



British Embassy  
Pristina



# VOTERS' VOICE

Report for the period 16 September to 31 October 2008

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The Kosova Women’s Network (KWN) began implementing the “Voters’ Voice” project on 16 September 2008. Voters could contact KWN to express their complaints and make suggestions about specific politicians or policies at the local or central level via three mechanisms. The first mechanism, a telephone line, allows citizens to call a toll-free number **0800 201 401** every working day from 9:00 to 17:00. The second mechanism is an email address to which citizens can write: [zerivotuesve@gmail.com](mailto:zerivotuesve@gmail.com). The third mechanism is public meetings organized in municipalities. The project is supported by the British Embassy and the Post and Telecommunications of Kosovo (PTK).

## COMPLAINTS RECEIVED THROUGH THE TELEPHONE LINE

From 16 September to 31 October 2008, 610 phone calls were made to the “Voters’ Voice” phone line. From the total number of calls, 457 were made by males and 153 by females. Telephone calls were received from all regions of Kosovo, as Table 1 illustrates.

**Table 1. Municipalities ranked by the number of calls made to the “Voters’ Voice” phone line.**

Nr	Municipality	Number of phone calls	Nr	Municipality	Number of phone calls
1	Prishtinë	84	16	Viti	15
2	Gjakovë	49	17	Kastriot	15
3	Prizren	47	18	Kaçanik	14
4	Të panjohura	46	19	Gjilan	12
5	Drenas	41	20	Lipjan	12
6	Ferizaj	28	21	Vushtrri	12
7	Podujevë	26	22	Deçan	10
8	Klinë	26	23	Istog	9
9	Malishevë	25	24	Fushë Kosovë	5
10	Mitrovicë	24	25	Dardanë	5
11	Suharekë	22	26	Han i Elezit	4
12	Pejë	20	27	Artanë	2
13	Skenderaj	16	28	Shtime	2
14	Rahovec	16	29	Shterpcë	2
15	Dragash	16			

Based on the calls made so far, people’s main complaints and concerns were: corruption among particular political leaders (at the local and central level); electric power cuts; water reductions; the absence of water utility systems especially in villages where inhabitants drink water from untested wells; the lack of sewage systems in villages, which endangers the health of residents; and the absence of paved roads in rural zones.

Unemployment was another major concern, and citizens emphasized that emigration among Kosovar youth was increasing as a result.

Nepotism was another concern. Many callers stated that although they fulfilled the criteria for employment in a designated job, they were not chosen due to a lack of family connections with the employer.

People were also concerned with poverty; poor or no access to health services; and the absence of schools, especially in rural zones, which makes continuing education more difficult (in some rural areas students walked up to four kilometers to attend lessons).

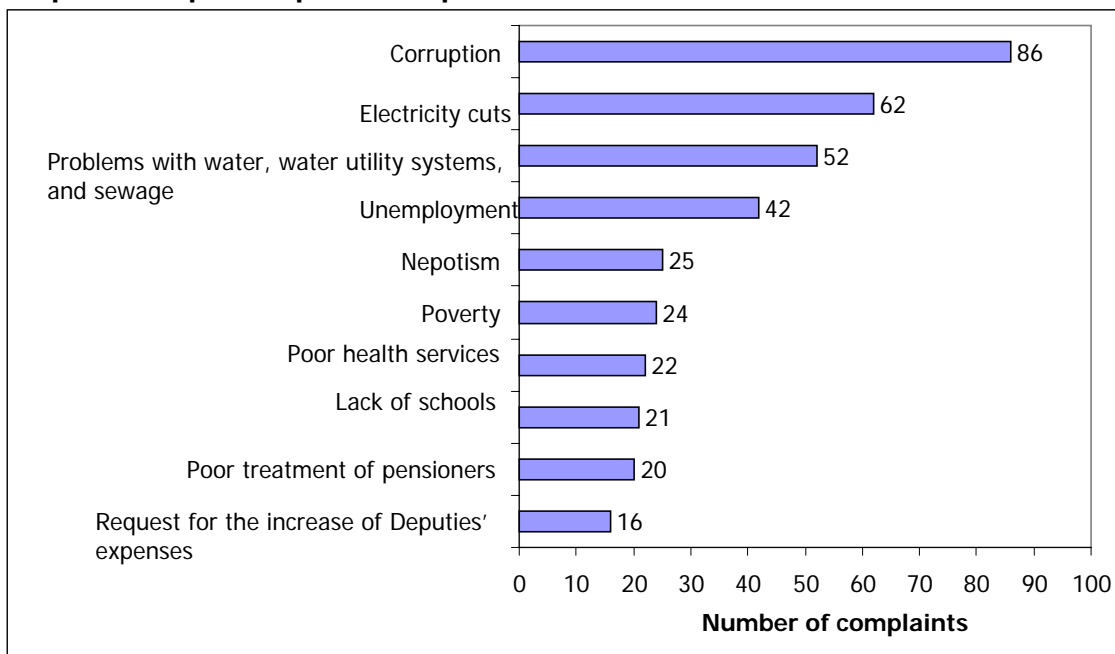
Many calls were received from pensioners who complained about poor state services, health problems, and the still to be approved law on pensioners.

Immediately after the Assembly of Kosovo proposed to budget funds for each deputy to purchase a car, people called to express their discontent regarding this proposal.

People also expressed their concern with the legal system at the local and central level. They stated that despite the existence of laws, court decisions rarely abide by the law. Particular judges have also neglected cases because of favoritism due to family connections.

Many people, especially from the municipalities of Drenas, Kastriot, and Mitrovicë, expressed concern over environmental pollution in these areas, including sulfuric acid, and pollution produced by Kosovo Electric Company (KEK) and Feronikel Company.

**Graph 1. People's top ten complaints**



In addition to the aforementioned complaints, many people expressed concern regarding the non-integration of the northern part of Mitrovicë, which they considered a result of negligence on behalf of the local, central, and international authorities.

Inadequate care for war veterans was another concern, as callers said that many veterans lived in very poor health and economic conditions.

Considering the level of poverty and unemployment in Kosovo, people said the low level of social assistance and the withholding of assistance from families with children over five years old made it difficult for them to fulfill their elementary needs.

Despite the Ministry of Education's high criteria for accepting students into high school and university, many people and especially high school pupils complained about the lack of school infrastructure. Schools lacked enough classrooms, which reduced opportunities for fulfilling set criteria for graduation.

Additional complaints made by citizens included:

- The lack of care by local and central authorities for people with special physical and psychological needs, including the absence of schools for them to attend; and
- Poor agricultural development, including an inability to plant due to the expense of necessary goods.

#### **PEOPLE'S COMPLAINTS BY MUNICIPALITY**

As Table 1 illustrates, most telephone calls were received from people in the ***Municipality of Prishtina*** (84). Their concerns and complaints included:

- Corruption;
- Damaged roads;
- Poor health services;
- Unemployment;
- Poor services in the justice system; and
- Lack of water in some districts of the city, as well as overall water reductions. People sought accountability and transparency from municipal institutions for the donation made by the German government for regulating the water utility system in Prishtina.

Citizens from the ***Municipality of Gjakova*** made 49 calls. Peoples' complaints included:

- High unemployment in the municipality;
- Lack of schools especially in rural areas;
- Lack of water utility systems in rural zones;
- Poor treatment of people with limited abilities; and
- Poor functioning of courts, especially difficulties getting official documents because of the insufficient number of offices that deal with this issue.

People from the ***Municipality of Prizren*** made 47 calls related to:

- Inadequate care for war invalids and martyrs;
- The lack of a sports centre;
- Insufficient schools for children with limited abilities;

- The lack of health centers in villages;
- Poor conditions for the development of agriculture; and
- Too few schools, especially in rural zones.

Residents from the ***Municipality of Drenas*** made 41 calls, regarding:

- Pollution of the environment by Feronikel company;
- The failure to rebuild houses destroyed during the war;
- The lack of a complaints office in the municipality;
- Nepotism; and
- The lack of traffic signs.

From the ***Municipality of Ferizaj***, 28 citizens called to express concerns about:

- The lack of institutional care for war invalids, including inadequate social assistance;
- Failure to pave roads, especially in rural areas;
- Poverty;
- Corruption in courts; and
- Insecurity, especially for pupils at school.

Residents from the ***Municipality of Podujeva*** made 26 calls related to:

- The damage of forests;
- Poor education in schools;
- Unemployment; and
- The lack of health insurance.

From the ***Municipality of Klina***, 26 citizens called to complain about:

- Municipal leaders' negligence toward problems confronting the population;
- Inadequate and irregular social assistance;
- The lack of sewage systems especially in rural areas;
- The threat posed to children in the municipality due to uncovered sewage systems; and
- The absence of water utility systems in rural areas.

Citizens from the ***Municipality of Malisheva*** made 25 calls related to:

- The poor functioning of the legal system;
- High costs for agriculture, making planting difficult; and
- The absence of schools and water utility systems in rural areas.

People from the ***Municipality of Mitrovica*** made 24 calls to complain about:

- Institutional nepotism;
- The failure to pave roads, especially in rural areas;
- The lack of water utility systems in rural areas;
- The failure to raise the salaries for technical and educational employees;
- The lack of access to Mitrovica's hospital (located in the north) for residents in the south; and
- Inadequate commitment at the local, central, and international level to integrate the northern part of Mitrovica.

Altogether 22 calls were received from citizens from the ***Municipality of Suhareka*** regarding:

- The Assembly of Kosovo's proposal to purchase cars for deputies;
- The failure to rebuild houses destroyed during the war;
- The absence of factories and the issue of unemployment; and
- The lack of a sports centre.

Residents from the ***Municipality of Peja*** made 20 calls related to:

- Protecting the environment;
- Illegal building in the municipality;
- The health system; and
- Nepotism in finding employment.

In the ***Municipality of Skënderaj***, 16 people called to make complaints regarding:

- Power cuts;
- Difficulties in securing travel and other official documents;
- The failure to care for families of people who were killed during the war;
- Inadequate support for agricultural development; and
- Institutional nepotism.

In the ***Municipality of Rahovec***, 16 citizens called to complain primarily about:

- The failure to support agricultural development;
- The lack of computer equipment in schools;
- Electricity cuts; and
- Nepotism in schools and the job market.

From the ***Municipality of Dragash***, 16 residents called to express concerns about:

- Electricity cuts;
- The lack of central heating in schools;
- The lack of garbage containers; and
- The failure to pave roads, especially in rural areas.

Residents from the ***Municipality of Viti*** made 15 calls to complain about:

- Poor functioning of the judicial system;
- Illegal building; and
- Nepotism and corruption at the local level.

From the ***Municipality of Kastriot***, 15 people called to complain about:

- Unemployment;
- The failure to pave roads in rural areas;
- Electricity cuts;
- Inadequate security; and
- The failure to rebuild houses destroyed by floods.

From the ***Municipality of Kaçanik***, 15 people called to complain primarily about:

- The lack of schools;
- The lack of economic development; and
- Corruption at the local level.

Residents of the ***Municipality of Gjilan*** made 12 calls, primarily concerning the current administration, which failed to develop the municipality, despite the many promises made during the election campaign. They also mentioned poverty and unemployment.

From the ***Municipality of Lipjan***, 12 people called regarding:

- Nepotism in the education system;
- The lack of economic development; and
- Corruption on behalf of the leader of the Municipal Assembly linked with the Lipjan market.

Twelve citizens from the ***Municipality of Vushtrri*** called to report:

- Low pensions;
- Poverty;
- The lack of water; and
- The lack of electricity.

Ten residents of the ***Municipality of Deçan*** called to complain about the absence of transport for pupils traveling from other villages to attend classes, and the destruction of forests.

Nine people called from the ***Municipality of Istog*** regarding:

- The lack of electricity;
- The failure to pave roads; and
- Institutional nepotism.

***Fushë Kosovë*** residents made five calls to complain about the delivery of services from politicians and corruption at the local level.

Residents from ***Dardanë*** made five calls related to the lack of water, electricity, and the government's privileging of the Serb minority when distributing agricultural instruments.

***Han i Elezit*** citizens made four calls to complain about corruption in the privatization of cement factories, the lack of water, and corruption in the Municipal Directorate of Health.

Citizens from ***Artanë*** made two calls, concerning the absence of water utility systems in the municipality.

Two calls were received from ***Shterpcë*** related to the Ministry of Health failing to improve health services, and the lack of commitment from local and central government to returning residents to their homes.

#### **PEOPLES' COMPLAINTS RECEIVED THROUGH THE EMAIL ADDRESS**

In total, 11 emails were sent to the email address. Citizens complained regarding:

- The energy sector;
- The health sector not functioning;
- Insufficient drinking water, especially during the summer;
- Poor rule of law;

- Territorial sovereignty and security of the country;
- Stagnation of foreign policy;
- The totalitarian government;
- Government control of the media;
- Passive opposition in the Parliament;
- Corruption at the local and central level; and
- Nepotism in the selection of employees for ministries and all institutions.

Excerpts from the emails are reproduced below:

*"We have witnessed that in different areas of Kosovo they are paving the roads. However, none of these roads have sidewalks and pedestrians are obliged to walk in the path of cars. In this manner, their life is being endangered."*

*"I am from Lipjan. I want to write to tell you about the trickery going on in my municipality. Just after he took over his post, the mayor of the municipality started to exploit the cow and vegetable markets. He did the same with the building of the Business Bank (the property of the municipality), which he transformed into his own restaurant."*

*"If you think that voting in 2007 was fair, you've lost it! One of my professors personally confessed that his son had 35 votes in a voting station, and his son increased the number of votes to 87. Today his son is an advisor in the Municipal Assembly because of it."*

*"The Prime Minister continually mentions the implementation of law, yet he allows people who have misused finances (for example, the former Chair of the Assembly of Kosovo, against whom a criminal suit has been initiated for the abuse of his position) to walk freely in the streets as if they have done nothing. As a lawyer, I know that when a criminal suit is filed against someone that person should be arrested so the judge can verify the truth."*

## **COMPLAINTS RECEIVED DURING MEETINGS WITH CITIZENS**

Citizens also expressed complaints and concerns related to local and central government during public meetings. Eight of ten planned meetings were held in the following municipalities: Gjakovë, Vushtrri, Kastriot, Viti, Prizren, Drenas, Mitrovicë and Fushë Kosovë.

The first meeting was held in **Gjakovë** on 18 September 2008. The concerns and complaints included:

- The economic situation in the municipality;
- The north of Mitrovicë, an issue they said was outside the control of Kosovo's institutions;
- The lack of necessary commitment to recognizing the state of Kosovo by other states in the world;
- The increasing emigration of youth from Gjakovë;
- The lack of agricultural development;
- Problems with water utility systems in the villages of the municipality;
- Illegal building in the town;



- Potholes in the town's roads;
- Difficulties faced by pensioners due to their low pensions, despite their health problems;
- Health problems especially in rural areas where they lack health centers;
- The park of Gjakovë, which may be endangered by the building of a church;
- The lack of schools in some villages of Gjakovë, so children must attend classes in other villages, though schools may be four or five kilometers away;
- Insecurity at school, expressed by high school pupils who participated in the meeting, including the use of physical and psychological violence (threats) against pupils by teachers, and the lack of equipment in schools; and
- Concerns about survival, an insufficient number of schools, and poor conditions at schools, voiced by participants from Hasi i Gjakoves.

The second public meeting was held in **Vushtrri** on 19 September 2008. Concerns and complaints raised by people in the Municipality of Vushtrri were:

- Decreasing opportunities for employment;
- Inadequate water, as the water came from only 15 minutes to two hours every 24 hours; and
- The educational system.

The third meeting was held in **Kastriot** on 22 September 2008. People expressed concerns about the promises made by political leaders in this municipality. After taking their votes, elected politicians forgot them, they said. Other complaints included:

- Poor infrastructure and the lack of a long term urban and development plan for the municipality;
- Health problems resulting from dust inhaled each day from the thermoelectric plant;
- Bad roads with potholes that have not been invested in since the war;
- Poor quality education due to the lack of schools. Poor management by the Director of the Directorate for Education in Kastriot has meant that children in some schools still attend lessons in barracks due to insufficient space at the school;
- Poor cooperation between KEK and the Municipal Assembly, which has meant that KEK has not paid municipal taxes although it is obliged by law, which influences the development of the municipality;
- Insufficient electricity even though the residents of Kastriot live between two thermoelectric plants;
- Few activities for youth;
- Unemployment which leads youth to work in other municipalities where they have greater opportunities; and
- The municipality's lack of action to fix houses damaged by flooding where inhabitants remain even though their lives are endangered.

The fourth public meeting was held in **Viti** on 25 September 2008. During the meeting, high school students from "The Assembly of Lezhë" expressed their discontent with the politicization of schools. Other concerns expressed by participants included:

- The failure of institutions to implement the law on gender equality;

- Rising unemployment and an increase in the number of youth emigrating from Viti;
- High costs considering the current economic situation, which makes it difficult for people to fulfill their elementary needs;
- Corruption (people recommended that a special commission be established to identify the ways people are becoming rich and to monitor businesses' payments of taxes and duties); and
- Employment in the educational system according to party affiliation.

The fifth public meeting was held in **Prizren** on 7 October 2008. The complaints and concerns expressed by people included:

- Poor quality medical treatment, so patients must be transferred to other places;
- Inadequate family medical staff in rural areas;
- Being sacked from work due to party affiliation;
- Inadequate equipment and necessary conditions at school;
- Poor conditions and a lack of infrastructure and employment for people with special physical needs;
- A lack of transparency at the local and central levels of government;
- The failure to renovate student dormitories in Prizren;
- Insufficient electricity;
- Inadequate sewage networks in some districts of the city;
- The lack of lighting on roads;
- Few women in leadership positions in the municipality; and
- Damage to the Drini i Bardhë (white river) by companies digging there, and the municipality's failure to intervene and address this issue.

The sixth public meeting was held in **Drenas** on 9 October 2008. Participants expressed their concerns regarding:

- Feronikel company's pollution of the environment; citizens said they had the right to be informed of the health consequences Feronikel causes residents of Drenas;
- Rubbish in the town and the burning of trash by residents;
- Illegal building;
- High unemployment;
- Inadequate traffic signs, which endangers the lives of children;
- The failure to renovate houses destroyed during the war;
- The lack of public gathering places or parks;
- Insecurity in schools;
- Too few schools, so many children attend schools far from their homes, endangering their safety.
- The still unknown fate of 173 people still missing from the war;
- Nepotism in the government regarding the division of property for families who lost family members during the war;
- The poor economy in the municipality, especially low salaries; and
- The inability to plant crops due to high prices for oil, seeds, and fertilizer, which means that they may not be able to feed their children.

The seventh public meeting was held in **Mitrovicë** on 10 October 2008. Residents voiced their concerns regarding:

- Albanian residents selling their property in northern Mitrovicë (they suggested that the government have a strategy for assisting Albanians in the north);
- Inadequate living conditions for people with special physical and psychological needs, including the lack of a rehabilitation center, employment opportunities, and sincere treatment by government officials;
- Unemployment;
- Employment based on nepotism;
- Privileging of people from the Serb minority by international and national institutions, including allowing them to violate the law;
- Corruption among inspectors that enables illegal construction;
- Poor educational infrastructure, including some teachers leading two parallel classes at the same time and in the same classroom, shortened class times (35 minutes), and large classes (up to 50 pupils in one class) due to inadequate space;
- The lack of Albanian schools in the north;
- The lack of respect for peoples' protests calling for the removal of the UNMIK administrator in Mitrovicë;
- Mistreatment of pensioners and war invalids;
- The limited number of students accepted in the University of Prishtina;
- Few licenses for private universities.

Participants **suggested** that the local and central government work on these issues:

- The return and protection of residents in the northern part of Mitrovica through tax credits or employment;
- Ensuring the rule of law for Serb residents as well;
- Building schools in rural areas; and
- Increasing the number of students in the State University.

The eighth public meeting was held in **Fushë Kosovë** on 16 October 2008. Citizens expressed the following concerns:

- The road in the Mirena district has not been fixed, and it is endangering children on their journey to school; women from the district said that the authorities must pave the road where their children walk or the 12 widowed mothers and their 37 children would protest in the road until it was fixed;
- High unemployment, especially among families led by widows with children;
- Nepotism in employment practices, which contributed to this unemployment;
- Municipal authorities' neglect of families led by women;
- The absence of road lights;
- Open sewage that is a health risk for children during their journey to school, especially children who finish school at 19:00; and
- The removal of health centers from the town centre to Bresje, which made access to health services more difficult.