



VOTERS' VOICE

The Issues Voters Demand Their Government Address



24 hour electricity & water!
Pave our roads!

Make policies to support new jobs!

Stop corruption and nepotism!

Install functioning sewage systems!

Ensure quality healthcare!

Stop pollution!

September 2008 - March 2009

Report #1

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Report #1: September 2008 - March 2009

Prishtina, Kosova 2009

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INTRODUCTION

Parliamentary elections held in November 2007 were conducted with an open-list system. This provided citizens with the opportunity to cast their ballots for individuals and not only political parties. The new system makes it possible for citizens to monitor and hold politicians accountable for promises made during the pre-electoral campaign. However, to date, politicians have tended to be more accountable to international decision-makers than to the citizens who elected them. Citizens need information, mechanisms, and support to monitor the work of politicians and to advocate for elected officials to address their priorities.

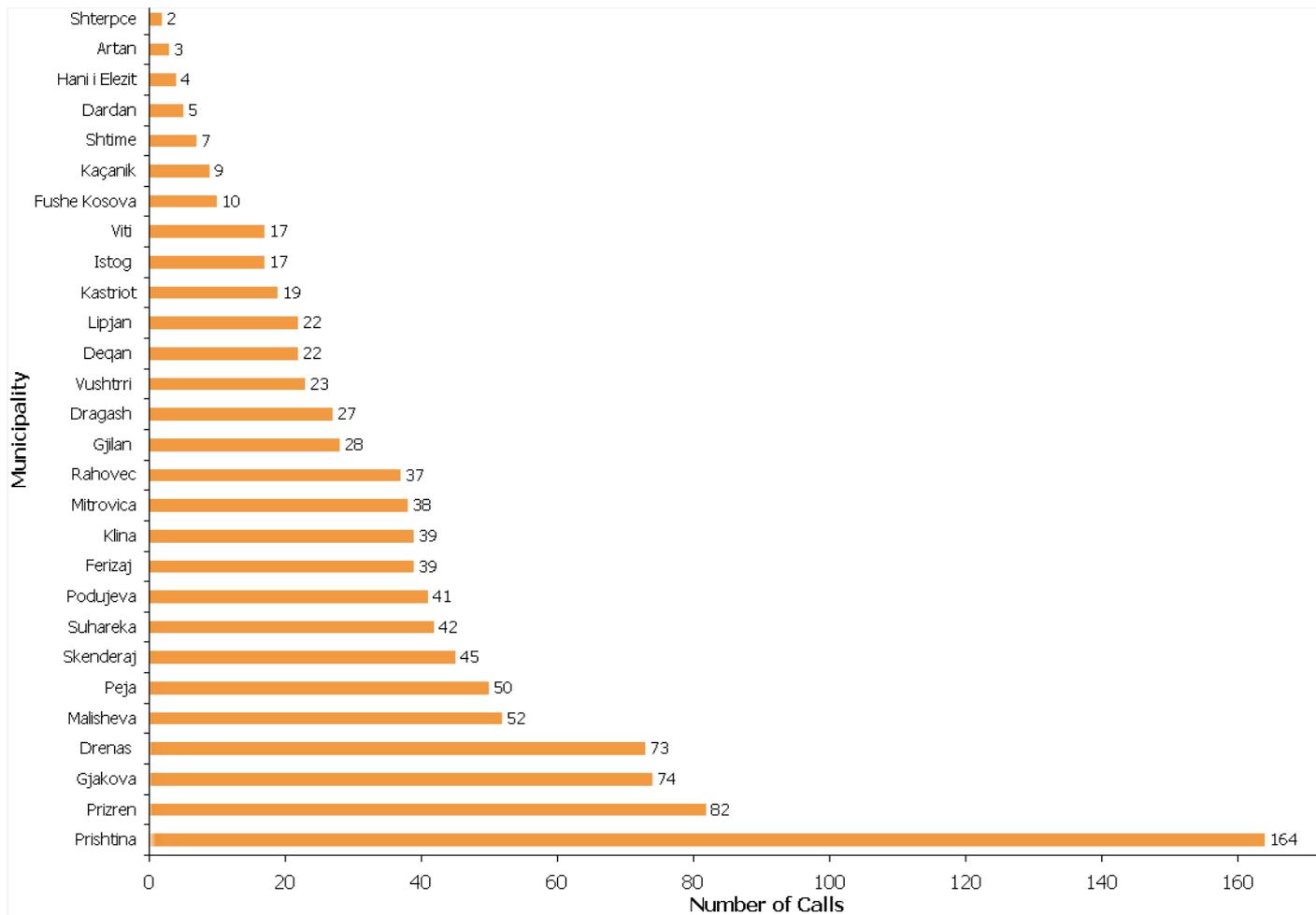
To facilitate this process, in March 2008, the Kosova Women's Network (KWN), supported by the British Embassy in Kosova and Post and Telecom Kosova (PTK), initiated the Voters' Voice initiative. The initiative aims to provide citizens with an opportunity to express their concerns and make their priorities known to elected leaders through three mechanisms: the Voters' Voice toll free, anonymous hotline (0800 201 401), email address (zerivotuesve@gmail.com), and meetings organized in their municipalities. The purpose of this report is to present the priorities voiced by voters during the first six months of the initiative to elected officials and other interested parties. The report includes recommendations for elected officials based on citizens' priorities.

METHODOLOGY

The findings presented below are based on citizens' 1,052 telephone calls, 44 emails, and concerns expressed during meetings in eight municipalities: Gjakovë, Vushtrri, Kastriot, Vitia, Prizren, Drenas, Mitrovicë and Fushë Kosova. All calls to the Voters' Voice hotline were registered in a Microsoft Excel database. Calls were then coded according to the issues citizens raised. The database was cleaned and data sorted by the frequency of calls relating to certain issues. Similarly, emails were registered in a Microsoft Excel database that was later coded and sorted by the type of concern and/or suggestion presented. Transcripts of debates in eight municipalities were also kept, and the issues raised by the citizens who attended meetings were recorded. Finally, the findings were organized into this report, which contains an overview of the calls made to the Voters' Voice hotline, the top ten issues citizens raised, and an alphabetical guide to the priorities voiced by citizens in each municipality.

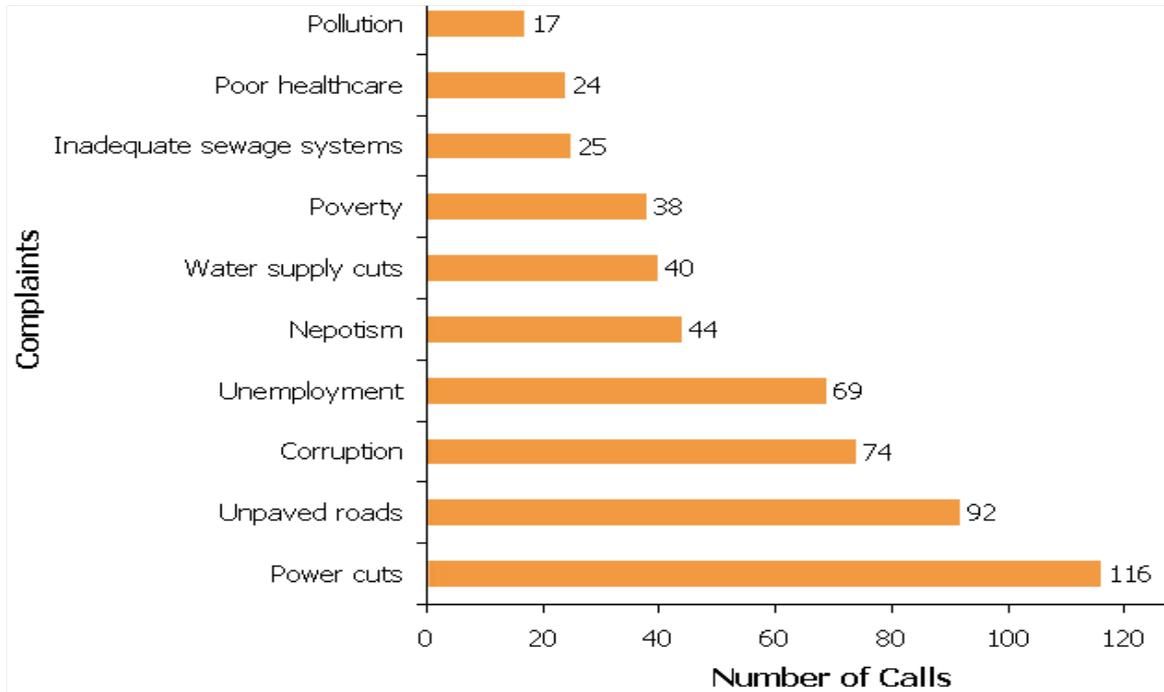
WHOSE CONCERNS ARE IN THIS REPORT?

Between 16 September 2008 and 16 March 2009, 1,052 calls were made to the Voters' Voice hotline. Of them, 277 were made by women and 775 by men. Citizens called from 28 of Kosovo's 35 municipalities. An additional 61 calls were made from undisclosed locations. The table on the next page illustrates the number of calls made from each municipality. Most calls came from Prishtina (164). Eighty-two citizens called from Prizren, 74 from Gjakova, 73 from Drenas, 52 from Malisheva, 50 from Peja, 45 from Skenderaj, 42 from Suhareka, 41 for Podujeva, 39 from Ferizaj, 39 from Klina, 38 from Mitrovica, 37 from Rahovec, 28 from Gjilan, 27 from Dragash, 23 from Vushtrri, 22 from Deçan and Lipjan respectively, 19 from Kastriot, and 17 from Istog and Viti, respectively. Ten or fewer people called from Fushë Kosova, Kaçanik, Shtime, Dardan, Hani i Elezit, Artanë, and Shtërpce.



CITIZENS' TOP TEN CONCERNS

The most common complaints citizens made were in regards to electricity outages (116 calls), unpaved roads (92), corruption (74), unemployment (69), nepotism (44), water supply cuts (40), poverty (38), inadequate sewage systems (25), poor healthcare (24), and pollution (17) (see the table below). For example, in relation to corruption, a citizen wrote to the Voters' Voice email address:



The Prime Minister constantly calls upon the rule of law while allowing those who have engaged in financial misuse (e.g. the former Speaker of the Assembly who is subject to criminal charges for misuse of office) to stroll the streets freely as if they did nothing. As a lawyer, I know that when criminal charges are pressed against a person, he is to be arrested in order for the court to be able to make a just deliberation.

Other concerns raised by many citizens included: the still unresolved status of Mitrovica; poor services provided to pensioners; the lack of attention to the families of war veterans; violence in schools; inadequate social assistance; high transportation costs; and poor healthcare services. "The health system is not functioning properly because public servants, doctors, are profiting from it as a business," a citizen said, continuing:

I know from personal experience that the management of the Neurology Hospital sends patients from the public hospital to their private clinics to do CT scans. There is a private car that belongs to Euromat waiting in front of the Hospital of Neurology to take patients to their private clinic where people pay 200 Euros, while the public service at the hospital costs only 35 Euros and works fine. In addition, the Director of the Neurology Hospital has a private clinic that does CT scans. Doctors send their patients to his private clinic instead of providing affordable healthcare to citizens, as they should according to their responsibilities.

Citizens also called and wrote to say they were against the Assembly of Kosova's request to increase expenses allotted to assembly members and against Ban Ki Moon's proposed six points for Kosova. Another citizen requested the adoption of the Law on the Declaration and Origin of Wealth so voters could monitor changes in politicians' wealth after elections.

VOTERS' VOICE IN MUNICIPALITIES

Through the telephone hotline, email, and meetings in eight municipalities, citizens reported issues in 28 municipalities throughout Kosova. Below in alphabetical order by municipality are the concerns that citizens raised. Each section concludes with recommendations regarding the actions that municipal authorities should consider taking to satisfy their constituencies.

Artana Municipality

Three citizens called from Artana Municipality to express their dissatisfaction regarding the lack of a functioning sewage system and poverty in the municipality. One citizen stated, "In our village the sewage system still doesn't function, even though it was among the promises made by the municipal mayor during the pre-election campaign. He stated that it wouldn't be long before the system would be constructed." Based on calls to the Voters' Voice hotline, municipal authorities need to construct a functioning sewage system and work towards creating policies that might foster economic development in the municipality.

Dardana Municipality

From Dardana Municipality, five citizens called to file complaints regarding the lack of paved roads, poorly paved roads, poor healthcare, water supply cuts, unemployment, power cuts, and corruption. A citizen said, “[T]he road to Koliqka is not paved although it was a promise made during the pre-election campaign by the current authorities.” Authorities in Dardana should ensure that their campaign promises have been fulfilled by paving the promised roads. They should also seek to improve healthcare, support solutions for water and electricity cuts, address corruption, and promote policies toward economic development in their region.

Deçan Municipality

A total of 22 calls were received from Deçan Municipality. Most callers were concerned about unpaved roads, especially those connecting Deçan with the villages of Gllloxhan and Ballaboq. Citizens also expressed dissatisfaction with regard to power cuts; water supply cuts; unemployment; violence in schools such as “Hivzi Sylejmani” in Dobraj e Madhe village and “Migjeni” in Gllloxhan village; expensive urban traffic tariffs; insufficient social assistance; corruption in the distribution of social assistance; poor healthcare; the damaging of forests, especially in the Strellc mountains; and low income for employees in the education sector. For example, a woman reported having to drop out of school as a consequence of unpaved roads and excessive travel expenses. She said:

I am from the village Baballoq. The secondary school was located too far away, and I could not bear the travel expenses so I had to drop out of school. [I] appeal to the authorities to provide free of charge travel for students, as I don't represent the only case of a person having to drop out of school for this reason; there are many others that are facing the same fate.

In regards to education, according to Article 47 of the Law on Education, the Government of Kosovo should ensure free transportation to school. Improved access to education can also contribute to improving the economic situation of the municipality's citizens. The authorities in Deçan, according to voters' requests, should also develop the roads; identify solutions to water and electricity cuts; address violence in schools; decrease urban traffic tariffs; improve the quality of social assistance; provide better healthcare; address the damaging of forests, for example through enforcing fines; and support initiatives to increase the income of employees in the educational sector.

Dragash Municipality

The citizens of Dragash made 27 calls during which they expressed dissatisfaction with the local government's inefficiency. The most common complaints included: unpaved roads in the villages of Zgatar and Brut; the lack of heating in schools in Opoja and Bresan villages; corruption in the district court; nepotism; environmental pollution; power cuts; and poor healthcare. In regards to corruption, a citizen reported:

There is corruption in Dragash Municipality in the hospital, the court, and with in the municipal and police services. ... The director of the textile factory is corrupt, as he requests 30 euros for employment. He keeps these employees for three months and then he removes them. I actually recorded him when he requested 200 euros from me. I submitted the recording to the police, but nothing was done; neither by the police nor by the prosecutor or the municipal mayor. All were informed about this issue. [In addition,] the mayor of our municipality annulled the project for constructing an annex building to the local school, although this project was initiated by the previous authorities which had allocated the [financial] means. The chairman of the court takes unjustifiable decisions.

Voters calling the hotline sought attention from the authorities in Dragash to pave the roads, provide heating for schools, address corruption and nepotism, ensure access to education, address environmental pollution and power cuts, and improve healthcare.

Drenas Municipality

The hotline received 73 calls from citizens in Drenas Municipality. The most common complaints were related to unemployment (9); unpaved roads, especially in the villages of Kroi i Mbretit and Komoran (10); insufficient sewage systems (5); power cuts (6); and the lack of train stations in six villages of Drenas, particularly Dobroshevc village, which would ease villagers' commute along the Peja-Prishtina line (5). A citizen reported, "I just accompanied children to school. The road on which they make their journey is heavily flooded with sewage, and there was a promise to address this situation."

During the Voter's Voice meeting with citizens in Drenas on 9 October 2008, citizens filed further complaints regarding pollution from Feronikel Company. They requested detailed information from the government about the impact that Feronikel's pollution was having on the health of Drenas residents. Citizens also voiced concern about the garbage in town streets; the burning of garbage by citizens; illegal construction; unemployment; the use of Serbian names for residential dwellings; insufficient traffic signs endangering the lives of children; the failure to reconstruct houses destroyed during the war; the absence of a town square; insecurity in schools; and insufficient school facilities, which forces many children to attend classes in distant locations.

The families of missing persons demanded that the authorities take action to identify the fate of 173 persons still missing from the war and that they address the nepotism exercised by the authorities when distributing social assistance and property to the families of war veterans.

The lack of economic development in the municipality was another major concern. Citizens complained of low wages, and farmers said they were unable to utilize agricultural land due to expensive fuel, seed, and processing prices.

At the beginning of the gathering, the Municipal Mayor admitted that the authorities did not ask citizens about their priorities enough. Even so, the Mayor and other municipal officials left the room soon after, stating that citizens would feel more relieved to express their complaints without the authorities in the room. Now that voters' priorities have been voiced and recorded, the authorities in Drenas should take action to address citizens' concerns.

The municipal authorities should prioritize policies that foster economic development in the area, pave roads, install sewage systems, identify solutions to power cuts, improve train transportation routes, address environmental pollution, stop illegal building, change the names of residential dwellings, install traffic signs, build a town square, increase security in schools, make schooling more available to residents, and support policies that benefit agricultural development. They should also attend to the issues of missing persons; inadequate care for the families of war veterans and disabled persons; and the reconstruction of buildings still damaged from the war.

Ferizaj Municipality

Of the 39 calls received from this municipality, citizens' greatest concerns were related to the lack of paved roads, especially in Bajnica village and the Zogiani neighborhood of Ferizaj. Citizens also expressed concern over power cuts, unemployment, the six-point plan of Ban Ki Moon, corrupt judges, governmental corruption, corruption in the Ministry of Economy and Finance, poor social assistance, and nepotism. A citizen commented, "Unemployment is ever growing. [Politicians] keep lying to themselves that they are providing new employment, but in fact they are only keeping their chairs warm and are not much concerned with the fate of their poor citizens." In Ferizaj, elected officials should seek to address voters' concerns by paving roads, finding solutions to power cuts, supporting policies that welcome new employment opportunities to the region, addressing corruption in the government, improving social assistance, and addressing nepotism.

Fushë Kosova Municipality

Ten calls were received from this municipality during which citizens expressed their dissatisfaction regarding power cuts in villages such as Grabovc, unpaved roads, water supply cuts, illegal construction, nepotism, and unemployment. "We only have water supplied one hour a day," a citizen reported. "There is no power either. There are cases when there is no power for two days straight."

During the meeting with citizens in Fushë Kosova on 16 October 2008, the residents of the Mirenaj settlement, family members of 16 war heroes, were among the first to speak. Their main complaint was the unpaved, unlit road, which represents a hazard for children traveling to and from school. The open sewage lids in the streets posed a further danger to their children. The residents of this settlement together with other citizens said that if the road was not paved so their children could receive proper education, "The 12 widows with 37 children will protest in the streets until the issue is resolved." The settlement's residents also expressed concern regarding high unemployment in their families, which they attributed to nepotism and the negligence of the municipal authorities. Another concern for the citizens of Ferizaj was the relocation of the town health clinic from the city center to Bresje, which makes access to healthcare more difficult, they said.

To address their constituents' concerns, municipal authorities should make electricity, roads, water, addressing illegal construction and nepotism, and supporting policies toward economic development priorities.

Gjakova Municipality

Citizens from Gjakova made 74 calls to express their concerns regarding the lack of paved roads in Vathaj, Shapater, Gramaqel, Hereq-Partaj, and Dobrosh villages; power outages, especially in Dobrosh village; cuts in the water supply; the lack of a water system in Demian village; poverty; poor social assistance; delays in distributing official documents; and unemployment. A citizen commented, "Thaçi needs to give more consideration to the prevailing poverty. He is not taking care of the villages. When it is about voting, they [politicians] make promises and say that they will improve the situation, while in fact they do nothing. Many roads were promised to us, but no good came from these promises to date."

During a Voters' Voice meeting with citizens in Gjakova on 18 September 2008, citizens also expressed their concerns about the economy; the future of the northern part of Kosovo; political leaders' insufficient action towards ensuring that other countries recognize Kosovo; the increasing emigration of Gjakova youth; lack of agricultural development; problems with the water supply system in villages; out of control construction in the town; pot-holes in town streets; low income for pensioners, which made it difficult for retirees to cope with their health problems; poor healthcare; a lack of access to healthcare for people in rural areas where there is a lack of health institutions; Gjakova park, which is endangered by the construction of a church; and the lack of school facilities in certain Gjakovar villages, which forces children to enroll in schools located 4-5 kilometers away.

Secondary school students participating in the discussion expressed concern over the lack of security in schools; teachers used physical and psychological (threats) violence against students, they said. They also lacked school equipment. Attendees from the village of Has in Gjakova municipality also said they had poor conditions in schools, in addition to difficult living conditions.

In Gjakova municipality, elected officials should prioritize paving roads; ensuring electricity and water; improving access to water in villages; establishing policies toward decreasing poverty, increasing employment, and supporting agriculture; improving social assistance, including for pensioners; improving processes for receiving official documents; creating an urban plan in close consultation with citizens; ensuring access to quality healthcare; protecting Gjakova park; and guaranteeing access to quality education free from violence.

Gjilan Municipality

In total, 28 calls were received from Gjilan Municipality. Numerous citizens complained about nepotism in the justice system, alleging corruption among two judges in particular: Shefqet Xhelili and Mursel Ahmeti. They also reported nepotism in schools, the municipal government, and Tobacco Factory. "I am dissatisfied with the work of the Gjilan Municipal Assembly," a female citizen said. "Nepotism is prevalent in all sectors: employment, education, etc. If you have no acquaintances, nothing can be done." Citizens also expressed concern in regards to poverty; unemployment; corruption; insufficient economic development; and governmental inefficiency in dealing with the Ban Ki Moon six point plan. Voters in Gjilan called upon the government to make priorities of addressing nepotism, poverty, unemployment, corruption, and economic development.

Hanit i Elezit Municipality

Four calls were received from this new municipality, through which citizens complained about nepotism; unclean schools (high school “Dardania” in particular); and corruption in the Municipal Directorate for Health. Citizens also criticized the government for failing to pay former employees the 20 percent provision from the privatization proceeds, mentioning the privatization of the Cement Factory specifically. A citizen said:

I have many complaints regarding Bahri Shabani [President of the Workers’ Union of Kosova] as far as privatization is concerned, including the failure to pay workers the promised 20 percent of the proceeds. ... The privatization process was unsuccessful while led by Ahmet Shala, and it is unsuccessful now. I am interested to know why nothing was done when the privatization documents were burned. I wonder if Hashim Thaçi knows these issues or if he is also playing deaf because he is implicated in these issues, in corruption. Why don’t the courts do something against these corrupt people, and why do [they] allow them to climb into leadership positions?

In this new municipality of Hanit i Elezit, officials should investigate allegations of corruption within the privatization process, address nepotism, and improve schools.

Istog Municipality

Seventeen citizens from Istog Municipality called the hotline. The most common complaints were in regards to power cuts in villages such as Surrogoll and Siligan; water supply cuts; unpaved roads; poverty; inadequate quality control of food; poor living conditions; and the non-existence of a law on war invalids. A citizen from Suhagerll village commented:

The municipality shows no interest in repairing the power transmission sub-station. Our road is a disaster, and it is a road that connects many municipalities, connecting us with Mitrovica. The closest water supply point is three kilometers from where we live, and we have no means to connect our system there. The municipality is doing nothing to support us on this.

For the citizens of Istog, the authorities should focus on electricity, water, roads, poverty prevention strategies, improving quality control of food products, and identifying ways to improve living conditions.

Kaçanik Municipality

Nine calls were received from Kačanik Municipality. The most common complaints were about governmental corruption, especially involving the municipal mayor; nepotism in the courts; mandatory payments to RTK through electricity bills, despite the fact citizens do not receive RTK due to the lack of network coverage; poverty; and unpaved roads. A citizen commented:

I have a problem at the Municipal Court in Kačanik where a judge, Hebib Livoreka, is deliberately delaying my case, according to which I have the right to property owned by my late husband. He, however, is causing undue delay and is not deliberating on the issue, because he favors my former brother-in-law as they originate from the same region. This case has been in the court since 2001.

For the citizens of Kačanik, the government should first and foremost address government corruption and nepotism. Elected officials should also advocate for removal of the RTK tax because citizens do not have access to this public television station, promote policies toward economic development, and pave roads.

Kastriot Municipality

The citizens of Kastriot Municipality made 19 calls to the Voters' Voice hotline to express their concerns in regards to power cuts, especially in Raskove village; environmental pollution; deficiencies in reconstructing houses destroyed during the war; the lack of sufficient school facilities; and poor healthcare. A citizen explained their concerns over the environment in Kastriot:

Our municipality suffered a lot from the dust from power plants, and the Mayor is allowing the construction of a third power plant. Something needs to be done on this issue. We should not suffer from further poisoning. We, the Albanian community, pay our electricity bills. The Serbian community doesn't, and this is not right. In Plemetin the situation resembles that of wartime. No one knows what is happening. There is shooting on a daily basis. They [Serbs] drive in cars with fake registration plates from Belgrade or Novipazar, and there's no one to put a halt to this. The police do nothing to stop this phenomenon.

During a meeting on 22 September 2008 in Kastriot municipality, the participants also complained of the dust they inhale daily, a consequence of the nearby power plant operations. They also expressed concern over municipal infrastructure, stating that no long-term urban or municipal development plan existed.

Inadequate cooperation between the Kosova Electric Company (KEK) and the Municipal Assembly resulted in KEK failing to pay municipal taxes despite its legal obligations, citizens reported. They were angered by continued power cuts, emphasizing that the citizens of Kastriot municipality reside between the two power plants and should at least have consistent power. Other citizens said their homes are still damaged from flooding, which poses a threat to their health, though the municipality is not taking any action, they said.

In addition, students do not receive quality education due to insufficient school facilities, they said. Poor management by the Director of the Municipal Directorate of Education in Kastriot has meant that children in certain schools receive education in containers. Citizens also expressed concern about the pot-holed streets; lack of activities for youth; and unemployment contributing to the migration of youth to other towns.

Altogether, residents of Kastriot said that their elected leaders at the municipal and national levels forgot the promises they made to voters. Elected officials should take action to address power cuts, environmental pollution, still damaged homes, the need for more accessible and quality schooling, pot-holed roads, and poor healthcare. They should also develop an urban plan in close consultation with citizens.

Klina Municipality

Citizens from Klina Municipality made 39 calls to report power cuts; insufficient school facilities in villages such as Zbergje; unpaved roads in Sferke; unemployment; inadequate sewage systems; a lack of power sub-stations and lines; nepotism; and environmental pollution. "We have no schools, although we were promised to have a school constructed and to start the new school year in the new school, but this has not happened," a citizen said. "We have no water supply and commute daily on unpaved roads." Citizens' priorities were to have access to constant electricity, more schools, paved roads, policies supporting more employment opportunities, better sewage systems, and improved environmental conditions.

Lipjan Municipality

Twenty-two calls were received from Lipjan municipality. Citizens called to report corruption among public officials. More specifically, a citizen alleged that the Mayor of Lipjan city, Shukri Buja, was involved in corruption at multiple levels:

The Mayor of Lipjan sold two vehicles owned by the municipality, which remained from the previous government. He sold them and bought a new one, which he in turn sold to buy yet another one. ... Instead of repairing the central heating system, it was sold. Now the cost for installing a new one could reach 300,000 Euros, as the main burner itself costs 75,000. Mayor Shukri Buja made the sale to his cousin. The bank was transformed into a restaurant and awarded to one of his friends for management, but this is only

a cover-up as the proceeds go to the Mayor. His brothers already manage the health clinic's cafeteria. The tender for the construction of the road between the villages of Kraishte and Halla was awarded to the highest bidding company, for more than 50,000 Euros, while the work could have been procured for a much lower price. Thereoo he has gained personally. He disregards the authority of Kosova courts. He also appointed as village leaders only representatives of PDK without consulting the inhabitants of villages.

Other citizens called or wrote to report that the Mayor bought public spaces in someone else's name and misused his position. For example, another citizen wrote:

I am from Lipjan. I want to write to you to about the 'irregularities' occurring in my municipality. The Mayor took it upon himself to manage the livestock market and the fruit market as soon as he was elected to his position. He is also transforming the building of the Bank for Business (municipal property) into a restaurant of his own.

Citizens also accused the Director of the Education Directorate Hajri Ramadani of nepotism. Other concerns voiced by voters included power cuts in villages such as Sllovi; inadequate water supply and sewage systems; unemployment; low wages; and poor performance on behalf of the police. Voters called upon the authorities to address corruption among officials immediately. They also requested consistent electricity, improved water and sewage systems, and policies that promote employment and higher wages.

Malisheva Municipality

Citizens made 52 calls from Malisheva Municipality. A major concern for callers was corruption and nepotism, especially within the education system. The Minister of Education and Major of Malisheva are not working hard enough to stop the nepotism occurring in Malisheva's schools, a caller said. He asserted that unqualified persons receive jobs as teachers because those persons' relatives are in positions of power. Citizens also expressed discontent with regards to unpaved roads; power cuts; water supply cuts in villages such as Drenovc; Ban Ki Moon's six point plan; and insufficient social assistance. "Electricity and employment were promised by PDK, as well as better healthcare," a citizen said, "but nothing has improved yet." The authorities should concentrate on addressing corruption, nepotism, power cuts, water shortages, and unpaved roads.

Mitrovica Municipality

Thirty-eight calls were received from Mitrovica Municipality. Citizens' key concerns, also expressed during a meeting on 10 October 2008, were the unresolved status of Mitrovica and the failure to provide shelter for Albanian citizens displaced from their homes in the north. "The Government of Kosova is doing nothing for Northern Mitrovica," a citizen commented, "especially for us citizens who had to flee our homes. Our homes and property remain in the north, and we have no assistance in carrying out our lives here." Citizens asked why the national and municipal authorities had failed to do anything about Albanian residents of North Mitrovica selling their properties there. They called upon the government to adopt a strategy for supporting Albanian citizens living in the north. Further, they accused international and local institutions of privileging the Serb minority by allowing them to violate the law without having to face justice for their actions. They also said that the authorities disregarded entire-citizens' protest in which they called for the removal of Mitrovica's UNMIK administrator.

During the meeting, representatives of Handikos organization also called upon the municipal authorities to attend to their needs, including improved living conditions, a rehabilitation center, more employment opportunities, and proper treatment by governmental authorities.

Another priority for voters in Mitrovica was the prosecution of allegedly corrupt public officials. Callers accused the majors of Mitrovica, Minister of Economy and Finance Ahmet Shala, and Director of Urbanization of Mitrovica Mehdi Bala of corruption. Callers also said that corruption among inspectors enabled illegal construction that endangered citizens' lives.

Poor quality education also angered citizens. They said that due to inadequate school infrastructure, teachers had to hold two lectures in the same space and at the same time. They also led shorter classes, only 35 minutes in length. This coupled with the large class sizes, often up to 50 of pupils in the same class, meant that children were not receiving a quality education. Citizens also noted the lack of Albanian language schools in North Mitrovica, the limited number of students admitted in the Public University, and the failure to license private universities.

Citizens expressed further concerns about nepotism; unemployment; power cuts; water supply cuts; unpaved roads; improper treatment of retirees and war invalids; and the inadequate performance of assembly members.

Voters from Mitrovica called upon municipal and national authorities to enable the return of Albanian residents to their homes in the north; develop policies toward creating more employment opportunities; ensure that Serb citizens respect the law; construct more schools, especially in rural areas; increase the number of students admitted to the Public University; better address the needs of disabled persons; stop illegal construction; and take action to investigate allegations of corruption among public officials.

Peja Municipality

Citizens from Peja Municipality made 50 calls to express their concerns in regards to poverty; corruption; difficult living conditions for persons with disabilities; unpaved roads, including Kapeshtice Street; insufficient care for the inhabitants of rural areas; the lack of security for citizens; the unresolved status of Mitrovica; and environmental pollution. "It's all a disaster," a citizen commented, "high unemployment, unpaved roads, irregular power supply." To address citizens' concerns in Peja, authorities should support policies toward poverty reduction, address corruption, identify ways to improve the living conditions of persons with disabilities, pave roads, ensure the needs of citizens in rural areas are addressed, improve security, support negotiations toward resolving the status of Mitrovica, and address environmental pollution.

Podujeva Municipality

Forty-one citizens from Podujeva called to voice complaints in regards to governmental corruption, unpaved roads, unemployment, power cuts, poor services for retirees, and insufficient social assistance. "I have a complaint for the Major who paved only 30 meters of Ilir Ponushevci Street," a citizen said. "Then he stopped paving the road because eight families that don't belong to his political party live here." In Podujeva, elected officials can address citizens' concerns by addressing corruption in the government, paving roads, developing policies to support economic development, improving electricity delivery, working to ensure better pensions for retirees, and providing more adequate social assistance.

Prishtina Municipality

More citizens called the Voters' Voice hotline from Prishtina than from any other municipality. In total, 164 calls were made concerning unemployment (26); the failure to resolve the status of former employees of the Trade Store Gërmia (15); power cuts (12); corruption, especially related to tenders for roads and the water supply system "Iber-Lepenci" (13); poverty (12); insufficient social assistance (10); nepotism (8); unpaved roads, especially in the suburbs of Prishtina, such as Kodra e Trimave and Lagja e Spitalit (8); water supply cuts (7); low wages (5); poor services for retirees (5); delays in the provision of identification documents (5); illegal construction (4); and government inefficiency in preventing domestic violence (4). For example, a citizen commented:

The government promised much and delivered nothing. Electricity was promised, but nothing is improving. Politicians are only working for their own benefit and the benefit of their relatives. Nothing is done for people. Those who were awarded the responsibility to lead the country have proven to be weak. We are totally unsatisfied. The police are corrupt and unprofessional. They are putting Kosova in danger, while the government poses a threat to our lives.

More specifically, citizens accused Ekrem Rexha, Ridvan Shahini, Refki Sadiku, and Dhurata Ramadani of corruption. The authors of this report have not investigated citizens' accusations and call upon the police and justice system to investigate such allegations.

In Prishtina, officials seeking reelection should attend to the needs voiced by voters, including creating policies that will support economic development; addressing the unresolved status of the former workers at Trade Store Gërmia; improving power and water delivery; addressing corruption, nepotism, and illegal construction; paving roads; working to develop a better social assistance scheme, including pensions for retirees; enabling the provision of official documents in a more timely manner; and supporting policies that may contribute to decreasing domestic violence.

Prizren Municipality

Eighty-two citizens called from Prizren Municipality to express their concerns in regards to power cuts in villages like Srebrenice e Poshtme and on Jeglenice Street (13 calls); unpaved roads like Dervish Hima Street (7); unemployment (5); water supply cuts (5); delays in document provision (5); inadequate services for war veterans (3); poor services for persons with disabilities (3); violence in schools (4); and failures to resolve the status of Mitrovica (3). A citizen commented, "No problem is being resolved, especially related to Mitrovica. The government is there only as static inventory; they aren't doing anything, and they're not stimulating employment."

During a meeting in Prizren on 7 October 2008, voters also called upon their elected leaders to put an end to job dismissals based on political affiliations. They asked public officials to properly equip schools; provide better infrastructure in public spaces for persons with disabilities; create policies toward economic growth, especially for persons with disabilities; ensure transparency at the municipal and national levels; renovate the student dome in Prizren; address power cuts; fix inadequate sections of the sewage system; install more street lights; ensure that women have more leadership positions within the municipality; intervene and stop companies that are damaging to the Drini i Bardhë River; and ensure better, more accessible healthcare. Few health practitioners have adequate medical training, especially in rural areas, citizens said. Consequently, patients must be transferred to other locations, which places them at risk.

Rahovec Municipality

Of the 37 calls from Rahovec Municipality, many citizens complained of electricity outages, especially in Krajk village where citizens said they did not have power for 11 months. Voters also expressed concern about water supply cuts; unpaved roads; poor conditions for farmers and agriculture; sexual harassment against female job applicants; the lack of governmental transparency on budget expenditures; the failure to assist families of war veterans; and low social assistance. In relation to the failure to develop agriculture, a citizen said, "The selling prices for agricultural goods are too low, whereas caring for plants is very expensive. Our institutions have disregarded agriculture." In addition to passing policies that foster agricultural development, elected officials should seek to ensure more consistent electricity and water; pave roads; install and enforce polices against the sexual harassment of job applicants; increase transparency concerning the budget; and offer better social assistance, including to the families of veterans.

Shtërpcë Municipality

Two calls were received from Shtërpcë Municipality to complain about the inefficiency of the Ministry of Returns, poor healthcare services, and the difficult economic situation. A citizen commented, “The Ministry of Health is way behind current events. The Minister should step down as he did nothing to improve the situation in the sector.” Elected officials can address their constituents’ concerns by ensuring efficiency by the Ministry of Returns in particular, improving healthcare, and developing policies toward economic growth.

Shtime Municipality

Seven inhabitants of this municipality expressed dissatisfaction with poverty; inadequate care for the families of war veterans; the failure to count workers’ contributions under Yugoslavia when processing pension payments; and officials’ failure to resolve the status of Mitrovica. “We’re facing great poverty,” a citizen said. “We can’t even feed our children properly with bread in these difficult times. I can’t take it any longer. I’m afraid that we’ll die of poverty.” The municipal authorities should develop policies for supporting economic growth in the area, pressure national authorities to ensure pensions promised under Yugoslavia are delivered, and encourage national representatives to resolve the status of Mitrovica.

Skenderaj Municipality

The citizens of Skenderaj Municipality made 45 calls to express their dissatisfaction regarding poverty; power cuts, especially in Kujice village; nepotism; inadequate water and water supply systems; unpaved roads in villages, such as Lecine and Surigon; insufficient social assistance; and poor healthcare. “Unemployment is soaring,” a citizen from Skenderaj said. “Only those who have acquaintances are being employed.” To address voters’ concerns, authorities should develop policies for reducing poverty, increasing employment, developing new sources of energy, and improving the water supply. They should also pave roads, work to increase social assistance, and provide better healthcare.

Suhareka Municipality

A total of 42 calls were made by citizens from Suhareka Municipality in regards to electricity outages; cuts in the water supply; the inadequate sewage system; unpaved roads; unemployment; corruption; a failure to reconstruct destroyed houses; poor healthcare services; and insufficient social services. A citizen from Suhareka described the situation in his family, “Our houses are burned. We live in houses that don’t belong to us. We receive no help, and have no one to approach. We went to the municipality to seek help, but no one shows any interest in us.” Based on calls to the Voters’ Voice hotline, the municipal authorities should focus on improving electricity and water supply; installing improved sewage systems; paving roads; making policies that foster economic growth; addressing corruption; constructing houses destroyed by war; offering better quality healthcare; and improving social services.

Vitia Municipality

Seventeen calls were made by citizens from Vitia Municipality. Numerous callers accused public officials of corruption, including the Mayor of Vitia, as well as Nexhmedin Arifi, Xhevat Bislim, Skender Habibi, judge Ibrahim Idrizi, and officials involved in the privatization process. Citizens also complained about illegal construction; nepotism; a failure to assist the families of veterans; and job dismissals based on political party affiliation. "Our municipality is home to much illegal construction," a citizen said. "The judiciary doesn't function. Houses are built in schoolyards, [and] pedestrian sidewalks are used for construction and by local restaurants."

During a meeting on 25 September 2008, citizens from Vitia also discussed corruption within the municipality. They called for the creation of a special commission to identify political leaders' sources of wealth and for the government to ensure that businesses pay their taxes and fees. Citizens asserted that job dismissals were occurring within the education sector based on political party affiliations and demanded an end to this practice. More specifically, students from "Kuvendi i Lezhës" secondary school expressed their discontent with the politicization of schools.

The citizens participating in the meeting expressed further concern regarding institutions' failure to apply the Law on Gender Equality; increasing unemployment, which impacted migration among Vitia's youth; and high living costs considering the current economic situation, which meant citizens could barely cover their elementary needs.

Voters called upon municipal authorities to address corruption in the municipality, as well as illegal construction, nepotism, and job dismissals based on political affiliation. Elected officials should also support policies toward improving care for the families of war veterans and fostering economic development.

Vushtrri Municipality

Citizens made 23 calls and participated in a meeting in Vushtrri Municipality on 19 September 2008, during which they expressed concern regarding electrical outages in the city and villages like Lumi i Madh; insufficient lobbying by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for Kosova's recognition; poverty and unemployment; unpaved roads; insufficient water supply, with some places only receiving between 15 minutes and two hours of water per day; the failure to distribute the 20 percent provision from the privatization process; poor healthcare services; and deficiencies in the education system. "We have not had electricity for two days now," a citizen commented, "[And] they have not done anything about it."

Elected officials should seek energy solutions, promote policies toward economic development, pave roads, improve water provision, ensure contracts for privatized buildings are followed, improve the quality of education, and ensure better healthcare.

Calls from Undisclosed Locations

The Voters' Voice hotline received an additional 61 calls from citizens who did not disclose their location. The callers complained about low wages; unemployment; power cuts; and the National Assembly's proposal to increase deputies' salaries, fuel provisions, and other expenditures.