibilities, as well as to highlight its achievements to date. One way of achieving this could be through a greater emphasis on direct outreach to communities, with visits to universities and secondary schools, town hall meetings and other public events, at which ordinary people would have the opportunity to ask questions and voice their views and concerns.
- **Kosovo Government institutions and EULEX should improve their co-ordination and communication strategies.** Apparently contradictory public statements can serve to further decrease trust in EULEX and hamper its progress in fulfilling its mandate.

Recommendations for engaging more effectively with the people of Kosovo

- **More and better information should be made available to citizens about the work of, and access to, the different security-related institutions.** This should include Municipal Community Safety Councils (MCSCs), but also 'new' institutions such as the Kosovo Intelligence Agency (KIA) and the Kosovo Security Council (KSC). In the newly established municipalities, particularly those with a Kosovo Serb majority, this need relates to Kosovo institutions in general as there is currently little understanding of their functions or trust in their ability to discharge these functions fairly.
- **Opportunities for citizen engagement should be improved and public awareness of any existing possibilities for engagement increased.** This is not just relevant for issues relating to public safety or security but to general civilian participation in community matters. Efforts in this regard should involve all elements of society, including people whose voices are not usually heard, namely women, young people and ethnic minority groups.
- **Local authorities should support public willingness to engage voluntarily in local community activities on issues that concern people directly.** The existence of the MCSCs and other safety and security forums at the community level offers opportunities for local authorities to reach out to those groups whose voices are not commonly heard such as young people, women and minorities, and encourage and support initiatives that will help improve their local environment as well as their security situation.

1

Introduction

THIS REPORT INVESTIGATES public perceptions of safety and security in Kosovo, and public attitudes towards the institutions responsible for its provision. Findings are based on 20 focus group discussions which took place during two periods in late 2009 and mid-2010; a household survey undertaken in October 2009 covering 1,200 households; and numerous interviews with policy makers, implementers and commentators from late 2009 to autumn 2010. Saferworld and FIQ have published four similar surveys tracking attitudes and perceptions relating to a range of relevant human security issues: one in 2006, two in 2008, and one in 2009.¹

In addition to looking at public perceptions of safety and security and identifying relevant trends in this area, the report examines on how people in Kosovo perceive security providers and other institutions which are responsible for policy making and oversight of security issues. Perceptions relating to levels of trust, expectation and performance are assessed, as well as how the public understands the respective roles and responsibilities of the different international institutions engaged in Kosovo. Further, the report looks at whether people feel they can (and do) participate in decision making on safety and security issues. In particular, people's perceptions of the Kosovo Police (KP) and of the EU's Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) are examined. The report also analyses public opinions on other relevant institutions, including local municipal authorities, which have an important role to play in the provision and oversight of safety and security.

The aim of the report is to contribute towards promoting effective and accountable security provision in Kosovo. It provides a number of recommendations aimed at encouraging security institutions to better inform and engage with citizens in order to establish greater clarity over their respective roles and responsibilities and to enable more people to hold these institutions accountable. As such, the report is aimed at those in both Kosovo-based and international organisations and institutions working on the provision of safety and security in Kosovo.

The research combines both qualitative and quantitative data. The methods employed were a randomly sampled household survey based on detailed questionnaires; 20 focus groups representing different interest groups from specific areas across Kosovo; and a range of key informant interviews with those responsible for policy development, implementation and oversight of security policy. To allow for comparison of responses over time and the identification of trends and patterns, the survey questionnaires contain a 'core set' of questions which remain the same for each survey. Within this parameter however, the precise dimensions of the survey have evolved slightly over time. For example:

¹ Previous SafePlace publications can be found on the project website www.safeplaceproject.org, accessed 20 February 2009.

1. The number of respondents increased slightly from 1,153 in the first survey in December 2006 to 1,200 in subsequent surveys;
2. The percentages of Kosovo Albanians, Kosovo Serbs and other minorities covered by the survey has changed, reflecting official changes in the composition of the population in Kosovo (based on the electoral role/voters list);
3. A large majority of heads of households in Kosovo are men, so in order to provide an adequate gender balance, from 2008, women were interviewed in every second and fourth household. In total for the 2009/10 survey, 52.3% of respondents were male and 47.7% were female.

All places identified in the report have been provided with their Albanian and Serb names.

2

Context: developments in Kosovo's security sector

Local and international security institutions

THIS REPORT COMES AT A TIME when the security sector in Kosovo has undergone significant development and changes, and when it continues to be dominated by the move from internationally provided security to security provision being the responsibility of the Kosovo Government. In the years immediately following the war, formal security provision in Kosovo was overseen exclusively by international institutions. The military Kosovo Force (KFOR) provided 'stabilisation' under NATO leadership, and the UN mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) had an executive role. Over the years, this role has changed to one of monitoring and providing technical support to local institutions. As the security situation stabilised and public safety gradually improved, more emphasis was placed on strengthening the capacity of Kosovo's domestic institutions, the Provisional Institutions of Self-Governance (PISG). This included establishing, reforming, training and equipping local security institutions, for example the Kosovo Police Service (KPS), the Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC) and the Kosovo Security Force (KSF).

Since February 2008, when Kosovo declared independence, the Kosovo Government has to a large extent taken over responsibility and ownership for safety and security, but because of the complexities still surrounding Kosovo's status, a significant international presence remains. After the adoption of the new Constitution and the Law on Police,² the Kosovo Police Service (KPS) was renamed the Kosovo Police (KP). In addition, in 2009 a number of security institutions envisioned by the 'Ahtisaari Plan'³ were established, related strategies and laws were adopted, and importantly, the KSF became operational. The KSF's mandate is to fulfil security responsibilities which other law enforcement agencies (such as the police) do not have the mandate and/or capacity to provide, including civil protection and crisis response. Despite Kosovo Albanian perceptions to the contrary, KSF is not a fully-fledged army; NATO plays a significant role in training KSF staff and designing KSF's organisational structure, and while KSF is under the control of Kosovo authorities, NATO continues to provide oversight over operations. In addition, the Kosovo Intelligence Agency (KIA) and the Kosovo Security Council (KSC), which are charged with advising the Government

² The Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo was adopted in April and came into effect on 15 June 2008. The Law on Police was approved by the Assembly on 20 February 2008 and promulgated by the Decree of the President of the Republic of Kosovo on 15 June 2008.

³ Martti Ahtisaari was the UN Secretary General-appointed Special Envoy for the future status process for Kosovo. After an 18 month UN- and EU-backed negotiation process between Prishtinë/Prishtina and Belgrade on 26 March 2007, Martti Ahtisaari presented his Comprehensive Proposal for the Kosovo Status Settlement to the UN Secretary General; United Nations Security Council, S/2007/168, 26 March 2007, <http://www.unosek.org/docref/report-english.pdf>.

on security matters,⁴ were established in 2009, as were the parliamentary committees responsible for overseeing the KIA and the KSF. Finally, in 2010, Kosovo's Security Strategy was adopted by the Government of Kosovo and approved by the Assembly of Kosovo.

Despite considerable progress in the development of the domestic security sector, the international role in Kosovo remains strong. Based on UN Security Council Resolution 1244, UNMIK and KFOR maintain their presence in Kosovo, although with greatly reduced numbers of personnel,⁵ reflecting the generally improved security situation. UNMIK staff number around 10% of its initial capacity, and Northern Kosovo is now the exclusive focus of operations. Over the past ten years, the European Union (EU) has taken on a gradually more significant role, including in the security sphere, and in 2008, EULEX was established. EULEX is increasingly assuming the tasks and responsibilities previously undertaken by UNMIK, and is mandated to assist the Kosovo authorities in the provision of the rule of law, specifically as it relates to the police, judiciary and customs sectors, while retaining limited executive powers.

The EU as an institution does not recognise Kosovo's independence (although 22 out of 27 member states do), and therefore EULEX is 'status neutral', which is taken by most commentators in Kosovo to mean that by default, it does not recognise independence. However, the overall picture as it relates to the role of the EU and its institutions is more complex than this would suggest: the EU Special Representative (EUSR) also heads up the International Civilian Office (ICO). The ICO assists Kosovo with the implementation of the Ahtisaari plan – which also set out a framework for Kosovo's future constitutional development – and thus does recognise independence.⁶ While intended to ensure a co-ordinated and unified effort, this 'double-hatting' at the highest levels of policy development creates ongoing problems over clarity of purpose and influences the manner in which Kosovo's citizens view EULEX, the ICO and the EU more generally.

Many Kosovo Serbs do not recognise the independence of Kosovo and do not accept or co-operate with the political, social and administrative structures and institutions established by the Kosovo Government. In many areas inhabited mainly by Kosovo Serbs, so-called 'parallel institutions' operate, which continue to be supported politically and financially by the Serbian Government in Belgrade. The result is a complex institutional framework, leading to a lack of administrative coherence and efficiency, especially as regards the rule of law and security provision. However, over time the situation has improved in many areas in Kosovo. For example, after initially boycotting service in the police force following the declaration of independence, many Kosovo Serb police officers have resumed duty; and in the local elections held in November 2009, Kosovo Serbs voted in significant numbers contrary to vocal discouragement from Belgrade. However, despite these positive developments, Northern Kosovo remains largely beyond the control of the Kosovo authorities, and the Kosovo Government and EULEX have made very limited progress in extending their control over the rule of law north of the river Ibar. Consequently, this remains possibly the biggest challenge to Kosovo's future and to the quality of security and justice provision enjoyed by its citizens.

⁴ SETimes, "Kosovo Security Council is inaugurated", 12 February 2009, available at http://www.setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/xhtml/en_GB/features/setimes/features/2009/02/12/feature-02.

⁵ KFOR has been reducing its numbers gradually from some 50,000 soldiers in 1999 to 10,200 in early 2010. KFOR, 'NATO's role in Kosovo', available at http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_48818.htm.

⁶ Džihic V. and Kramer H., *Kosovo After Independence - Is the EU's EULEX Mission Delivering on its Promises?* (Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, July 2009).

Community safety in Kosovo

Against this complex background, attention in Kosovo has increasingly centred on the provision of security at the local and community levels. There are numerous theories for why there is such a strong focus in this area. Perhaps the dominant one is that targeting the local rather than the central level enables those who want to see improvements in safety and security experienced by citizens in their communities to sidestep the confusion and inertia which comes with the context of multiple institutions and sometimes competing mandates at a national level. Consequently, in recent years several mechanisms, institutions and programmes have been established in Kosovo under the banner of ‘community security’ or ‘community safety’. While different in scope and focus, a common aim has been to promote a partnership approach to local security which includes involving and consulting with local communities at the village and municipal levels to develop joint solutions to local safety and security issues; and involving a broad range of local stakeholders, such as citizens, civil society organisations, media, local authorities and local security providers.

Various institutions at different levels of Kosovo society now work to promote community safety:

- **State level:** A ‘Community Safety Strategy for Kosovo’ was drafted in 2005 but was not adopted by the Government. On 8 March 2010, the Government decided to begin the procedure of drafting a new strategy, entitled the ‘National Strategy and Action Plan for Community Safety’. Work on community safety has so far been co-ordinated by the Kosovo Community-Based Policing Steering Group (KCP-SG). However, at the time of writing, the KP is being reorganised and it is possible that consequently, this may change.
- **Municipal level:** Since the Administrative Instruction for Municipal Community Safety Councils came into effect on 20 March 2009, the establishment of MCSCs in all municipalities in Kosovo has been required by law. MCSCs have been established – or, in the newly established municipalities following the municipal elections of 2009, are in the process of being established – in all but three remaining municipalities in Northern Kosovo. According to the government, the MCSC is ‘the main consultative body of a municipality for security issues, which in co-operation with police, reviews and resolves all security issues for communities, in the interest of all citizens within the municipality.’⁷ MCSCs are therefore obliged to consult widely, collect and analyse information and, with the co-operation of the police, address and resolve security concerns. MCSCs are chaired by the local mayor and comprise inter alia the local police commander, representatives of civil society and each of the religious communities, as well as members of the LPSCs and CSATs (see below) where these exist.
- **Local/community level:** Two structures currently exist at the local/community level: Local Public Safety Councils (LPSCs) and Community Safety Action Teams (CSATs).
 - LPSCs currently exist in 27 municipalities/areas. They were originally created in 2005 under UNMIK ‘Regulation No. 2005/54 on the Framework and Guiding Principles of the KPS’, in order to improve the relationship between the police and ethnic minority groups, and to make the police more responsive to the specific needs of the communities.⁸
 - CSATs were established in 2003 by the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the US Department of Justice (USDOJ) under its International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program (ICITAP). The intention was to ‘facilitate interaction between community leaders, municipal

⁷ Article 3.2 – Republic of Kosovo, Administrative Instruction No. 08/2009, MIA – 02/2009 MLGA for Municipal Community Safety Councils.

⁸ Saferworld, *Human Security in Kosovo – a survey of perceptions* (London, May 2007), available at <http://www.saferworld.org.uk/smartweb/resources/view-resource/266>.

officials and the Kosovo Police [then the Kosovo Police Service], in order to create co-operative working relationships so that they can work together to identify and address issues of crime, safety and liveability'.⁹ Membership is intended to be representative of the community at large. CSATs now exist in 28 municipalities and continue to be established through a process of pre-establishment selection and training. Training includes addressing subjects such as communication and facilitation, partnership and team-building, problem solving, conflict resolution and creating action plans. ICITAP is currently in the process of handing over responsibility for overseeing CSATs to the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

The field of community safety in Kosovo has seen some important developments over recent years, with institutional frameworks established and greater capacity and the benefits of practical experience. Numerous grassroots and local community NGOs across Kosovo as well as other international institutions and organisations (such as UNDP, East-West Management Institute, FIQ and Saferworld) have contributed to developing the theory and practice of community safety in Kosovo.

⁹ OSCE, *Assessing the Impact, Kosovo's Community Safety Action Teams* (Brussels, 2009), p 14. Available at http://www.osce.org/documents/mik/2009/03/36621_en.pdf.

3

Public perceptions of security and safety

THIS SECTION DESCRIBES public perceptions of security and safety issues. It builds on previous surveys undertaken by Saferworld and FIQ under the SafePlace project since 2006, enabling comparison of responses to key questions over time. In addition, it outlines some of the main findings of the most recent survey, conducted in 2009/10. It also provides the context within which to consider the relationships between citizens and institutions dealing with security issues, outlined in more detail in the following section. The main points are summarised below:

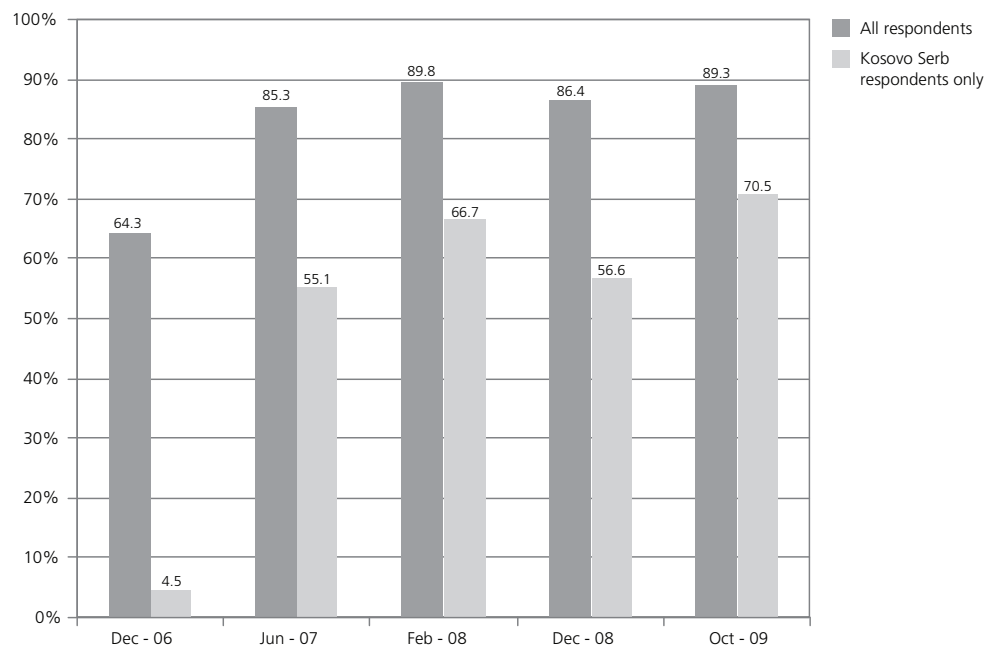
- Perceptions of day-to-day public safety and security continue to improve, especially among Kosovo Serbs. However, there are still specific areas where a considerable percentage of people feel very unsafe.
- A relatively high proportion of people still fear an outbreak of violent conflict over the next five years. The main causes are seen to be unresolved political issues, but economic and social problems also create frustration and tension, which are perceived to have the potential to contribute to triggering violent conflict.
- High crime levels and poor infrastructure continue to rank high on the list of concerns, as do the interrelated factors of pollution and health. Domestic and gender-based violence is a safety and security issue that is not much talked about by survey respondents, but is one which arises relatively frequently in focus group discussions.
- People remain reluctant to discuss weapons use and ownership. The majority of people claim that they would not feel safer with weapons in their house and would not acquire one even if they were allowed to. People report hearing more gunshots than in the past.

People feel safer

Most respondents say they feel safe where they live. There was a slight increase from 2008 in positive perceptions across all communities, after what had already been a significant improvement in 2007 and 2008 (see figure 1). Today, 46.4% of respondents describe their neighbourhood as very safe, and 42.9% as somewhat safe. In Pozharan/Požaranje and Viti/Vitina, respondents described the good public safety situation in their community: “(...) there are no problems among citizens, or maybe just a few (...). During summer holidays I go to Albania and I leave my house alone for two months. There are times when I leave the keys inside the house but no one attempts to enter (...) in the entire place as far as security is concerned it is an extraordinary collaboration.” (Male, 43 years old, Viti/Vitina).

Generally, Kosovo Serbs feel much safer in their neighbourhood today than they did a year ago, and the improvement is even more considerable if tracked over a three-year period (see figure 1). This is a positive development which might be due to the notion that the reduction of KFOR troops is an indicator of the improved security situation that accompanies the general normalisation of relations between communities, combined with Kosovo Serb police officers resuming duty and the increased co-operation with administrative institutions. 70.5% of Kosovo Serb respondents say that they feel very safe or somewhat safe compared to 56.6% in December 2008. During the same period, the number of Kosovo Serbs who felt very unsafe or somewhat unsafe reduced from 24.5% in 2008 to 11% in 2009. Improvements in the situation – as well as the challenges that remain – are illustrated by the following statement: “Today (...), I can go to Pristina and fulfil my needs. Sometimes in the past I didn't even dare to think about this, even though I'm still not free to introduce myself as Serb or speak Serbian at every place...” (Male, Gračanice/Gračanica).

**Figure 1: Would you describe your neighbourhood as...?
Very safe or somewhat safe**



In figure 1, the dip in December 2008 which breaks the generally positive trend can perhaps be explained by the fact that data for this time frame was collected in April/ May 2008, just a few months after the declaration of independence. This new political situation might have caused a sense of unfamiliarity and even insecurity among some respondents.

Overall, very few respondents rate their neighbourhood as somewhat unsafe or very unsafe. However, the percentages are higher for Kosovo Serbs, 8.5% of whom describe their neighbourhood as very unsafe, against a Kosovo-wide average of 3.3%. Geographically, Mitrovicë/Mitrovica stands out, with 9.5% of respondents here describing their neighbourhood as very unsafe. (Figures range from between 0.7% to 3.6% for other regions.) A male focus group participant from Mitrovicë/Mitrovica described the situation from his perspective: “When the clock reaches seven or eight, and if you have to go out, there is a place (...) up to Ibri Bridge which is like a dead zone. Only a few vehicles pass every half an hour. It is like Siberia or Greenland, where you can find only ice, there is an absolute calmness. They made this zone on purpose, so that Albanians or Kosovo Serbs could not go out.” (Male, 50 years old, Mitrovica).

More than three-quarters of all respondents (76.8%) feel that the safety situation in their neighbourhood has remained the same in the last six months, while almost one-fifth (19.4%) feel that it has improved. People with higher levels of education are more

critical in their assessment of the local safety situation, and of how it has developed. Interestingly, the majority of people who hear gunshots frequently (between once a week and on a daily basis) perceive their neighbourhood as safe or very safe (more than 70%). Only those who hear gunshots several times a day (0.8%) overwhelmingly describe their neighbourhood as very unsafe. The fact that most people feel safe in the neighbourhood in which they live does not ease their fears that one of their family members might become a victim of crime: more than half of respondents describe themselves as either very or quite concerned that their families might become a victim of crime.

The 'community' in which people live is generally seen to provide security. However, this depends to a large extent on where people live. In rural areas and neighbourhoods where the same people have been living for a long time, it seems that solidarity within the community is stronger and people feel more protected; in towns and especially in areas where displacement took place during the war – and resettlement happened afterwards – there seems to be a tendency for people to feel less protected by their 'community'.

The extent to which people feel they can rely on their neighbours and community members also depends on what kind of threat concerns them most. As a respondent from Mitrovicë/Mitrovica North explained: "(...) with respect to the security in the community, it all depends whether the safety is breached internally or externally. If the person who breaches my safety comes from outside, over the bridge, then the community has a very big role in protecting my personal safety. If it is about some internal things, then I feel totally unsafe. Because there is nobody there to protect me, there is no institution or any sort of informal group to protect me." (Male, 24 years old, Kosovo Serb, Mitrovicë/Mitrovica). Perceptions of security also depend on whether people feel they are perceived as the sole minority in an area, or as one of several minority groups. For example, a respondent from Shtërpçë/Štrpce explained that he feels safer when going to Prizren than to Ferizaj/Uroševac: "Because there are a lot of Bosniaks living in the suburbs of Prizren, and they go to the city. That is why they cannot tell in Prizren if we are Serbs or Bosniaks." (Male, 38 years old, Kosovo Serb, Shtërpçë/Štrpce).

While the family is largely perceived as a positive contributor to safety and security, there is evidence that many women and children do not feel safe at home: "Violence is also applied to women who are disrespected and often treated like animals. Many husbands suppress them and apply systematic violence to their wives and their children (...) children who are obliged to work or who serve as beggars in the streets of the majority of towns and cities of Kosovo." (Female respondent from Istog/Istok). This is clearly a sensitive topic, one that is widely considered taboo and little talked about, especially in formal research settings.

Major concerns relating to safety and security

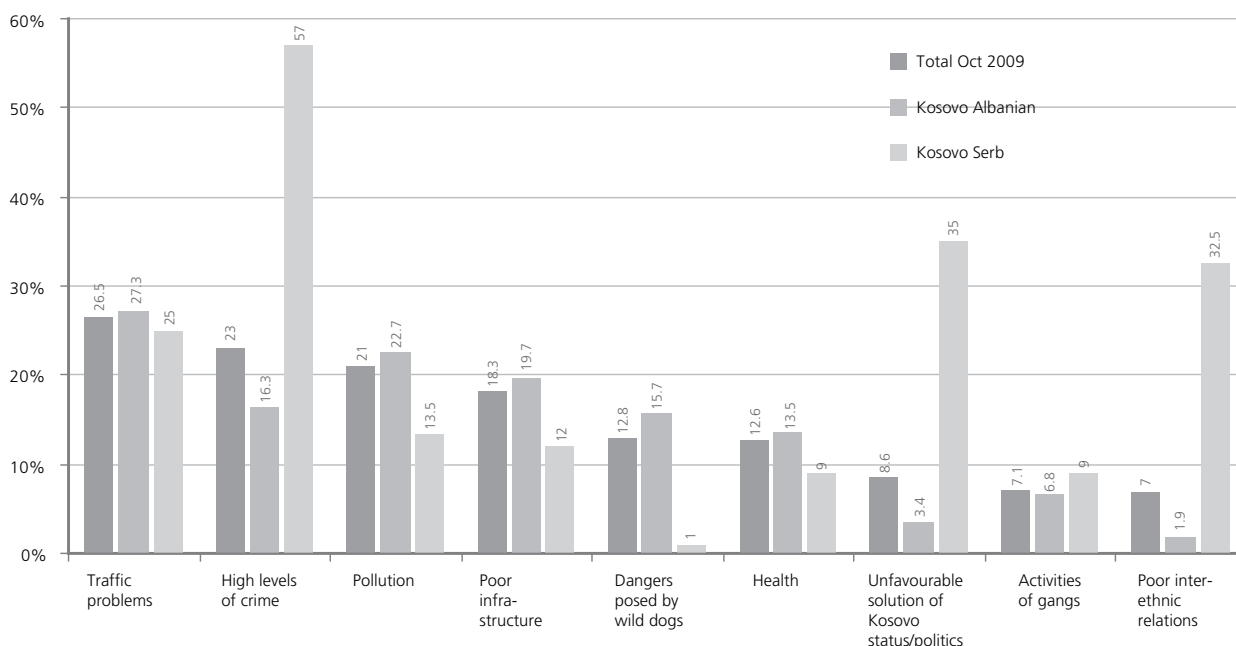
Local, day-to-day safety and security concerns have not changed significantly over the last few years. The major concerns remain the same, while the order in which they are articulated has changed only slightly over time. When asked about the most serious safety and security issue faced by their community, the following issues were highlighted by respondents:

- 1. High crime levels:** Fear of crime in the community remains an issue and it appears to be increasing over time (23% in 2009, up from 21% in March/April 2008 and 19.1% in June 2007). This is an issue that particularly worries Kosovo Serbs, with more than twice the average rate (57%) identifying this as a major concern. Robberies, theft and violent crime (such as assault and beatings) are by far the most common types of crime reported to researchers by respondents. Younger people tend to be more concerned about violent crime in their community.

- 2. **Traffic issues:** Concern over reckless driving and dangerous roads is highlighted more often than any other issue, and has gained in importance (26.5% in 2009, up from 15.4% in March/April 2008 and 14.3% in June 2007). This reflects the poor state of many of Kosovo’s roads, and the limited enforcement of traffic laws. Some focus group participants expressed apprehension about their children walking to school along unsafe roads.
- 3. **Pollution** is considered more important than it was in the past. This reflects the serious environmental problems people in Kosovo are confronted with in their day-to-day life, with air pollution caused by coal-fired heating and emissions from industrial production, and contamination of soil and water through unsafe waste disposal. Linked to this are concerns over the availability of clean drinking water in many locations, which was highlighted as a serious issue in several focus group discussions, closely linked with concerns about public health.
- 4. **Poor infrastructure** remains a public safety concern. Missing or broken streetlights and a lack of pavements are perceived to negatively influence safety in many communities.
- 5. **Dangers posed by wild dogs and poor public health** share fifth place, both being mentioned more often than in the past. Wild dogs are mentioned by 12.8% of respondents (up from 4.4% in June 2007 and 9.7% in March/April 2008), and health is mentioned by 12.6% (up from 6.8% in June 2007 and 9.4% in March/April 2008). Packs of wild dogs are still a common sight in many towns and communities in Kosovo, causing fears of attack among citizens. They are attracted by uncollected rubbish, and pose more of a threat at night than during the day.

However, when disaggregated by ethnicity, there are sometimes extremely significant differences between Kosovo’s different communities in terms of which safety and security issues are considered most serious. Apart from high crime levels, Kosovo Serbs quote ‘unfavourable resolution of Kosovo status’ (35%, against only 3.4% of Kosovo Albanians) and ‘poor interethnic relations’ (32.5%, against only 1.9% of Kosovo Albanians) as their key security and safety concerns. While Kosovo Albanians appear to focus more on the ‘local’ public safety and security issues that cause them concern in their immediate surroundings, Kosovo Serbs tend to see their local security and safety situation as much more connected to the wider political context.

Figure 2: In your opinion, what is the most serious safety and security issue that your community faces?



In the survey data, very few respondents mention domestic violence or sexual assault as types of crimes that occur frequently in their neighbourhood (2.5% and 0.4% of respondents respectively). However, it should be noted that views expressed in the focus group discussions (in particular the all-female ones), suggest that such problems do exist on a more significant scale, and that for many women this represents a day-to-day security concern. As in many other countries, in Kosovo these are very sensitive issues and not openly discussed: “We can assume that there is domestic violence in our families, but we don’t know that for sure because people and families are closed.” (Male, 24 years old, Mitrovicë/Mitrovica). The fact that more people from urban areas (4.3%) mention domestic violence than those from rural areas (0.9%) might suggest a greater reluctance to talk about these issues in smaller communities, and should not be taken to mean that domestic violence occurs less in the villages than in bigger towns.

Violent conflict still perceived as likely

Ten years after the war, 44.1% of respondents think that it is still very likely or somewhat likely that there will be another violent conflict in the next 5 years. While this is obviously concerning, it does represent an improvement compared to previous years (51.1% in December 2008 and 47.7% in June 2007).

Generally, political issues are seen by many respondents as the most likely causes of a renewed outbreak of conflict. These include the issue of Northern Kosovo (Mitrovica/ division of Kosovo/ security of borders – 36%) and the relationship with Serbia and the return of displaced persons (Serbia/ Serbs/ Return of Serbs/ Not allowing the construction of houses – 19.1%). Perhaps unsurprisingly, perceptions vary between groups of different ethnic identity. Kosovo Serbs consider renewed conflict more likely than the rest of the population (67.5% compared to 44.1% overall), and they see ‘Serbia/ Serbs/ Return of Serbs/ Not allowing the construction of houses’ (35.5%), ‘Interethnic conflict’ (34%) and ‘Attack of Albanian extremists’ (16%), as prime causes of conflict. Organised crime and corruption is also stated as a potential trigger of conflict (18% of Kosovo Serbs, against an average of 8.4%).

In focus group discussions, opinions varied as to whether political grievances could cause violent conflict. In this context, the following comments from male participants in areas in which tensions between Kosovo Serb and Kosovo Albanian communities have been significant are fairly representative of the range of perceptions more generally:

My personal opinion is that the conflict in Mitrovica with the Serbian community is over (...). Maybe an individual may reproach you or throw something at you, but I think that the mass conflict with Serbs has come to an end. (Male, 48 years old, Kosovo Albanian, Mitrovicë/Mitrovica).

Conflict can once again be started. Only a spark is needed and it will start. (Male, 38 years old, Kosovo Serb, Shtërpçë/Štrpce).

A second set of conflict triggers relate to the economic situation in Kosovo. The global economic crisis has hit Kosovo hard, and this influences the responses people gave when asked about likely causes of conflict. Unemployment is seen to lead to problems such as anti-social behaviour and crime, and is seen as potentially undermining safety and security. A lack of optimism about the future, which sometimes accompanies unemployment, is seen as a big risk for young people. One respondent from Viti/ Vitina commented that “for young people who are only going out for coffee and cannot find themselves work, the only thing that is left for them is to go out and meet friends and stay in the cafés (...) they then get into hooliganism, where they have difficult problems. When a young person does not have work to do, he or she will go out and join the lowest characters.” (Male, 37 years old, Viti/Vitina). ‘Unemployment/ Economic situation and Poverty’ were identified by 26.1% of respondents as having significant potential to cause conflict. Respondents with a postgraduate education considered the conflict impact of these three factors to be critical to peace and conflict,

and those with a basic university education identified them as the primary likely cause of future conflict.

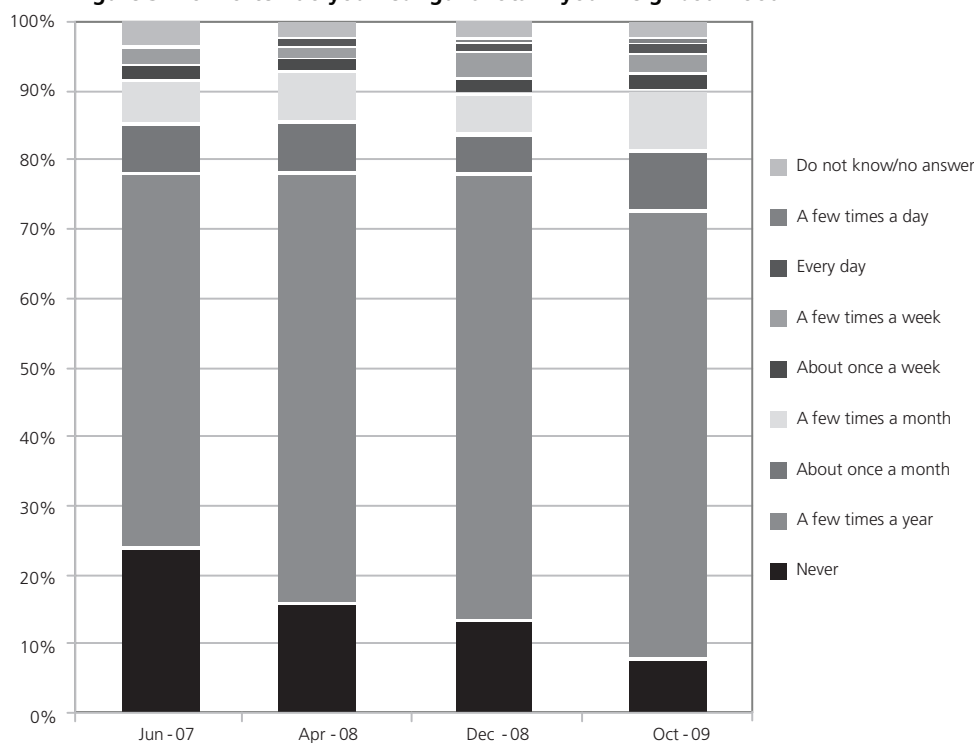
Weapons ownership and use remains a sensitive issue

The presence of small arms and light weapons (SALW) in Kosovo remains considerable. Although most people are aware of the potential risks related to weapons, there is still a considerable minority (24.2%) who feel that weapons ownership makes – or would make – them or their families safer.

In 2009, people reported hearing gunshots more frequently than they did 18 months ago. While in April 2008, 16.2% of respondents said they never heard gunshots, this number has decreased by half, to 8.2% in October 2009. How often people hear gunshots depends very much on where they live. The overall majority of respondents (65.1%) hear gunshots ‘a few times a year’. However, 22.5% of respondents from Mitrovicë/Mitrovica hear them at least once a week or more (and up to several times a day): “When summer comes and people go out and shoot with automatic weapons, you will think that there is a war going on outside.” (Male, 48 years old, Mitrovicë/Mitrovica).

The vast majority of people (80.9%) say that they have not heard of incidents in their community in which someone was injured by firearms, ammunition or explosives over the last six months. In focus group discussions however, respondents do mention weapons-related incidents. Hunting and celebratory shootings are occasions when guns are fired most frequently, which can cause accidents as well as unintended reactions from other community members: “We know what tradition is. You take the weapon and shoot two or three times. But you should not take the gun and shoot regardless of the people around. Even if you are a professional, you can make a fatal mistake and these persons are amateurs.” (Male, 48 years old, Mitrovicë/Mitrovica).

Figure 3: How often do you hear gunshots in your neighbourhood?



As in previous years, there is a lot of uncertainty around how many households own weapons. More than 50% of respondents say they do not know, which could indicate an uneasiness or unwillingness to talk about the issue as well as a genuine ignorance. However, 18.3% of respondents think that there are guns in at least one quarter of the households in their neighbourhood. Furthermore, there is no correlation between respondents' estimates regarding weapons possession and their opinion as to whether the area in which they live is safe or not.

The general perception that firearms do not enhance security and public safety remains constant and the majority of respondents still say they would not acquire a gun even if they had the opportunity (73%). The majority of those who say they would acquire a weapon if they were able to (23.8%) cite protecting their family as the main reason they would do so. For the Kosovo Serb respondents who say they would choose to own a firearm if they had the opportunity (26.5%), the importance of protecting their family has increased over the past year (from 82.7% in December 2008 to 94.3% in October 2009), while protecting business interests has decreased (from 38.5% to 15.1% over the same period).¹⁰

In concert with the results of the 2008 survey,¹¹ communities are sceptical that a weapons amnesty aimed at persuading people to surrender illicit weapons would be successful. This is in spite of the general public rejection of weapons ownership and the perceptions of comparative security at the local level. Only 8% of respondents think that all or almost all gun owners would hand in their weapons, while 17.3% think none or almost none would do so. There appears to be no strong correlation between how successful respondents think a weapons collection campaign might be and whether they perceive their neighbourhood to be safe or not, implying that the assumed reasons for weapons ownership have more to do with factors outside of the immediate community, such as national or regional political developments.

While a general amnesty was not seen as a particularly useful tool for reducing weapons ownership there was some support for the idea that specifically tailored and participatory public education and awareness campaigns might contribute to changing people's attitudes towards illicit weapons ownership and use. The survey showed that relatively fewer respondents in Ferizaj/Uroševac reported feeling safe with a gun, or said they would consider obtaining one than was the case elsewhere. This is of interest because Ferizaj/Uroševac was the focus of a targeted and locally driven public campaign focused on changing the attitudes of young people towards weapons possession.

¹⁰ The question allows for multiple answers and therefore the total does not add up to 100%.

¹¹ Saferworld, *Ready or Not? Exploring the prospects for collecting illicit small arms and light weapons in Kosovo* (London, July 2009). Available at <http://www.saferworld.org.uk/smartweb/resources/view-resource/403>

4

Public perceptions of and attitudes towards security institutions

WE USE THE TERM SECURITY INSTITUTIONS to describe a broad range of organisations, including municipal authorities which may be responsible for public safety-related issues such as road safety. This section describes the findings of the research with regards to people's perceptions of these institutions, which can be summarised as follows:

- People's trust in an institution depends not only on its perceived performance, but also on (a) how safe or secure people feel generally, and (b) how the institution in question is seen to fit within an individual's broader political views regarding contemporary Kosovo. In addition, it appears that perceptions of a particular institution are often coloured by a lack of knowledge about its precise role. A lack of clarity in this regard can create suspicion and undermine trust in this institution itself.
- Of all of the institutions in Kosovo dedicated towards security provision, the police are generally the most trusted, particularly amongst the Kosovo Albanian population. People feel that their performance is improving. However, the municipal authorities are the institution most evenly trusted across all communities. This is possibly because local authorities are perceived to address issues close to people's everyday lives and to represent the individuals living within a specific geographic area: it is unclear from this research whether people trust their municipal authority because they perceive it to represent their interests, or the institution of the municipal authority; this is an area for further research.
- Of the international institutions present in Kosovo, KFOR remains the most trusted, while EULEX appears to enjoy least support, with all communities expressing a high degree of mistrust and/or disappointment in EULEX performance, and a lack of clarity about the mission's mandate and role.
- People feel that there are not enough opportunities to participate in decision making about security issues. In addition, a significant number of people appear not to feel that they can express their views freely to institutions that provide security; this is especially the case for minority communities. Despite widely held scepticism about whether they are able to influence local affairs, people are generally willing to volunteer in projects aimed at improving their local environment or the security situation.

Institutional performance, the security situation and politics all influence attitudes towards security institutions

Generally, most people in Kosovo retain only limited trust in institutions, whether Kosovo or international. The levels of trust people have in key institutions responsible for safety and security depends on several factors which include performance, local security concerns, and views on whether the institution is seen as working in favour of or against the community interest.

There is a strong correlation between respondents' level of trust in the police and municipal authorities on the one hand, and positive perceptions of safety and security on the other. 56.5% of those who 'fully' trust the Kosovo Police (KP) and 45.7% of those who trust them 'very much' describe their neighbourhood as very safe. On the other hand, of those who do not trust the KP at all, only 24% perceive their neighbourhood to be very safe, and 17% perceive it as very unsafe. For municipal authorities, the correlation is slightly lower. 57.4% of those who fully trust municipal authorities and 50.4% who trust them very much say they live in a very safe neighbourhood. Only 1.4% and 1.5% respectively say their neighbourhood is very unsafe, while 39.1% of those who do not trust their municipal authorities at all perceive their neighbourhood as very safe, and 7.2% perceive their neighbourhood as very unsafe.

The difference between the different communities as regards the level of trust they place in a given institution is considerable, reflecting in part the political context in which these institutions operate. In general, Kosovo Serbs have less trust in institutions than any other group. They have by far the most trust in the municipalities (28.5% trust them fully or very much), and the least trust in Kosovo state institutions. 74% trust the Kosovo Security Force 'not at all'; 72% trust the Kosovo Government 'not at all' (an improvement from 2008, when the figure was 84.2%); and 71% trust the Kosovo Intelligence Agency 'not at all'. In terms of international institutions, Kosovo Serbs have more trust in KFOR (17.5% trust not at all, 32.5% trust a little, and 34.5% say they neither trust or distrust), while EULEX fares much worse: 44.5% say they do not trust EULEX at all.

Perceptions of Kosovo institutions

As in previous surveys,¹² the Kosovo Police comes out well in terms of public trust: it enjoys by far the highest level of trust of all national institutions, even though as stated above, there remains a considerable difference between Kosovo Albanian and Kosovo Serb communities, and between Kosovo Serb communities living in Northern Kosovo and those living elsewhere. Overall, 76.8% of respondents trust the KP very much or fully, followed by the Kosovo Security Forces (KSF) with 76%. The Kosovo Government and the Judiciary are the least trusted Kosovo institutions, with 22.8% and 22.3% respectively stating that they trusted them 'not at all'.

¹² For previous survey, see project website www.safeplaceproject.org.

Figure 4a: How much trust do you have in the following institutions? (High levels of trust)

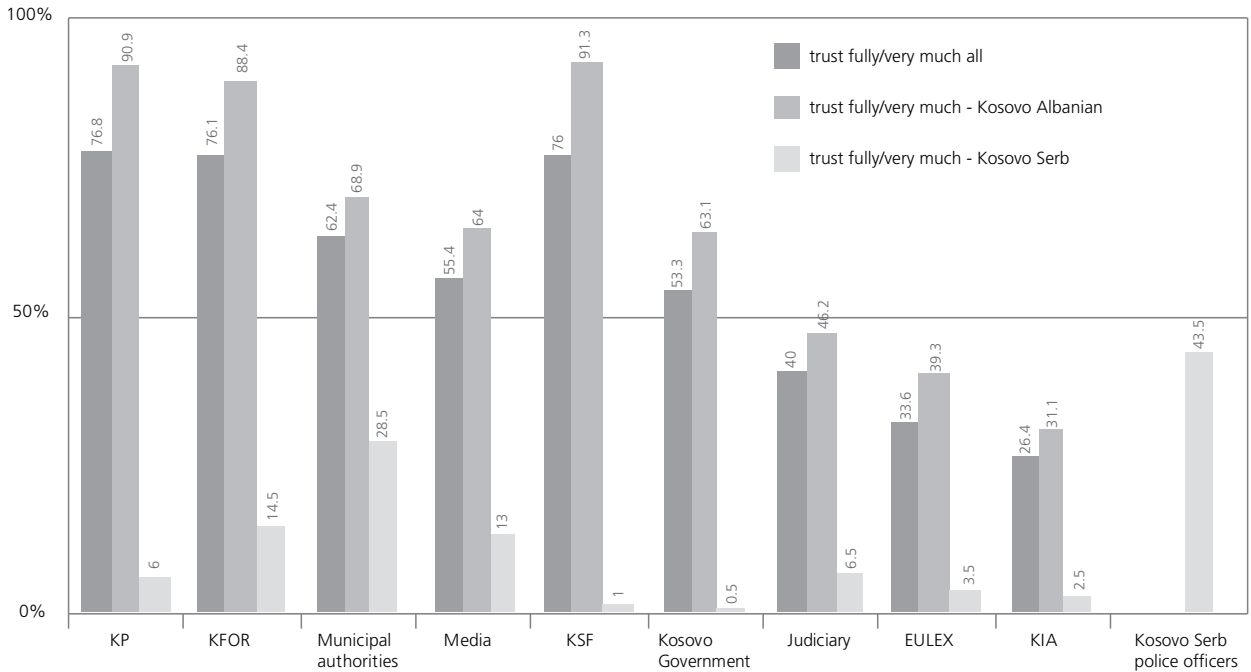
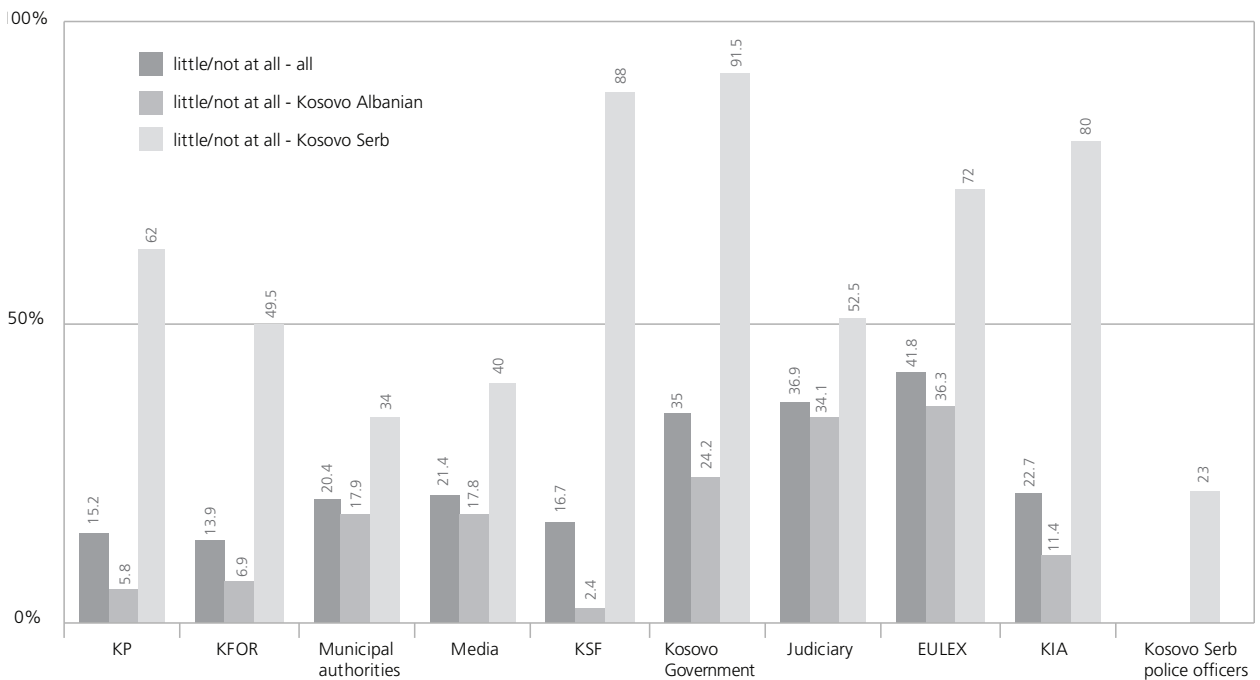


Figure 4b: How much trust do you have in the following institutions? (Low levels of trust)



Kosovo Police

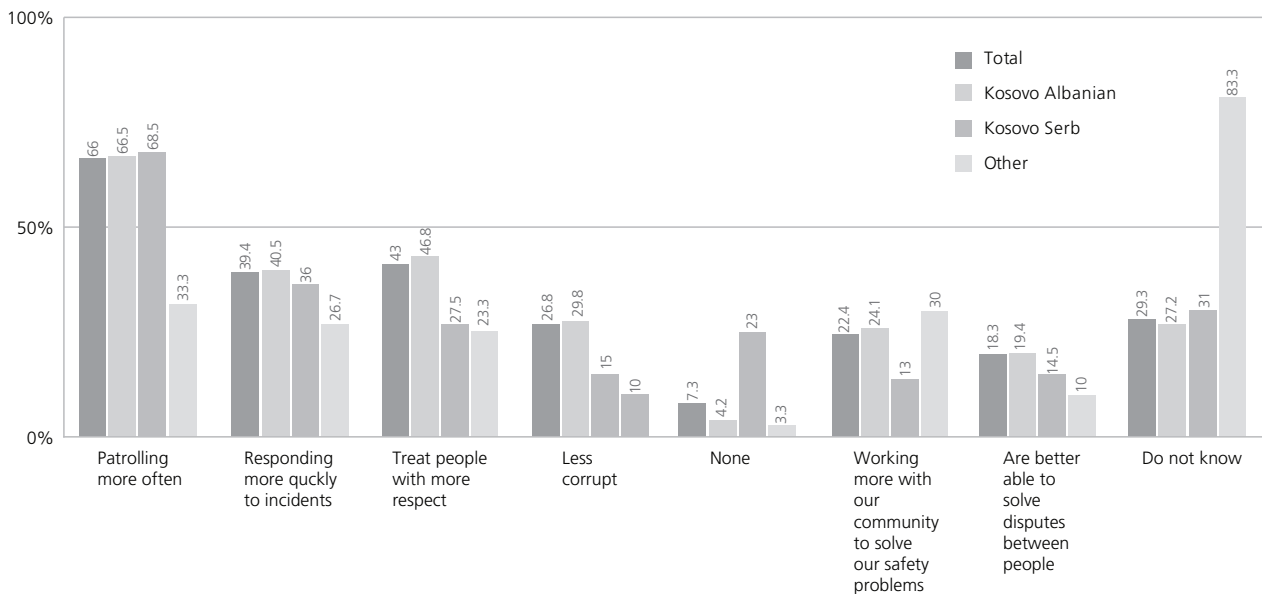
Not only do people put more trust in the KP than in other institutions, when asked in which three areas they felt KP had improved their performance, two-thirds of respondents (66%) saw an improvement in the frequency of patrols, 43% felt that KP was treating people with more respect, 39.4% felt that KP was responding faster to incidents¹³ and 26.8% believed the KP had become less corrupt.

¹³ These are the aggregate figures: respondents gave three responses each and therefore the sum of the responses is 300%.

As with other institutions, the different communities are divided in their attitudes: only 6% of Kosovo Serbs trust the Kosovo Police very much or fully, and 27% trust them not at all. These figures have remained largely unchanged over the past three years. However, many Kosovo Serbs express some trust in Kosovo Serb police officers in the KP: 43.5% trust them very much or fully, while 32.5% responded with the more neutral ‘neither trust nor distrust’.

However, in spite of those positive developments, focus group discussions also reveal that many people still feel that there is a need for greater effort to improve the capacity of the police, especially the time it takes the KP to respond to incidents. Some feel that the KP’s mandate does not provide enough scope for intervening to prevent crime or apprehend suspects. Similar viewpoints can be heard – particularly from the older generations – in other ex-Yugoslav countries, where the police previously had much more extensive powers. In the North of Kosovo people feel that the police mandate is not appropriate given the difficult local context: “The police have some competencies which are still limited, especially in Mitrovica. They are trying to do their best, but in Mitrovica we live in different circumstances than in Prizren or other cities. But taking into consideration the circumstances, we can say that they are making efforts.” (Male, 45 years old, Mitrovicë/Mitrovica).

Figure 5: In which of the following areas do you think KP has improved in the last six months?



The vast majority of respondents (93.3%) say that they would report a crime to the police if it was committed against them or a member of their family. This is regardless of community affiliation and the overall level of trust respondents have in the police. Among those who say they would likely not report a crime, the most commonly given reason (68%) was a belief that the police would not catch the perpetrator or ‘solve’ the crime.

In discussions, people reveal more reluctance when it comes to reporting a specific person who has committed a crime to the police: they worry that such a report would not be treated confidentially and that the perpetrator would find out who reported him or her to the police. This lack of trust in police confidentiality is seen as the main obstacle in police-community relations, which are otherwise perceived in a positive light: “If the police would offer protection for the witnesses probably the co-operation would be greater. Because I would be scared to witness against someone because they offer no protection.” (Male, 21 years old, Ferizaj/Uroševac).

For those who have a police substation near their home, its presence makes 70.1% of respondents feel safer. When asked who they would call if they or their family was threatened with violence, 87.7% say they would call the KP. However, there is still a considerable percentage of people (33.5%) who would prefer to rely on themselves or family members, neighbours or friends for protection rather than calling the police or other official law enforcement actors.¹⁴ Kosovo Serbs especially see this as their first choice (72%) – an expression perhaps of the generally low levels of Kosovo Serb confidence in the KP and other security institutions. The reasons people gave in focus group discussions tended to focus on whether the KP would respond in time to an incident: “I think (neighbours are) closer than the police because a neighbour can come to help a lot faster than the police. Police always come too late unless you have a relative who works there.” (Female, 20 years old, Ferizaj/Uroševac).

Municipal authorities and local government

Overall, 62.4% of respondents trust ‘fully’ or ‘very much’ in the municipal authorities. They are the sole group of institutions which enjoy the trust of a significant part of the Kosovo Serb (28.5%) and the Kosovo Albanian community (62.4%) alike. Likewise, asked how likely different government institutions are to improve their standards of living, ‘local government’ scores highest (56%), with only minor differences between the different communities. This could indicate that municipal authorities are seen as less contested, as they are more likely to deal with everyday issues that are close to people’s lives such as public transport, utilities and infrastructure maintenance, and therefore less associated with the higher-level politics which divide communities.

Focus group discussions and interviews undertaken in 2010 in Ferizaj/Uroševac, Shtime/Štimlje and Graçanicë/Gračanica have provided a more nuanced picture of how municipal structures, including the Municipal Community Safety Councils (MCSC) are perceived. In general, people believe that municipal actors such as MCSCs can improve the security situation. Even in Graçanicë/Gračanica, one of the newly established Serb municipalities, people are either uncertain about what to expect from the new municipal structures, or they are hopeful for a change for the better: “The expectations are high, but what will happen in practice remains to be seen. However, I can say that people are optimistic in relation to this issue.” (Entrepreneur, Graçanicë/Gračanica).

A satisfactory level of co-operation seems to exist between actors responsible for security and public safety provision, such as the municipal authorities, the Office for Security and Emergencies, the police, schools and NGOs. However, there is a lack of outreach to, and co-operation with, the wider public. Many people have never heard of MCSCs, and there is a perception that “the municipality never invites us for consultations, apart from election time.” (Entrepreneur, Shtime/Štimlje).

State institutions

Not surprisingly, state-level institutions such as the Kosovo Government, the Serb Central Government or its Ministry for Kosovo and Metohija only really enjoy the trust of their respective Kosovo Albanian or Kosovo Serb constituencies. Kosovo Albanians and other communities tend to trust the Kosovo Government (59.5% and 73% respectively), while Kosovo Serbs tend to trust the Serb Central Government (64.5%). In general, the more people trust in the respective institution, the more confident they are that it will contribute to improving their standard of living.

¹⁴ This was an open question, allowing the respondent to give more than one answer, which is why the total does not add up to 100%.

International institutions

- **KFOR:** KFOR comes after the KP as the most trusted institution generally, with 76.1% of respondents trusting KFOR fully or very much. While Kosovo Serbs have much less trust in KFOR than Kosovo Albanians and other communities, the level of mistrust by Kosovo Serbs in KFOR is lower than it is for other security providers, except for Kosovo Serb police officers and local authorities. The comparatively high levels of trust seem to stem mainly from the role KFOR played during and immediately after the war. How relevant they are seen to be in terms of providing security today depends very much on where people are living; for Kosovo Albanians in the North of Kosovo, KFOR is still an important security provider, “KFOR provides security. If KFOR were not here, I wouldn’t stay even an hour in Kosovo.” (Male, 50 years old, Mitrovicë/Mitrovica). Others feel that given the establishment of national security actors such as the KP and KSF, there is less need for KFOR. Among these respondents, the planned reduction in KFOR numbers is seen broadly as a positive development, as an indication that the security situation has improved.
- **EULEX:** EULEX is located at the other end of the scale with a relatively low level of trust overall (33.6%), and with less divergence between Kosovo Albanians and Kosovo Serbs. In general, respondents feel that their expectations in EULEX have not been fulfilled and EULEX is mostly regarded with disappointment. Many of the focus group participants expressed doubt as to whether EULEX has the capacity to respond to their security concerns, or whether the engagement of EULEX has so far resulted in positive changes. A respondent from Prizren, asked whether she felt more secure as a consequence of EULEX presence, said: “Not really. (...) EULEX wasn’t able to protect their own vehicles from ‘Vetëvendosje’,¹⁵ how do they expect to protect us?” (Female, 21 years old, Prizren). At the same time, people do think that EULEX is having a positive impact on the work of other government sectors: 46.5% of all respondents think that EULEX has done a good or very good job at improving the quality of the police. EULEX’s impact on improving the work of the justice and customs sector is seen as less successful, with 36% and 30.1% of respondents respectively saying the impact was good or very good. Some respondents do acknowledge that EULEX has certain comparative advantages vis-à-vis the police: “I think since they are here for justice, maybe we should let them do their job. They have more competencies than our police and are more powerful. EULEX is a powerful EU institution which can incriminate any important person here in Kosovo no matter how rich, something our police can never achieve.” (Male, 19 years old, Ferizaj/Uroševac).

Politically, EULEX has a fine balance to maintain; it is perceived by both Kosovo Albanians and Kosovo Serb as partial and working against their interests. Kosovo Albanians have only limited trust in the extent to which EULEX is co-operating with the Kosovo Government: “This last time when they signed the agreement with the Internal Ministry of Serbia they didn’t co-operate with the Government of Kosovo.” (Male, 21 years old, Ferizaj/Uroševac).

Apart from disappointment with EULEX’s performance and questions over its political ‘allegiance’, EULEX’s negative standing also seems to stem from its inability to define itself in the public mind and clearly communicate to Kosovo’s citizens how its mandate, role and responsibilities differ from those of UNMIK. 65.7% of respondents ‘agree’ or ‘completely agree’ with the statement that there are no significant differences between EULEX and UNMIK. This attitude is particularly prevalent among urban residents and those who have completed a longer education, while those with little or no formal education tend to answer that they do not know: “UNMIK left, EULEX came; where is the difference?” (Female, 21 years old, Prizren). As a consequence of these negative perceptions, but also perhaps out of a feeling that its functions should be carried out by Kosovo institutions instead, almost half (47%) of all respondents agree with the statement ‘EULEX should leave Kosovo’. The corresponding figure for UNMIK is 69.8%.

¹⁵ Vetëvendosje (Self-Determination) is a movement opposing the international community’s oversight role in Kosovo, and demanding full sovereignty. During a protest in August 2009, Vetëvendosje demonstrators turned over 25 EULEX cars in Prishtinë/Priština.

Lack of transparency and limited access to information about institutions

A lack of transparency regarding the role and mandate of national and international institutions, including too little or poorly timed information, contributes to the general lack of trust and dissatisfaction in both kind of institutions. For the Kosovo security institutions, many of which are still relatively new, the degree to which people feel adequately informed about their establishment and functions varies between communities, although the general picture is that people feel insufficiently informed. Kosovo Serbs generally feel that they were 'not informed' or 'not at all informed' about the establishment of KSF and the Kosovo Security Council (72% and 82.5% respectively). Kosovo Albanian respondents feel relatively well informed regarding the formation of the KSF, but feel they have not received enough information about the establishment of the Kosovo Intelligence Agency and the Kosovo Security Council (48.1% and 53.2% respectively felt 'not informed' or 'not at all informed'). This probably reflects the perception that the KSF mandate is relatively well defined and enjoys high popularity with many Kosovo Albanians.

Respondents generally reported that they do not feel that there is sufficient information available about the international institutions present in Kosovo. The lowest level of support was given to the ICO/EUSR, with only 11.6% of respondents responding 'yes' to the question 'Do you think there is sufficient information regarding the mandate/responsibilities of [ICO- EUSR]?' For EULEX, UNMIK and OSCE responses varied between 22.5% and 26.7%. KFOR stands out and scores comparatively well, with almost half of respondents feeling sufficiently informed. The fact that people feel better informed about KFOR's role is perhaps due in part to it being seen as a military mission with a strict security and protection-related focus. It has also been operating in Kosovo for many years, playing a very visible role in many communities. Conversely, the EULEX mandate is more complex and less clear to people. In addition, EULEX plays a less visible role, and is still relatively new to the Kosovo context.

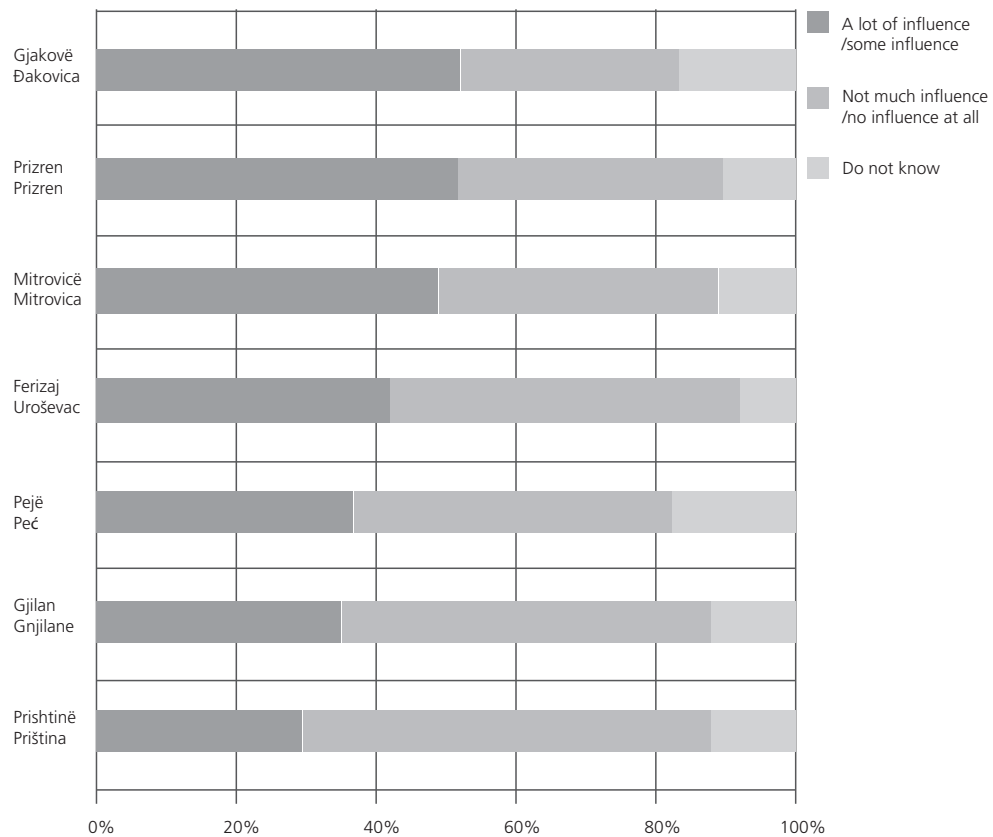
Lack of opportunities for greater participation

People generally do not feel that they have sufficient opportunity to participate in decision making, even at the local or municipal levels. Less than one-third (23.7%) of respondents had heard of any public meetings organised by the municipal authorities in the last 12 months, and only one-quarter (26.4%) of respondents believed that decisions taken by municipal authorities took into account concerns and opinions that were expressed during public meetings (45.7% think not, 27.1% are not sure). In focus group discussions, people reporting feeling that municipal authorities were not interested in their opinions. They feel that unless they know the mayor or another influential staff member in the municipal administration, or are a party member, their concerns will not be addressed.

Across communities, levels of confidence about expressing views freely at public meetings differs. While two-thirds (64.9%) of Kosovo Albanians feel that they can share their thoughts and opinions freely without fearing negative consequences, only 50% of Kosovo Serbs and 43% of members of other communities feel the same.

While the results above suggest that people do not have much trust in the role or outcomes of public municipal meetings, there are mixed perceptions as to whether community members generally are able to influence local government decision making. While 40.2% of respondents think that community members have 'some' or 'a lot' of influence on the decisions taken by local government, 47.5% disagree. There are quite considerable regional differences, as can be seen from the chart below, with most respondents in Prishtinë/Priština, Gjilan/Gnjilane, Peja and Ferizaj/Uroševac giving a negative response, and citizens in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica, Prizren and Gjakovë/Đakovica being more optimistic about their chances of influencing local government.

Figure 6: How much influence do you think people in your community have on the decisions taken by your local government?



Education levels also appear to influence people's perceptions as to whether they can have an effect on decision making or not. People with lower levels of formal education appear to feel less included in decision-making processes. They are rarely aware of opportunities to influence decision making, such as public meetings, and are more likely to answer 'do not know' when asked whether concerns that are raised at such meetings will have an influence on the decisions taken. When asked about how much influence in general people in their community have on decisions taken by local government, not a single respondent with little formal education reported that people in their community have a lot of influence and only 16.9% said they have some. Those with higher education and university degrees appear more confident with 32.5% stating that they have some influence and 9.9% claiming to have a lot.

Citizen engagement

While people appear to believe that their opportunities for influencing local authorities are limited, there does seem to be considerable will to engage voluntarily in the local community on issues that concern people directly, such as the environment and local safety and security. The vast majority of respondents (81.4%) said they would be willing to participate in a community clean-up project on a voluntary basis if something was organised. For participation in a project to improve safety or security, the figure is 76.7%. This is particularly the case in areas where the lack of safety and security is an ongoing concern: for example, 82.5% of respondents from Mitrovicë/Mitrovica stated that they would be willing or very willing to participate in community-safety projects.

Where community activities do take place, they are often organised by the municipalities and mainly concern environmental issues such as cleaning up rubbish. These activities are more frequent in rural than in urban areas, and young people seem to be more active than the older generations. Many people report that there used to be more voluntary community engagement in the past than there is today, partly, it was

claimed, because people nowadays rely on local authorities or others rather than taking initiative themselves.

Only 6.4% of all respondents are currently members of an organisation or association (not taking into account work-related membership), and of these more than half are members of a political party. There appears to be a clear correlation between the level of education and voluntary engagement: 13.8% of respondents with a higher education and 19.4% of those who have completed university are a member of an organisation/association, compared to none of those who have no formal education and just 1.1% of those who have completed primary school. Almost three times more men than women are involved in formal organisations (9.1% versus 3.5%). Of the women who are members of an organisation, 30% are members of a political party (compared to 59.6% of men), and 25% are members of a women's group.

Recommendations

THIS SECTION IDENTIFIES recommendations for the consideration of decision makers responsible for public safety and security in Kosovo. They are drawn from an analysis of the research data described above, which combines public opinions with those of opinion formers and professionals responsible for law enforcement and security provision.

These recommendations are intended as a constructive contribution to the further development of Kosovo's nascent institutions responsible for different aspects of security and public safety. The research suggests that as Kosovo continues to develop, so the perceptions of its citizens towards these structures and institutions will become more positive. The authors are able to identify clear and positive trends since the first survey in this series was conducted in 2006. However, some trends remain clearly visible this year and will require additional energy and attention if they are to be addressed over the coming months and years. These include:

- Perceptions of state institutions are heavily conditioned by a citizen's ethnic identity.
- Perceptions of the effectiveness of local institutions, including municipal authorities, are heavily dependent on local context; only where a local mayor is seen to be effective does the institution of government tend to be well regarded.
- Kosovo institutions appear to be becoming more popular and trusted by the majority of the population. It is less clear whether this positive trend is reflected within less powerful sections of Kosovo's citizenry, including non-Kosovo Albanian ethnicities, women, young people and those with a low level of formal education.
- The international presence in Kosovo, with its partial responsibility for security and justice issues, remains contentious. The well-established KFOR presence, with its clear and well-understood mandate, appears to be most trusted by all communities. EULEX is much less well understood and less well trusted. The reasons for this are outside the remit of this research project but it may well be the case that difficulties in explaining the 'status neutral' nature of the EU presence in Kosovo sends confusing signals to those on all sides.
- Despite the continuing challenges faced by Kosovo and international security providers in persuading the population at large that they should be trusted, there is a clear and very encouraging sense of community responsibility in Kosovo which is not reflected to the same degree in other countries in which the authors have conducted similar research. The existence of such social capital presents a real opportunity for the government and others such as international actors and local and international NGOs; if they perform well and demonstrate accountability and effectiveness they are likely to be rewarded with considerable support by their citizens.

Further enhancing the effectiveness of Kosovo's institutions

- **In the drafting of the National Strategy and Action Plan for Community Safety, the Government of Kosovo should ensure broad consultation** and take into consideration the experiences of successful community-safety initiatives at the local and central level.
- **The Kosovo Government and other actors should continue their efforts to further improve the performance of the Kosovo Police.** In order to increase trust in the police as legitimate security providers, the capacity of the KP needs to be further increased. Special attention should be given to improving the ability of the police to respond quickly to incidents, and to ensuring the confidentiality of information received. The relationship between the KP and Kosovo Serbs in particular requires further improvement. Progress made with regards to police performance should be communicated to the public as a valuable means of building public trust and confidence in the institution of the police.
- **A comprehensive approach should be applied to promoting community safety and security which involves key ministries and other actors in sectors such as infrastructure development, justice, health, local administration and economy.** As most public safety and security concerns do not directly relate to the core responsibilities of security providers, other key actors should be actively involved in the development of suitable policies and mechanisms at the national and municipal level, as well as in addressing safety and security concerns locally.

Enhancing the understanding of, and engagement with, international agencies with an interest in security and public safety in Kosovo

- **To enhance public trust, EULEX should consider ways in which it can enhance its communication with local citizens** in order to clarify its role and responsibilities, as well as to highlight its achievements to date. One way of achieving this could be through a greater emphasis on direct outreach to communities, with visits to universities and secondary schools, town hall meetings and other public events, at which ordinary people would have the opportunity to ask questions and voice their views and concerns.
- **Kosovo Government institutions and EULEX should improve their co-ordination and communication strategies.** Apparently contradictory public statements can serve to further decrease trust in EULEX and hamper its progress in fulfilling its mandate.

Engaging more effectively with the people of Kosovo

- **More and better information should be made available to citizens about the work of, and access to, the different security-related institutions.** This should include MCSCs, but also new institutions such as the KIA and the KSC. In the newly established municipalities, particularly those with a Kosovo Serb majority, this need relates to Kosovo institutions in general as there is currently little understanding of their functions or trust in their ability to discharge these functions fairly.
- **Opportunities for citizen engagement should be improved and public awareness of any existing possibilities for engagement increased.** This is not just relevant for issues relating to public safety or security but to general civilian participation in community matters. Efforts in this regard should involve all elements of society, including people whose voices are not usually heard, namely women, young people and ethnic minority groups.
- **Local authorities should support public willingness to engage voluntarily in local community activities on issues that concern people directly.** The existence of the MCSCs and other safety and security forums at the community level offers opportunities for local authorities to reach out to those groups with weaker voices such as young people, women and minorities, and encourage and support the initiatives that will help improve their local environment or security situation.

The Forum for Civic Initiatives (FIQ) is a non-governmental organisation with a focus on the rule of law that works to increase citizen participation in decision-making processes for a peaceful and developed Balkan region.

Saferworld works to prevent and reduce violent conflict and promote co-operative approaches to security. We work with governments, international organisations and civil society to encourage and support effective policies and practices through advocacy, research and policy development and through supporting the actions of others.

COVER PHOTO: Police Officer in the streets of Pristina. DRITON PAÇARADA



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