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A Gender Analysis

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Kosovo Women's Network
Serving, Protecting and Promoting the Rights of Women and Girls

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Acronyms

ADA	Austrian Development Agency
AGE	Agency for Gender Equality
BIRN	Balkan Investigative Reporting Network
CASA	Centre for Affirmative Social Actions
CBM	Community Building Mitrovica
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CEL	Centre for Equality and Liberty
CLIP	Country Level Implementation Plan
CPD	Centre for Peace and Tolerance
CSDP	Common Security and Defence Policy
CSO	Civil society organisation
D4D	Democracy for Development
EC	European Commission
ECMI	European Centre for Minority Issues
ECtHR	European Court of Human Rights
EEAS	European External Action Service
EU	European Union
EUO	European Union Office in Kosovo
EULEX	EU Rule of Law mission to Kosovo
EUSR	EU Special Representative
GAP	Gender Action Plan
GEO	Gender Equality Officer
GoK	Government of Kosovo
GoS	Government of Serbia
GRB	Gender-responsive budgeting
HCLK	Humanitarian Law Centre Kosovo
ICTY	International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia
IMC	Independent Media Commission
IPA	Instrument for Pre-Accession
K-	Kosovo
KAS	Kosovo Agency of Statistics
KCSF	Kosovo Civil Society Foundation
KCSS	Kosovo Centre for Security Studies
KFOR	Kosovo Force
KCGS	Kosovar Centre for Gender Studies
KII	Key informant interviews
KLA	Kosovo Liberation Army
KPGE	Kosovo Programme for Gender Equality
KRCT	Kosovo Rehabilitation Centre for Torture Victims
KSF	Kosovo Security Force
KWN	Kosovo Women's Network
LGE	Law on Gender Equality
LGBTQI+	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans*, queer, intersex and other identifying persons
MCYS	Ministry of Culture, Youth, and Sport
MEST	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
MFLT	Ministry of Finance, Labour, and Transfers
MP	Member of Parliament
NAP	National Action Plan
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NDI	National Democratic Institute
NPEI	National Programme for European Integration
NSI	New Social Initiative
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OPM	Office of the Prime Minister
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PTSD	Post-traumatic stress disorder

RSF	Reporters without Borders
RYCO	Regional Youth Cooperation Office
SAA	Stabilisation Association Agreement
SALW	Small Arms, Light Weapons
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SG	Secretary General
SL	Serbian List
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNMIK	United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo
UNKT	UN Kosovo Team
UNSC	UN Security Council
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
U.S.	United States
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VV	<i>Vetevendosje</i> [Self-determination] political party
WCSO	Women's rights civil society organisation
WISE	Western Balkans Young Professionals Internship Scheme for Empowerment
WPS	Women, Peace, and Security
YIHR	Youth Initiative for Human Rights
YPN	Young Professionals Network
YPS	Youth, Peace, and Security

1. Executive Summary

The Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) Agenda recognises the vital role women play in conflict prevention, peacebuilding, and post-war recovery. It calls for women's meaningful participation in all aspects of peace and security, protection of their rights during and after conflict, and integration of gender perspectives into all peacebuilding efforts. The EU has committed to implementing the WPS Agenda, including in Kosovo. The EUO in Kosovo commissioned this "Gender Analysis on Peace and Security in Kosovo", conducted by KWN, to provide evidence-based insight to inform the EU's external action in Kosovo, towards EU WPS commitments. The Analysis examines the gender-responsiveness of Kosovo's legal and policy framework for conflict prevention, causes and consequences of conflict, key stakeholders involved in conflict and peacebuilding, the gender-responsiveness of peacebuilding actions, and steps towards inclusive, gender-responsive, and sustainable peace and security. The research involved mixed methods, including interviews, focus groups, and content analysis.

Kosovo's legal and policy framework pertaining to security, including preventing and addressing conflict, is insufficiently gender responsive. Kosovo had a WPS Action Plan from 2013-2015, which was largely implemented. After its expiry, the Kosovo Programme for Gender Equality (KPGE) 2020-2024 included some aspects of WPS. As of August 2025, Kosovo lacked a National Action Plan (NAP) on WPS, but the Government planned to incorporate the WPS Agenda in the forthcoming KPGE.

Although large-scale violence has ended, people in Kosovo, especially diverse women, still feel insecure and face consequences of conflict, including persistent insecurity, low participation, limited access to services, unresolved trauma, health issues, activist burnout, and even death. Research participants emphasised that without justice and accountability, conflict persists and discourages engagement in peace processes. They identified possible triggers of conflict to include male-dominated political environs, political leaders' efforts to retain power, ethnonationalist patriarchal narratives propagated by political leaders and spread through media, segregated educational systems, education that reinforces militarised gender norms, poor communication among ethnic groups, insufficient (transitional) justice, economic instability, exclusionary narratives promoted by media, limited access to basic rights and services, persistent patriarchal gender norms linked with unemployment, and the marginalisation for political ends of women, people with disabilities, ethnic minorities, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, intersex, and other identifying persons (LGBTQI+). Research suggests that men, particularly political leaders in Kosovo and Serbia, are the main actors contributing to conflict. Despite often lacking legal, political, and economic power to engage, and their general exclusion from formal peace and decision-making processes, women were recurrently mentioned as willing to engage in peacebuilding, and civil society organisations (CSOs), particularly women's rights organisations (WCSOs), as key contributors to peace. Potential exists for youth to be agents of peace, or of conflict (particularly young men), depending on how they are engaged and by whom. Yet, homogenising women as peaceful or men as violent can overlook their plurality of roles, reinforcing rather than challenging gender norms and relations contributing to conflict.

Standalone peacebuilding projects have tended to contain strong conflict analyses but lacked gender-responsive conflict sensitivity, considering Kosovo's past. From an intersectional gender perspective, conflict-sensitivity requires more inclusive consultations in action planning, improved intersectional gender analysis to inform actions' intervention logics, gender-responsive conflict risk analyses and mitigation measures, longer-term approaches focused on needs (i.e., economy, energy, or environment rather than "peace", to build trust), and addressing structural barriers to women's enhanced engagement in programming, policies, and political dialogues (e.g., inaccessible venues, care unavailability, economic and political exclusion).

This Analysis offers several recommendations towards more gender and conflict-responsive laws, policies, and programs.

2. Introduction

The overall objective of this Analysis is to contribute to implementing EU commitments to WPS in external action in line with the 2018 and 2022 Council Conclusions on WPS and the EU Strategic Approach to WPS and Action Plan (2019-2024).¹ The specific objective is to inform the EU's policy related to WPS in Kosovo and its financial assistance related to all programs by providing evidence-based recommendations and an action plan to inform EU policy and programming.

2.1. Methodology

This section summarises the methodology. KWN used “grounded research”, an iterative process through which the research methodology, questions, methods, and sources were adapted as new information was gained during the research process.² Such an approach contributes to participatory, inclusive research, which can enhance its quality and validity.

2.2. Research Questions

The main research questions included:

1. How inclusive and gender-responsive is Kosovo's legal framework related to prevention and address of conflict?
2. What are the causes and consequences of conflict, from an intersectional gender perspective?
3. Who are the key stakeholders, including parties to the conflict, people affected by the conflict, and those with interests and stakes in the conflict, as well as actors for peace and resilience, considering gender and other intersectional differences?
4. How inclusive and gender-responsive have past and present prevention, peacebuilding, and stabilisation activities been?
5. Considering these, what policy and programmatic steps can be taken towards a more effective, inclusive, gender-responsive, conflict-sensitive, and sustainable response to furthering peace and security?

Intersectionality

The EU has committed in the EU Gender Action Plan (GAP) III to an intersectional approach, which includes analysing and seeking to address the potentially interrelated situations and inequalities that different women (and men) may face due to their gender *and* other demographic and socioeconomic factors. For brevity, in this Analysis, the term “**diverse***” refers to women and girls (and men and boys, where relevant) “in all their diversity”, as used in the EU GAP III. This should be interpreted to mean women, girls, men, boys, and non-binary persons who live in geographic areas (rural/urban, North/South of Kosovo), are of various ages, ethnicities, (dis)abilities, educational levels, employment, and economic statuses.

2.3. Research Methods

In accordance with Council Conclusions, the EC's “Guidance for conflict analysis”, and the EU staff handbook on operating in situations of conflict, the Analysis included the following methods:

1. **Consultations** with stakeholders from the EU, Agency for Gender Equality (AGE), and diverse CSOs to inform the methodology.
2. **Literature review and analysis of Kosovo's legal framework:** KWN reviewed EU policies related to peace and security; examined literature related to gender, peace, and security; and analysed the gender-responsiveness of Kosovo's legal framework related to preventing and addressing conflict. KWN used the “Traffic Light Scale” of gender-responsiveness (Figure 1) to assess the extent to

¹ Council of the European Union, [Women, Peace and Security - Council Conclusions \(2018\)](#), 2018. [EU Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security \(WPS\) 2019-2024](#), 2019. [Council Conclusions on Women, Peace and Security](#), 2022. This report is an abbreviated version of the longer gender analysis contracted by the EUO in Kosovo to inform its policies and programs.

² Brooke Ackerly & Jacqui True, *Doing feminist research in political and social science* (2nd ed.), Red Globe Press, 2020.

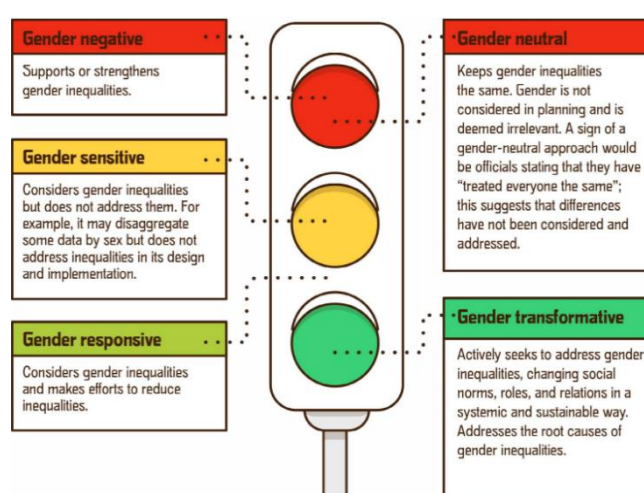
which laws and policies related to peace and security are gender negative, neutral, sensitive, responsive, or transformative.

3. **Mapped and analysed** peacebuilding programs using the “Traffic Light Scale”.
4. **Mapped key stakeholders** to conflict and peace. This drew from literature review, consultations, and interviews.
5. **Conducted key informant interviews** (KIs) with 79 diverse* women (61) and men (18) to identify their needs, experiences, and interests. KIs were selected using variation sampling to identify as diverse* persons as possible with reference to their hypothesised responses to the research questions and

intersectional considerations (e.g., ethnicity, age, disability, geographic location). KIs were conducted with government officials; CSOs including diverse* WCSOs; academics; and development actors, selected based on positions. During interviews, mapping identified additional research participants, using snowball sampling. Interviews sought to respond to research questions. They were conducted at times and locations (online or physically) where participants felt comfortable and secure. Participants were informed about the research, their rights, and oral consent was secured, following ethical practices. Interviews involved an inclusive, conflict-sensitive, and participatory approach, seeking to dismantle power relations between the “researcher” and “researched”; participants were invited to share views, analysis, and recommendations. KWN received written input and data from 13 additional actors including police, embassies, and international organisations.

6. **Organised five focus groups** with: women with disabilities, including Bosnian and Croatian women; Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian women; WCSOs (primarily Albanian); K-Serb women in the north; and K-Serb young women in the north. In total, 31 women took part.
7. **Analysed data**, engaging research participants in data analysis and identifying recommendations. Transcripts were coded with reference to research questions by at least two research team members with diverse backgrounds, towards triangulation of researchers and enhanced validity. Intersectional gender analysis included disaggregating findings by sex and age, ethnicity, geographic location, disability, and other factors where possible. All percentages are rounded for readability.
8. **Organised two validation workshops** with 24 stakeholders to gather input on findings, recommendations, and the Action Plan. The draft Analysis also was shared for their review and comment, towards validity. The draft report was revised based on input received.

Figure 1. “Traffic Light” Scale of Gender-transformativeness



2.4. Limitations and Estimated Error

Examining municipalities’ work towards peace was beyond the scope of this research; additional local government efforts likely exist. The research team found that research participants generally were open to speak about their experiences, interests, and needs. Only a few people refused to participate due to health reasons, busy schedules, travel, and/or fatigue with interviews. Views on topics related to their areas of expertise were collected from other participants. Parliamentary elections in February 2025 created challenges in securing interviews with officials, given the lack of a government and persons able to speak in an official capacity. Ongoing attempts to form the government limited political party representatives’ availability for interviews. Given that elections have not had clear results, post-election views of security could not be assessed and may shift.

2.5. About This Report

Following a short historical background, the Legal and Policy Analysis examines the gender-responsiveness of Kosovo’s legal framework related to prevention and address of conflict. The Situation

Analysis provides a brief gender analysis of contextual factors relevant to peace and security. The next section examines causes and consequences of conflict and violence from a gender perspective. The section that follows identifies the main stakeholders in conflict and peace, including their interests and gender differences in how individuals contribute to conflict and peace. The final section examines the gender responsiveness of peacebuilding efforts. Lastly, recommendations are provided.

3. Background

While Kosovo's history is complex and contentious, this section provides a very brief overview. Once part of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Kosovo experienced growing tensions in the 1990s after then President of Serbia and of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia Milošević revoked Kosovo's autonomy. Women played an under-recognised role in K-Albanians' non-violent resistance, organising underground schools, healthcare services, and humanitarian aid.³

In 1998-1999 violence escalated into war between Serbian forces and the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA). The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) undertook a humanitarian intervention.⁴ In total, 850,000 K-Albanians were forcefully displaced.⁵ Immediately after the war, K-Serbs and Roma faced violence and displacement.⁶ Overall, an estimated 13,535 people were killed or disappeared, of which 10,812 were K-Albanians, 2,197 were K-Serbs, and 526 were Roma, Bosnian, Montenegrin, and other ethnicities.⁷ Of 6,065 missing persons, 1,607 cases remained unsolved in 2024.⁸ While men accounted for most persons killed and missing, women and children were disproportionately affected by displacement and sexual violence.⁹

After 1999, Kosovo was governed by an international civilian mission,¹⁰ the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK).¹¹ In March 2004, triggered by a series of ethnically motivated events, 23 people lost their lives (one Macedonian, nine Serbs, and 13 Albanians), hundreds of K-Serb, Roma, and Ashkali homes and churches were destroyed, and more than 4,000 persons were displaced, showing the inability of international forces (NATO's Kosovo Force [KFOR] and UNMIK) to protect minorities.¹² In 2008, Kosovo declared its independence and has continued the state-building process in the context of aspired EU Accession. Serbia has not recognised Kosovo.

4. Legal and Policy Framework

This section responds to the research questions: How inclusive and gender-responsive is Kosovo's legal and policy framework related to gender-responsive prevention and address of conflict; how can Kosovo's legal framework be improved to be more inclusive and gender-responsive; and how can lessons learned from the implementation of Kosovo's Action Plan for Implementing Resolution 1325 "Women, Peace, and Security" and WPS aspects of the KPGE inform the future legal framework and programming? First, it examines the extent to which Kosovo laws and policies are in line with international and regional commitments to the WPS Agenda. Then, it discusses the gender-responsiveness of laws and policies related to WPS and opportunities for improvements.

³ Clark Howard, *Civil Resistance in Kosovo*, 2000; Kosovo Gender Studies Centre, *History is Herstory, too*, 2008.

⁴ Sh. Osmani, "[KFOR mission in Kosovo and its future](#)", *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 2014, pp. 350-351.

⁵ UNHCR, "[Kosovo Crisis Update](#)".

⁶ Human Rights Watch, "[Abuses against Serbs and Roma in the New Kosovo](#)", 1999.

⁷ Humanitarian Law Centre, "[31,600 documents undoubtedly confirm death or disappearance of 13,535 individuals during war in Kosovo](#)", 2015.

⁸ European External Action Service, "[EU-facilitated Dialogue: Successful conclusion of the negotiations for the 2023 Declaration on Missing Persons' implementation](#)", 2024.

⁹ Human Rights Watch, "[UNDER ORDERS: War Crimes in Kosovo](#)", 2001, pp. 3-8.

¹⁰ UNMIK Official Gazette, [Security Council Resolution 1244](#), 1999.

¹¹ UNMIK Official Gazette, [Regulation No. 1999/1](#), 1999.

¹² Human Rights Watch, "[Failure to Protect: Anti-Minority Violence in Kosovo, March 2004](#)", 2004; Humanitarian Law Centre, "[The March violence in Kosovo – a reminder of the facts](#)", 2021.

4.1. International Legal and Policy Framework

This section briefly describes the international legal framework relevant to the WPS Agenda and the extent to which Kosovo laws and policies are in line with international commitments.

4.1.1. UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

The United Nations (UN) Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) (1979) declares that discrimination against women violates equal rights and human dignity.¹³ CEDAW does not articulate direct provisions related to WPS. However, it includes legally binding general recommendations on non-discrimination and equality.¹⁴ These recommendations recognise situations in which women suffer discrimination and call on states to take necessary measures toward gender equality. CEDAW emphasises that “the welfare of the world and the cause of peace require the maximum participation of women on equal terms with men in all fields”. Kosovo’s Constitution explicitly mentions CEDAW in Article 22, rendering it applicable and with “priority over provisions of laws and other acts of public institutions”.¹⁵

4.1.2. United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security

United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on WPS (2000) includes four pillars: prevention, protection, participation, and relief and recovery.¹⁶ It expresses concern that most persons affected by armed conflict are women. It emphasises the importance of recognising women’s role in the prevention, solution, and consolidation of peace, noting that women need to be able to participate fully in all decision-making processes, from local to international levels. It emphasises the need for peace operations and negotiations to adopt a gender perspective. UNSCR 1325 renders all states responsible for ending impunity and prosecuting persons “responsible for genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes”, particularly those of a sexual nature against women and girls. It calls for such crimes to be excluded from amnesties. UNSCR 1325 has served as the basis for several WPS “sister” resolutions,¹⁷ related to participation in peace processes, prevention of sexual violence, and justice for such violence.

In its 2024 report on WPS (UNSCR 1325, 2122, and 2493), the UN Secretary General (SG) finds that often, UN peacekeeping and political missions have limited time to plan and implement projects that contribute to gender equality and the WPS Agenda, leaving women in vulnerable and dangerous situations.¹⁸ The SG highlights the importance of gender analysis in transition processes in conflict affected areas, as referenced in numerous UN resolutions but not fully implemented. Gender analysis to inform post-conflict recovery funds is considered essential; governments, international financial institutions, and the private sector are encouraged to better understand the role of care work and its inclusion in economic recovery strategies in conflict-affected countries. Additionally, the SG states that gender analysis is crucial in cases of climate crisis, helping to determine economic and non-economic impacts, such as gender-based violence and unpaid work.

While the KPGE 2020-2024 committed to implementing the WPS Agenda, Kosovo’s current legal framework does not contain explicit commitments to UNSCR 1325 or its “sister” resolutions. At present, Kosovo does not have an Action Plan for the implementation of UNSCR 1325. Kosovo does not yet have any development and humanitarian aid policy.¹⁹ However, the Law on Gender Equality (LGE) calls for gender analysis and mainstreaming to inform all laws and programs.²⁰

¹³ UN General Assembly, CEDAW, 1979.

¹⁴ Rashida Manjoo, “Women, Peace and Security – Negotiating in Women’s Best Interests”, 2016, p. 268.

¹⁵ Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo, [Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo](#), 2008, Article 22.

¹⁶ UN Security Council, [UNSCR 1325](#), 2000.

¹⁷ UN Security Council, UNSCR 1820, 2008; UNSCR 1888, 2009; [UNSCR 1889](#), 2009; UNSCR 1960, 2010; [UNSCR 2106](#), 2013; [UNSCR 2122](#), 2013.

¹⁸ UNSC, “[Women and peace and security - Report of the Secretary-General](#)”, 2024.

¹⁹ European Commission, “[Kosovo* 2024 Report](#)”, 2024, p. 20.

²⁰ Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo, [Law No. 05/L-020 on Gender Equality](#), Official Gazette of the Republic of Kosovo, 2015, Article 5.

4.1.3. Sustainable Development Goals

Kosovo has shown its commitment to implementing the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for 2030 by unanimously adopting a resolution on SDGs in 2018.²¹ SDGs are 17 global objectives adopted by the UN to promote social, economic, and environmental sustainability. The EU has integrated these into its policies.²² Commitments to SDGs have been reflected in documents related to Kosovo's EU Accession, such as the National Program for the Implementation of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) and the European Reform Agenda. SDG Target 5.5 calls for women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic, and public life, which is relevant for security institutions, negotiations, and dialogue processes. SDG 5 also calls for governments to implement gender-responsive budgeting (GRB), requiring gender analysis to inform programming, collection of sex-disaggregated data, and ex-post gender impact assessments. These commitments should influence government programming for peace and security.

Although Kosovo's LGE references GRB, it has not been institutionalised in laws on Public Finance, Procurement, and Local Government Financing. This undermines implementation, including adequate budget allocations for the WPS Agenda and broader gender equality efforts.

Aside from limited information on UN Kosovo Team (UNKT) activities, no government reports on SDG implementation are publicly available. A parliamentary group reportedly was established to monitor SDG progress, but no information is available on its existence or activities. Data presented in this Analysis suggest slow progress towards achieving SDG 5 on Gender Equality, particularly regarding women's political participation. Civil society monitoring of SDG 5.c.1 indicator on GRB suggests limited implementation,²³ which can contribute to weak budget allocations for peace and security.

4.1.4. EU Commitments to the WPS Agenda

In 2012, the EU adopted a Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) on the implementation of UNSCR 1325, aiming to improve gender balance in CSDP missions and operations, such as the EU Rule of Law Mission to Kosovo (EULEX). The subsequent Civilian CSDP Compact 2018-2023 aimed to strengthen the EU's civilian CSDP through 10 strategic guidelines.²⁴ It led to limited progress in increasing women's representation in international missions, from 22% in 2018 to 24% in 2023.²⁵ The next 2023 CSDP has included implementing UNSCR 1325 on WPS as a strategic guideline and commitment, ensuring "full, equal and meaningful participation of women in all functions, including in leadership positions".²⁶ It sets the target for women's representation at a minimum of 40%.

The EU Strategic Approach to WPS built on and replaced the 2008 Comprehensive Approach to implementing UNSCRs 1325 and 1820.²⁷ It does not have a fixed timeframe, serving as a long-term policy framework for mainstreaming the WPS Agenda across all EU external actions and policies. It commits to actions to achieve sustainable peace and security by engaging, empowering, protecting, and supporting women and girls. The Strategic Approach recognises gender equality and women's empowerment as prerequisites for dealing with conflict and aims to ensure women's meaningful participation in all aspects of peace and security. It identifies actions under key areas of prevention, protection, relief, and recovery, together with gender mainstreaming and participation. The EU Strategic Approach sets out supportive measures for implementing the WPS Agenda, covered by the Action Plan's indicators, which can help evaluate implementation. They include: political support for implementation;

²¹ UN Kosovo Team, "[Kosovo Parliament Unanimously Adopts SDG Resolution](#)", 2018.

²² European Commission, "[Sustainable development in the European Union: Monitoring report on progress towards the SDGs in an EU context – 2022 edition](#)", Publications Office of the European Union, 2022.

²³ Kosovo Women's Network, "[Monitoring the Implementation of SDG Indicator 5.c.1 in Kosovo](#)", 2022.

²⁴ Council of the European Union, "[Conclusions of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, on the establishment of a Civilian CSDP Compact](#)", 2018.

²⁵ Timo Smit, "[New Compact, Renewed Impetus: Enhancing The EU's Ability to Act Through its Civilian CSDP](#)", SIPRI, 2023.

²⁶ Council of the European Union, [European Union Common Security and Defence Policy Civilian CSDP Compact: Towards more effective civilian missions](#), 2023, p. 12.

²⁷ Council of the European Union, EU Strategic Approach to WPS in [Women, Peace and Security - Council Conclusions](#), 2018.

funding and resourcing; capacity-building and training; exchange of information and best practices; leadership and accountability; support through gender advisors and focal points; robust monitoring, evaluation, and reporting mechanisms; and NAPs as key tools for WPS implementation. The EU's WPS Agenda has focused on women's representation,²⁸ overlooking other aspects of the WPS Agenda.²⁹

To implement this strategic framework, the EU adopted a WPS Action Plan for 2021-2024, which has expired. It provided a comprehensive framework for the EU and its Member States to advance implementation of the WPS Agenda across their missions and policies. In Kosovo, EULEX, as the largest civilian mission, supports law enforcement institutions, ensuring alignment with international human rights standards and EU best practices.³⁰ These responsibilities require these institutions to adapt and implement the Action Plan on WPS in their work, while supporting and monitoring the Government of Kosovo (GoK) in doing the same. The Plan also encouraged third parties to take actions that contribute to fulfilling its six objectives,³¹ including increasing women's participation in peace and security processes, promoting justice for survivors of conflict-related gender-based violence, integrating gender considerations into strategies addressing violent extremism, and ensuring that relief and recovery efforts meet women's specific needs.

First, the Action Plan on WPS calls for women's increased participation and leadership in peace and security, setting targets for improved gender balance in CSDP missions and operations, and women's involvement in peace processes through capacity-building and mentoring. Second, it emphasises the need for systematic gender mainstreaming across all EU policies and actions. This involves developing tools and methods for gender analysis and integration in all EU policy frameworks, including CSDP missions and operations. Regular gender analysis is to be conducted for planning and reviewing missions and operations. It also mandates gender training for all staff, including pre-deployment training, and incorporates WPS responsibilities into job descriptions and performance evaluations for leadership positions. The Plan also calls for policies on sexual exploitation, abuse, and sexual harassment. It commits to accountability policies to help end impunity and bring perpetrators to justice. It also emphasises support for victims/survivors of conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence and the integration of a gender perspective in strategies to counter violent extremism. Lastly, the Plan focuses on relief and recovery efforts, ensuring that they meet the needs of women and girls affected by conflict, considering women's specific needs in disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration processes. Indicators exist for assessing implementation of the Plan.³²

As of June 2025, the EU has not issued a new standalone Action Plan to succeed the 2019-2024 WPS Action Plan. Yet, the WPS Agenda has been integrated into the EU's GAP III, launched in 2020 and extended to 2027.³³ GAP III encompasses WPS priorities, including participation, protection, prevention, and relief and recovery. It aims for 85% of all new actions to contribute to gender equality by 2025.

In 2024, the Council of the EU reaffirmed its commitment to the WPS Agenda, emphasising the need for full, equal, and meaningful participation of women in all aspects of peace and security.³⁴ The Council highlighted the importance of integrating gender perspectives into EU CSDP missions and operations, ensuring that gender equality is mainstreamed across all EU policies. It called for increased efforts to prevent and respond to sexual and gender-based violence and stressed the necessity of victim- and survivor-centred approaches. Further, it recognised the need for gender-responsive leadership and strengthening gender expertise in EU structures. The Strategy and Action Plan to Enhance Women's Participation in Civilian CSDP Missions 2021-2024 called for missions to significantly increase the number of women personnel at all levels.

²⁸ European External Action Service, [Strategy and Action Plan to Enhance Women's Participation in Civilian CSDP Missions 2021-2024](#), 2021.

²⁹ Anna Molnár & Veronika Hornyák Gracza, "[Women, Peace and Security in EU Interventions: Analysing EULEX and Operation Irini](#)", *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, 2024.

³⁰ EULEX, "[The Mission](#)", n.d.

³¹ Council of the European Union, [EU Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security \(WPS\) 2019-2024](#), 2019.

³² Council of the European Union, [EU Strategic Approach to Women, Peace and Security \(WPS\)](#), 2018.

³³ European Parliament, [EU Action Plan on Gender Equality \(GAP III\) Legislative Train Schedule](#), (n.d.).

³⁴ Council of the European Union, [Council conclusions on women, peace and security](#), 2022.

Kosovo is not yet an EU Member State, so it is not obliged to implement the WPS Action Plan. Yet, considering Kosovo's aspirations for EU membership, alignment with the EU's WPS commitments, including relevant Council Conclusions and any forthcoming EU action plans, could be beneficial.

4.1.5. EU GAP III and Kosovo CLIP

Building on the two prior plans, EU GAP III is a Staff Working Document of the European Commission (EC) towards gender equality in EU external relations. It includes attention to the WPS Agenda. Delegations, including the EUO, have committed to implementing a Country Level Implementation Plan 2021-2025 (CLIP) for GAP III. The Kosovo CLIP observes that while UNSCR 1325 is not explicitly mentioned in Kosovo law, its objectives were integrated in the KPGE 2020-2024, focusing on decision-making, justice, peace, security, and equal participation in the security sector.³⁵ The Plan highlights women's underrepresentation, particularly ethnic minority women, in decision-making. It notes that despite commitments to UNSCR 1325, women's priorities have been underrepresented in the Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue. It commits to advancing the WPS Agenda and emphasises the need to engage WCSOs and women in political dialogues and peace processes. EULEX commits to continuing to promote women's participation in security institutions.³⁶ No monitoring has examined implementation of CLIP objectives related to the WPS Agenda. The GoK does not have any obligation to implement the EU GAP III or CLIP. However, aligning its efforts with CLIP commitments would be consistent with national objectives and could advance peace and security. Moreover, cooperation with the EU on CLIP implementation could open opportunities for additional resources and support for the WPS Agenda.

4.2. National Legal Framework

4.2.1. Constitution

The Constitution (2017) guarantees human rights and freedoms for all citizens, including protections for minority ethnic groups and their participation.³⁷ It commits to ensuring gender representation in state institutions and guarantees the right to security for all.³⁸ Article 22 stipulates that international agreements and instruments are directly applicable and take precedence over domestic laws and policies. This includes CEDAW, the Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, and the Istanbul Convention. CEDAW recognises that "the welfare of the world and the cause of peace require the maximum participation of women on equal terms with men in all fields."³⁹

In terms of institutional responsibilities, the Constitution tasks the Kosovo Security Forces (KSF) with crisis response, civil protection, and defence missions; the Kosovo Police with public safety, law enforcement, and crime prevention; the Security Council of Kosovo with advising on national security matters; and the Ministry of Defense with overseeing defence policy and KSF development. The Constitution broadly aligns with EU principles on peace processes through its commitments to human rights and a democratic, inclusive society. However, it does not explicitly reference the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, UNSCR 1325, or its "sister" resolutions. Implementation of its commitments, particularly regarding equal gender representation, remain insufficient.

4.2.2. Law on Gender Equality and Electoral Laws

The LGE (2015) ensures gender equality as a "fundamental value for the democratic development of the society, providing equal opportunities for both female and male participation in the political, economic, social, cultural and other areas of societal life".⁴⁰ It defines equal participation and

³⁵ EUO, European Union Special Representative in Kosovo, Head of Office, [Gender Action Plan III – 2021-2025 Country Level Implementation Plan for Kosovo](#), 2021, p. 1.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 5.

³⁷ Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo, [Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo](#), 2017, Articles 1.2, 57–62.

³⁸ Ibid., Articles 71 and 29.

³⁹ UN General Assembly, CEDAW, 1979.

⁴⁰ Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo, [Law No. 05/L-020 on Gender Equality](#), 2015.

representation as 50% of each gender in governing and decision-making bodies of all legislative, executive, judicial, and other public institutions. Institutions should take temporary special measures to accelerate gender equality, which may include quotas, programs to increase the participation of the less represented sex in decision-making, economic empowerment, and measures to address inequalities.⁴¹

The Law on General Elections (2023) and the Law on Local Elections (2008) are not aligned with the LGE,⁴² despite advocacy to increase the 30% quota for each gender on political parties' candidate lists to 50%.⁴³ Thus, 50% gender participation stipulated by the LGE has not been implemented in the Assembly or the GoK. Instead, political parties typically adhere only to electoral laws. While the Constitutional Court has decided that election laws are in line with the Constitution,⁴⁴ this does not preclude the use of affirmative measures towards a gender-balance in decision-making as foreseen in the LGE. Amending the electoral laws to require 50% representation for both women and men on candidate lists could facilitate the implementation of the LGE and directly promote women's equal participation in national and municipal assemblies. This could enhance their involvement in peace processes, oversight of security institutions, and the allocation of state funds for peace and security programs. Meanwhile, provisions on equal representation also remain unimplemented in security and justice sectors, as elaborated later in this analysis; affirmative measures are needed to address women's underrepresentation per the LGE. The LGE also foresees GRB, though this has not been institutionalised by harmonising the LGE with the Law on Public Finance, among others. This could contribute to GRB across all sectors, including security and justice.

4.2.3. Law on Protection from Discrimination

This Law (2015) was enacted to ensure equality and prevent discrimination on various grounds, including gender.⁴⁵ It explicitly prohibits discrimination based on gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and gender identity. It mandates that all public and private entities ensure equal participation of women and men in all spheres of life, including political, economic, social, cultural, and civil sectors. While the Law broadly addresses equal participation and non-discrimination, it does not specifically mention women, peace, and security. However, by promoting gender equality and prohibiting discrimination, it lays a foundation to support women's inclusion in all areas of life, including peace and security.

4.2.4. Law on the Status and the Rights of Martyrs, Invalids, Veterans, Members of Kosovo Liberation Army, Sexual Violence Victims of the War, Civilian Victims, and their Families

The Law (2014) defines the status and provides financial support through pensions and benefits to individuals and families who contributed to the country's liberation, including martyrs, war invalids, veterans, members of the KLA, civilian victims, and their immediate family members.⁴⁶ Following years of tireless advocacy by WCSOs and women in politics,⁴⁷ the Assembly amended the Law to recognise sexual violence survivors in 2014, providing them with benefits similar to other veterans including a monthly pension.⁴⁸ The Law had a five-year deadline for sexual violence victims of war to submit applications for recognition and benefits. In 2025, this deadline was extended for two years, until 15 May

⁴¹ Ibid., Article 6.

⁴² Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo, [Law No. 08/L-228 on General Elections in the Republic of Kosovo](#), 2023; [Law No. 03/L-072 on Local Elections in the Republic of Kosovo](#), 2008.

⁴³ Koha.net, "[RrGK: Barazia gjinore është obligim ligjor në zgjedhjet lokale](#)" ["KWN: Gender Equality is a legal obligation on local elections"], 2021.

⁴⁴ Constitutional Court of Kosovo, [Case KO15/24 Constitutional review of Article 28 of Law no. 08/L-228 on General Elections in the Republic of Kosovo](#), 2024.

⁴⁵ Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo, [Law No. 05/L-021 on Protection from Discrimination](#), 2015.

⁴⁶ Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo, [Law No. 04/L-054 on the Status and Rights of the Martyrs, Invalids, Veterans, Members of the Kosovo Liberation Army, Civilian Victims, and Their Families](#), 2011.

⁴⁷ Kosovo Women's Network, "[A Seat at the Table: Women's contributions to and expectations from peacebuilding processes in Kosovo](#)", 2021, p. 63.

⁴⁸ Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo, [Law No. 04/L-172 on Amending and Supplementing the Law No.04/L-054 on the Status and the Rights of the Martyrs, Invalids, Veterans, Members of Kosovo Liberation Army, Sexual Violence Victims of the War, Civilian Victims and their Families](#), 2014.

2027. WCSOs have advocated for removing of this deadline,⁴⁹ as reemphasised in the campaign “Trauma Has No Deadline”.⁵⁰ Activists also have advocated to extend the timeframe for defining victims of war beyond 1999 to recognise sexual violence experienced by Roma, Ashkali, Egyptians, and Serbs. Currently, only those who experienced sexual violence between 27.02.1998 and 20.06.1999 can apply for this status and accompanying rights.⁵¹ Activists consider this a “double standard”, as the Law on Missing Persons extends until 2000.⁵² They and Amnesty International have argued that all victims should be treated equally, regardless of when they suffered violence.⁵³

4.2.5. Law on Kosovo Security Force

The Law (2018) regulates KSF’s establishment, role, and functioning related to security, defence, and protecting Kosovo’s sovereignty.⁵⁴ It includes provisions for recruitment, training, and operations. It does not address WPS, though it could have required equal participation of women in KSF, introduced quotas to promote gender equality, and ensured women’s involvement in peacebuilding and security. The Law requires the GoK to adopt a Defence Strategy with recommendations from the Minister of Defence.⁵⁵ The Law gives the Security Council, chaired by the Prime Minister, the competence of preparing the Security Strategy for Kosovo in cooperation with the President and the GoK.⁵⁶

4.2.6. Law on Education

Among other aims, this Law (2011) seeks to foster “good understanding, peace, tolerance, gender equality and friendship with members of all communities” for pupils.⁵⁷ It calls for education employees to “take all reasonable steps to ensure that pupils and staff are not injured or exposed to any offensive words or actions”.⁵⁸ It prohibits “activities outside the Kosovo Curriculum Framework for the benefit or detriment of any political party, gender, race, ethnic background, religion or social position”, stating that “pupils must be offered a balanced presentation of opposing views”. Similarly, the Law on Pre-University Education calls for preparing pupils “for a responsible life in the spirit of good understanding, peace, tolerance, gender equality and friendship with members of all communities.”⁵⁹ They are gender sensitive.

Little monitoring has assessed if educational institutions are contributing to peace and tolerance, particularly from a gender perspective.⁶⁰ A review of textbooks by the Ombudsperson’s Institution found that they fail to adequately represent Kosovo’s diverse communities in texts and images.⁶¹ Research suggests that teachers tend to have a one-dimensional perspective of history, often neglecting diverse ethnicities’ experiences and even using derogatory terms.⁶² Pedagogy also tends to reinforce rather than challenge gender stereotypes.⁶³

⁴⁹ Radio Free Europe, “[Afati i verifikimit të statusit për viktimat e dhunës seksuale të luftës](#)” [“Deadline for status verification for victims of wartime sexual violence”], 2023.

⁵⁰ Veronë Zymberi, “[Lansohet fushata ‘Trauma nuk ka afat’ në mbështetje të të mbijetuarve të dhunës seksuale të luftës](#)” [“The ‘Trauma has no deadline’ campaign launched in support of survivors of wartime sexual violence”], Kallxo.com, 2025.

⁵¹ UN Women, “[Reparations for conflict-related sexual violence](#)”, 2018.

⁵² Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo, [Law No. 04/L-023 On Missing Persons](#), 2011.

⁵³ KWN interview with a WCSO activist, 2025. See also Amnesty International, “[‘Wounds that burn our souls’: Compensation for Kosovo’s wartime rape survivors, but still no justice](#)”, 2017.

⁵⁴ Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo, [Law No. 06/L-123 on the Kosovo Security Force](#), 2018.

⁵⁵ Ibid., Article 18.

⁵⁶ Ibid., articles 18, 19.

⁵⁷ Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo, [Law No. 04/L-032 on Pre-University Education in the Republic of Kosovo](#), 2011, Article 1, Paragraph 2.5.

⁵⁸ Ibid., Article 4, Paragraph 1.

⁵⁹ Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo, [Law No. 04/L-032 on Pre-University Education in the Republic of Kosovo](#), 2011.

⁶⁰ UN Women, “[Voices of YOUth: Gender equality and social cohesion in the Western Balkans](#)”, 2024.

⁶¹ Government of the Republic of Kosovo Ombudsperson Institution, [Ex-officio No.3 31/2022 With regard to harmonization of the provisions of General Pre-University Education System of Kosovo with the rights of children in education](#), 2022, p. 34.

⁶² Valmira Rashiti, “[Qysh kemi ardhe deri tek liria: Kujtesa e cënuar tek generatat e reja](#)” [“How we came to freedom: The damaged memory of the new generations”], Kallxo.com, 2023.

⁶³ KWN research, forthcoming 2025.

4.2.7. The Law on Use of Language

In line with the Constitution, this 2006 Law affirms the equal status of Albanian and Serbian as official languages and mandates that other languages spoken by at least 3% of the population in a municipality be used officially.⁶⁴ This includes providing education in these languages. It does not contain any reference to gender in language.

Public institutions at central and municipal levels have struggled to implement language rights. Problems include insufficient translation of official documents, lack of bilingual signage, and limited availability of public services in minority languages.⁶⁵ Citizens and civil servants generally lack awareness regarding language rights. As a result, violations often go unreported. The Office of the Language Commissioner, tasked with monitoring and promoting language rights, has faced challenges due to limited resources and inadequate enforcement authority.⁶⁶ Municipal and central government have been inconsistent in implementing the language law, resulting in unequal access to public services, information, employment, justice, and other rights for minorities.⁶⁷ Courts often failed to provide adequate translation and interpretation for minority defendants and witnesses. GoK efforts to address these problems have been inconsistent.⁶⁸ Interviews suggested that poor access to translation and timely, quality information can contribute to misinformation and feelings of marginalisation among speakers of minority languages, which, in turn, can contribute to insecurity and potentially conflict.

4.3. Strategies and Action Plans

This section examines the extent to which Kosovo's strategies and action plans pertaining to security are inclusive and gender responsive.

4.3.1. Kosovo's Action Plan on I325

WPS NAPs are considered a tool for formalising WPS principles and addressing the most pressing issues.⁶⁹ Kosovo adopted its first NAP for WPS in 2014, covering the years 2013-2015.⁷⁰ Work on the WPS NAP began in 2012, building on the 2008-2013 KPGE, which outlined objectives, policies, and actors responsible for implementing gender equality. The drafting process was generally praised for its "multi-sectoral and all-inclusive" approach including representatives from state institutions, the judiciary, and civil society.⁷¹ The NAP aimed to enhance capacities to implement UNSCR 1325; increase women's participation in the foreign service, peacebuilding, and peacekeeping operations; increase women's roles in security forces; build capacities for the promotion and leadership of women in the sector; and reduce obstacles to women's participation in security structures. The Plan included activities towards creating a legal framework for "the treatment, rehabilitation and reintegration of civil survivors of conflict/war sexual violence, torture or other forms of violence". It foresaw the documentation of cases, access to justice, psychological support, health rehabilitation, and economic empowerment. The NAP did not clearly state which institutions are responsible for budget allocations.⁷² According to AGE, 79% of the NAP's activities were implemented, and it was considered exemplary in the region at the

⁶⁴ Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo, [Law No. 02/L-37 on the Use of Languages](#), 2007.

⁶⁵ Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, "[OSCE Mission calls on Kosovo institutions to implement law on languages](#)", 2008.

⁶⁶ European Centre for Minority Issues, "[Strengthening Institutional Compliance with the Kosovo Law on the Use of Languages](#)".

⁶⁷ United States Department of State, "[2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Kosovo](#)", Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, 2024.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Nicole George & Laura J Shepherd, "[Women, peace and security: Exploring the implementation and integration of UNSCR 1325](#)", *International Political Science Review*, 2016, 37(3), 297–306.

⁷⁰ Government of the Republic of Kosovo, Action Plan in Implementation of Resolution 1325, "Women, Peace and Security", Kosovo 2013-2015, 2013.

⁷¹ Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, National Action Plans by Region, "[Kosovo](#)", n.d.

⁷² Agency for Gender Equality (AGE), Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), "[Kosovo National Action Plan for the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325: Women, Peace and Security](#)", 2014.

time.⁷³ However, the NAP lacked a detailed monitoring and evaluation process, inclusive of civil society. The NAP did not establish explicit monitoring and reporting duties, leading to ambiguities in implementation; had insufficient budget allocations, hindering progress; and had limited stakeholder analysis, which affected coordination among institutions and organisations.⁷⁴ Reflecting these challenges, a 2025 survey of women engaged in peace and security in Kosovo found mixed views on the NAP: 17% considered it neither effective nor ineffective, 17% saw it as somewhat or very effective, 5% viewed it as somewhat or very ineffective, and 7% did not know,⁷⁵ suggesting uncertainty regarding its impact. AGE's second monitoring report on the NAP identified gaps in implementing activities and the need for improved inter-institutional coordination.⁷⁶ There were difficulties collecting disaggregated data to assess the NAP's impact on different groups, including minority women.

After the NAP expired in 2015, no new NAP was drafted to replace it. Kosovo did not have a NAP from 2015 to 2020. The KPGE for 2020-2024 incorporated WPS objectives, as discussed in the next section. The GoK plans to similarly incorporate a pillar dedicated to the WPS Agenda in the 2025-2035 KPGE.⁷⁷ Its drafting has been delayed, so Kosovo did not have a NAP as of August 2025.

4.3.2. Kosovo Program on Gender Equality 2020-2024

KPGE 2020-2024 integrated some aspects of the WPS Agenda in Pillar 3: "Promoting the realization of rights in decision-making, peace, security and justice and thereby guaranteeing the achievement of gender equality".⁷⁸ This objective was to be achieved by mainstreaming a gender perspective in laws and policies, strengthening institutional mechanisms for access to justice, requiring equal participation for women and men per the LGE, establishing a safe and non-discriminatory environment for women and men in the security sector and increasing women's participation in negotiation, peace, and reconciliation processes. It also foresaw establishing an Advisory Board for WPS in security institutions.⁷⁹

The KPGE and its Action Plan focused on women's participation, the security sector, and rehabilitation of survivors of sexual violence. Broader efforts towards rehabilitation for the general population and humanitarian aid were not explicit aims. KPGE did not involve a feminist peace perspective, towards demilitarisation and women's engagement in peace processes. The Action Plan relied substantially on funding from donors, including via civil society, for implementation, rather than ensuring adequate financing from the GoK budget.

The WPS Advisory Board in security institutions has not been established.⁸⁰ Related to Pillar 3, the following KPGE activities were not implemented: undertaking affirmative measures to increase the number of women in the security sector; research on the position of women in the Kosovo Police; research on the impact of small arms on the safety of men and women; and advocacy on the inclusion of women in the negotiation, peace, and reconciliation process.

4.3.3. Rule of Law Strategy 2021-2026

This Strategy (2021) has four pillars: judicial and prosecutorial system, criminal justice, access to justice and non-judicial services, and anti-corruption.⁸¹ It requires equal participation of women and men

⁷³ Kosovo Women's Network, "[A Seat at the Table: Women's contributions to and expectations from peacebuilding processes in Kosovo](#)", 2021.

⁷⁴ Olivera Injac & Kosovar Centre for Security Studies, "[Gender and security sector in Kosovo: Implementation of the UN Resolution 1325](#)", 2015.

⁷⁵ Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace, and Security, "The Women, Peace and Security Survey", Research Report, 2025.

⁷⁶ Government of the Republic of Kosovo, OPM, AGE, "[The second monitoring report on the implementation progress of the Action Plan for the implementation of Resolution 1325 "Women, Peace and Security" 2013–2015](#)", 2016.

⁷⁷ Government of the Republic of Kosovo, OPM, "Kosovo Program for Gender Equality 2025–2035 (KPGE) Methodology and Guidelines for Drafting the KPGE", 2024.

⁷⁸ Government of the Republic of Kosovo, OPM, AGE, "[Kosovo Program on Gender Equality 2020-2024](#)", 2020, p. 64.

⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 66.

⁸⁰ Republic of Kosovo, Government, Office of the Prime Minister, Agency for Gender Equality, "[The Final Evaluation Report of the Kosovo Program for Gender Equality 2020-2024](#)", 2024, p. 82..

⁸¹ Government of the Republic of Kosovo, Ministry of Justice, "[Strategy on Rule of Law 2021-2026](#)", 2021, p. 9.

in the rule of law sector at all levels towards gender equality, strengthening institutional mechanisms, and raising people's awareness about access to justice.⁸² It emphasises that access to justice remains challenging for vulnerable groups, including women, children, the elderly, LGBTQI+ persons, and ethnic minorities.⁸³ The Strategy emphasises the importance of a secure environment for the rule of law. It outlines measures to strengthen the criminal justice system, enhance the efficiency of law enforcement, and improve coordination among security institutions to combat crime and ensure public safety. It acknowledges the significance of women's participation in peace and security processes and institutions. It proposes initiatives to promote gender equality and empower women towards peace and security.

The Strategy does not refer explicitly to UNSCR 1325, but it emphasises the importance of integrating gender perspectives in the justice system and ensuring equal access to justice, regardless of gender.⁸⁴ It observes women's low representation in judicial and law enforcement institutions,⁸⁵ but objectives do not address this. Opportunities existed for the Strategy to be more gender transformative, such as by specifying objectives to transform gender roles and improve women's access to justice.

4.3.4. National Small Arms, Light Weapons, and Explosives Control Strategy and Action Plan 2024-2028

The National Small Arms, Light Weapons (SALW) Control Strategy (2024) outlines five strategic objectives: aligning legislation with EU and international standards, adopting a comprehensive risk-based approach, strengthening institutional capacities, reducing illegal possession and misuse through awareness-raising and cooperation with civil society, and systematically destroying surpluses to prevent proliferation.⁸⁶ While it lacks direct reference to the WPS Agenda, it promotes increased participation of women and youth in SALW control efforts; aims to improve the institutional response to SALW misuse in domestic violence cases; and seeks to increase awareness through meetings with (W)CSOs.⁸⁷ While the deadline for meetings was in 2024, the Ministry of Interior does not seem to have contacted diverse* WCSOs to participate. KWN was not contacted under the previous SALW Control Strategy (2017-2021) though it explicitly mandated cooperation with KWN in awareness-raising campaigns.⁸⁸

4.3.5. Kosovo EU Accession documents

In 2015, Kosovo signed its SAA with the EU.⁸⁹ It notes that political dialogue between Kosovo and the EU is to be developed by "increasing convergence with certain measures of the EU's common foreign and security policy; effective, inclusive and representative regional cooperation and the development of good neighbourly relations in the Western Balkans; the process of normalisation of relations between Kosovo and Serbia". The SAA is not aligned with UNSCR 1325 as it does not mention the need to ensure women's representation in peace processes and political dialogue.

Kosovo has committed to reforms towards EU Accession based on the SAA. The National Programme for European Integration (NPEI) is gender mainstreamed, including measures towards improving women's rights in access to justice and under fundamental rights, mostly related to addressing gender-based violence.⁹⁰ However, Chapter 31 on Foreign, Security, and Defence Policy does not mention women related to security measures and political dialogue. Nor does *The Reform Agenda of Kosovo* include any measures related to women pertaining to peace and security.⁹¹

⁸² Ibid., p. 8.

⁸³ Ibid., p. 22.

⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 7.

⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 15.

⁸⁶ Government of the Republic of Kosovo, Ministry of Internal Affairs, [National Small Arms, Light Weapons and Explosives Control Strategy and Action Plan 2024 – 2028](#), 2024.

⁸⁷ Ibid., Specific Objective 2.7, 2.8, and 4.3, respectively.

⁸⁸ Government of the Republic of Kosovo, Ministry of Internal Affairs, [National Small Arms, Light Weapons and Explosives Control Strategy and Action Plan 2017 – 2021](#), 2016.

⁸⁹ Council of the European Union, [Stabilisation and Association Agreement between the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community, of the one part, and Kosovo*, of the other part](#), Brussels, 2015.

⁹⁰ Government of the Republic of Kosovo, OPM, [National Programme for European Integration 2024–2028](#), 2024.

⁹¹ GoK, [Reform and Growth Facility for the Western Balkans: Reform Agenda of Kosovo](#), 2024.

4.3.6. Transitional Justice Strategy 2024-2034

This Strategy states that it was developed using a comprehensive, victim-centred, and inclusive approach, as well as sensitivity to gender dynamics.⁹² The Ministry of Justice-nominated working group involved representatives from all ministries, the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), war victims, CSOs, and experts on transitional justice. Notably, AGE was not among its members. Public consultations in 2022-2023, involved 30 meetings with 465 participants from victim groups, relevant institutions, and other stakeholders of all ethnicities.⁹³ Half the participants were women.⁹⁴ Participants were asked about their knowledge of transitional justice processes, but only a few were knowledgeable.⁹⁵ CSOs contributed funds towards a “broad and inclusive” process. WCSOs were consulted but primarily at the central level. WCSOs in other municipalities did not participate due to a lack of invitation or because they lacked funding to travel to Pristina.⁹⁶ Everyone could provide feedback through the online public consultation platform. CSOs and officials described the process as inclusive, “solid”, and with a victim-centred approach.⁹⁷ The Ministry of Justice noted that it is one of the first transitional justice strategies in the region.⁹⁸

The Strategy aligns with the Constitution and international standards, including UN and EU frameworks, upholding equality, non-discrimination, and the “do no harm” principle. Goals include to: “address the crimes of gross violations of human rights, international humanitarian law and other crimes under international law, for the time period 1989-2000”.⁹⁹ Specific objective 5 aims to ensure gender-sensitive transitional justice and address gender-based violence and discrimination. Measures include ensuring women’s equal participation in dealing with the past; informing women about transitional justice; creating safe spaces for women to share experiences of conflict; preventing and responding to violence resulting from war trauma; providing specialised training to investigate sexual violence in war; promoting women’s participation in transitional justice processes; strengthening the Commission for Survivors of Sexual Violence; and other measures to support survivors. No measures explicitly seek to increase women’s engagement in the Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue.

While CSOs who participated in the process described the initial document as satisfactory, they were disappointed with the version adopted by the GoK.¹⁰⁰ Two elements not in line with transitional justice practices were in the final version. First, the Strategy covers the period of 1989 through 2000, but the initial timeframe was 1989 through Kosovo’s independence in 2008, as transitional justice practices suggest including main political changes. Second, the final document reads in “monoethnic” language, a CSO representative noted, excluding ethnic minorities’ experiences of war.

The Strategy foresees establishing a Presidential Commission for dealing with the past, to provide “fair and equal treatment of all parties affected by the war”. It should analyse events that have occurred and engage all parties affected in documenting experiences.¹⁰¹ The Commission, known as the Truth Commission or the Presidential Commission for Transitional Justice, aims to “address the legacy of the past and help peace and reconciliation”. It is expected to materialise during President Vjosa Osmani’s mandate, which ends in March 2026.¹⁰² Transitional justice experts have called for the truth commission to be an independent body to retain legitimacy among ethnic minorities, particularly K-Serbs. They also recommend for it to follow a bottom-up approach.¹⁰³

⁹² Government of the Republic of Kosovo, OPM, [Strategy on Transitional Justice 2024-2034](#), 2024.

⁹³ Ibid., p. 8. In total, 22 meetings were held with 334 Albanian participants and eight with 131 minority participants (data provided by the Ministry of Justice, 2025).

⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 14. It is unclear how many women and men were consulted by ethnicity.

⁹⁵ KWN correspondence with the Ministry of Justice, 2025.

⁹⁶ KWN interviews and focus groups with diverse women from WCOs from Gjakova and Prizren, 2025.

⁹⁷ KWN, interview with the Ministry of Justice, Department for Transitional Justice and CSOs, 2025.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Government of the Republic of Kosovo, OPM, [Strategy on Transitional Justice 2024-2034](#), 2024, p. 5.

¹⁰⁰ KWN interviews with CSO representatives, April 2025.

¹⁰¹ Government of the Republic of Kosovo, OPM, [Strategy on Transitional Justice 2024-2034](#), 2024, p. 28.

¹⁰² Serbeze Haxhijaj, “[Scepticism Surrounds Revived Truth and Reconciliation Initiative in Kosovo](#)”, BIRN, 2024.

¹⁰³ Gezim Visoka cited in Serbeze Haxhijaj, “[Scepticism Surrounds Revived Truth and Reconciliation Initiative in Kosovo](#)”, BIRN, 2024.

This is not the first presidential initiative for a truth commission; former President Thaçi initiated the establishment of a presidential truth and reconciliation commission in 2018.¹⁰⁴ This led to a normative act in 2020 that defined the mandate and responsibilities of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.¹⁰⁵ However, the process was halted following Thaçi's resignation in 2020.¹⁰⁶ Some good practices from this process were incorporated in the newly adopted Transitional Justice Strategy.¹⁰⁷ The act envisioned the Commission as an independent institution with legal subjectivity, composed of nine commissioners and reflecting "the multi-ethnic and gender" composition of Kosovo. Gender representation required that 30% of its members be of the "opposite gender", a provision that does not comply with the LGE and reflects a biased assumption that men are the dominant gender. Since work on this normative act was suspended, a new initiative to establish a Presidential Commission in line with the Strategy on Transitional Justice began. Progress establishing the Commission and implementing other objectives in the Strategy is unclear, as no monitoring report has been published. The Department for Transitional Justice in the Ministry of Justice since 2020 is responsible for coordinating the Strategy's implementation. Although it planned meetings with civil society, these have been irregular.¹⁰⁸

4.3.7. Kosovo Security Strategy 2022-2027

The Strategy (2022) plans to invest in human, financial, and infrastructure resources for early warning systems to prevent and manage crises in health, energy, and environment.¹⁰⁹ It is unclear whether the Strategy involved adequate public consultations, including with AGE, Gender Equality Officers (GEOs), and WCSOs. The Strategy does not refer to gender-responsive security, and it is not gender mainstreamed. Its conceptualisation of national security does not attend to how women and men of diverse ethnicities may perceive security differently and have different human security needs, including threats related to digital transformation. The Strategy could have better attended to human security: while national security focuses on the security of the state and its borders, human security attends to individual and non-military threats such as social, economic, and environmental security.¹¹⁰

The Strategy states that the Secretariat of the Kosovo Security Council has the responsibility to draft an annual report on the Strategy's implementation, based on a "detailed matrix" for monitoring implementation.¹¹¹ KWN could not find any action plan published yet. Therefore, the gender-responsiveness of outcomes, indicators, baselines, targets, and budget could not be assessed.

4.4. Conclusion

- Successive UN resolutions emphasise the importance of engaging women in peace processes, incorporating gender perspectives in peacebuilding, and addressing sexual violence in conflict, including addressing survivors' needs and ensuring robust accountability mechanisms. The EU encourages alignment with these goals. Kosovo has expressed its commitment to UN resolutions and EU Accession, including SDGs, but tangible progress remains insufficient. The Constitution enshrines gender equality and human rights but lacks provisions on WPS.
- The Law on the Status and Rights of War Victims has provisions for sexual violence survivors, but the five-year deadline for applications and limited scope that excludes victims after 1999 are contentious and require amendment.
- The Law on the KSF needs to ensure equal participation of women and consultations with (W)CSOs in developing national security strategies, per the LGE.
- Electoral laws do not align with the LGE and WPS Agenda aims towards women's participation.

¹⁰⁴ Serbeze Haxhijaj, "[Scepticism Surrounds Revived Truth and Reconciliation Initiative in Kosovo](#)", BIRN, 2024.

¹⁰⁵ President of the Republic of Kosovo, [Draft Normative Act No. Xx/2020 on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission](#), 2020.

¹⁰⁶ Serbeze Haxhijaj, "[Is There a Future for the Kosovo War Truth Commission?](#)", BIRN, 2022.

¹⁰⁷ KWN interview with Ministry of Justice officials, 2025.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Republic of Kosovo, Government, OPM, [Kosovo Security Strategy 2022-2027](#), 2022.

¹¹⁰ S. N. MacFarlane and Y. F. Khong, *Human security and the UN: a critical history*, Indiana University Press: 2006, p. 12.

¹¹¹ Government of the Republic of Kosovo, OPM, [Kosovo Security Strategy 2022-2027](#), 2022, p. 22.

- Following the Kosovo Action Plan on UNSCR 1325 2013-2015, no replacement was created. The KPGE 2020-2024 only referenced WPS, and seemingly had limited implementation. In 2025, Kosovo lacked a NAP.
- The Rule of Law Strategy mentions gender equality but does not include targets for increasing women's participation in judicial and law enforcement sectors.
- EU Accession-related documents (i.e., SAA and NPEI) insufficiently address women's roles in peace and security processes.
- The Strategy on Transitional Justice mentions gender-sensitive transitional justice but focuses on awareness-raising rather than structural challenges to women's participation. It insufficiently addresses ethnic minorities' expressed priorities. Adequate budget and monitoring mechanisms have been lacking, including clear, measurable targets.

5. Situation Analysis

This section provides a brief gender analysis of the general situation in Kosovo as relevant to peace and security, examining women's participation in education, the economy, media, politics, and decision-making. It discusses gender roles and challenges faced by LGBTQI+ persons. Such gender analysis is relevant to a comprehensive approach to security. It responds to the research sub-question: to what extent do diverse* women have political, economic, and/or legal power to participate in furthering peace?

5.1. Education and Security

Generally, girls and boys attend preschool, primary, and secondary education at similar levels, though boys slightly outnumber girls (Table 1).¹¹² More women are enrolled in bachelor's, master's, and PhD programs than men. More than 95% of students in pre-university education are Albanian,¹¹³ which is higher than their estimated share of the population (91%).¹¹⁴ No official data is disaggregated by ethnicity and gender, but studies indicate that Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian girls face added barriers to accessing education.

Education Level	Students	Boys	Girls
Pre-school	5,420	52%	48%
Pre-primary	18,946	51%	49%
Primary and lower secondary	212,967	51%	49%
Upper secondary	63,029	50.5%	49.5%

Kosovo schools have two official languages: Albanian and Serbian. Pre-university education follows the Kosovo Curriculum Framework (2016) developed by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST). Schools can offer education in Serbian, using curricula developed by Serbia, subject to approval by MEST. Schools in Serbian communities tend to use the Serbian language.¹¹⁵ Serbia controls Serbian-language education in Kosovo through a parallel system run by its Ministry of Education; schools operate in six districts without coordination with Kosovo's institutions.¹¹⁶ Segregation of students of different ethnicities and the different curricula taught can hinder interactions and thus potential for peacebuilding.

Poor access to education can undermine employment and diverse* women and men's ability to engage in decision-making processes. Research suggests that youth unemployment and political violence are positively related, especially among men; unemployed youth who have higher levels of education have high opportunity costs to engage in conflict, whereas unemployed youth with lower levels of education have lower opportunity costs.¹¹⁷ Low levels of education coupled with unemployment and

¹¹² Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation (MESTI), [Statistics 2022/2023](#), 2023.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Kosovo Agency of Statistics (KAS), [Population and Housing Census in Kosovo](#), 2024.

¹¹⁵ Sabiha Shala, et al., "[The non-majority communities' rights in Kosovo: implementation of the right to employment and education](#)", *Journal of Liberty and International Affairs*, 9(2), 531-549, 2020, p. 535.

¹¹⁶ ECMI, "[Education in Serbian Language in Kosovo](#)", 2018.

¹¹⁷ Therese F. Azeng & Thierry U. Yogo, "[Youth Unemployment, Education and Political Instability: Evidence from Selected Developing Countries 1991-2009](#)", 2015, pp. 4, 13.

inequalities can contribute to political violence, whereas increasing education among men results in less political violence. According to a 2024 opinion poll, men of all ethnicities in Kosovo, except Turks and Egyptians, are more likely than women to join protests because of the political situation and thus may be more susceptible to engaging in protests that could turn violent.¹¹⁸ Notably, men ages 35-44 are the most likely to report willingness to join such protests (45%), followed by those ages 25-34 (41%) and men under 24 (37%).

5.2. Employment and Security

In 2023, men had a significantly higher employment rate (53%) than women (20%).¹¹⁹ Among women ages 15-24 the employment rate was 12%, while it was 25% for men this age. Higher education was interlinked with employment with 76% of highly educated men and 60% of highly educated women being employed.¹²⁰ Women were more likely to work as unpaid family workers in service and sales roles (38% compared to 26% of men).¹²¹ The Kosovo Agency of Statistics (KAS) does not publish Labour Force Survey data by gender and ethnicity or geographic location. Other research suggests that ethnic minorities are more prone to informal work, especially K-Serbs.¹²² Informality, especially in northern municipalities, contributes to vulnerabilities, limiting access to rights like pensions.¹²³ Transitioning from an informal to a formal economy is crucial for peace and social cohesion.¹²⁴ Employment can provide women with resources and autonomy, enabling more independent decision-making and enhanced political engagement. Unequal care responsibilities and limited employment, exacerbated by legal barriers to employment, property ownership, and access to credit,¹²⁵ can hinder women's ability to engage in peacebuilding processes.¹²⁶ Some participants noted that even when women's economic initiatives are supported, entrenched social norms, such as men being seen as household heads, can limit impact. One participant shared an example of a business formally registered in the woman's name but effectively controlled by her husband, underscoring the need for careful monitoring of initiatives aimed at supporting women, toward making sure that funds reach the target.

5.3. Women's Participation in Decision-making on Security

Women's participation is a key component of the WPS Agenda. This section examines diverse* women's engagement in decision-making in their households, communities, politics, and the Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue, considering differences in women's participation based on age, ethnicity, geographic location and disability. It considers issues affecting women's participation.

Despite the LGE's commitment to equal participation (50%) of women and men,¹²⁷ women remain underrepresented, particularly in decision-making roles. While the quota in electoral laws for at least 30% participation of each gender has contributed to women's increased participation in municipal and national levels, women are not equally represented. From 37 women members of parliament (MPs) in 2007, the number increased to 44 in 2021. While 26 entered parliament due to the quota in 2007, only nine did in 2021, suggesting that the quota has contributed to more women being elected.

In the 2021-2025 mandate, which concluded in February 2025, two of three Deputy Prime Ministers were women, including one K-Bosnian. Women led five of 15 ministries, increasing from 19% to 33%.¹²⁸ Women's representation in decision-making across the GoK varied, but overall women were

¹¹⁸ Based on raw data shared by UNDP from the UNDP/USAID, "Public Pulse Brief XXVI", 2024.

¹¹⁹ KAS, [Labour Force Survey 2023](#), 2024, p. 16.

¹²⁰ Ibid., p. 17.

¹²¹ Ibid., p. 19.

¹²² KWN, "[In the Shadows: A Gender Analysis of Informal Work in Kosovo](#)", 2024, p. 15.

¹²³ Ibid., p. 105.

¹²⁴ International Labour Organization (ILO), "Informal Economy", para. 3.

¹²⁵ UN Women, "[Kosovo Gender Country Profile](#)", 2024.

¹²⁶ Katharine M Christopherson Puh, et al., "[Tackling Legal Impediments to Women's Economic Empowerment](#)", IMF Working Papers, 2022, para. 15.

¹²⁷ Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo, [Law No. 05/L-020 on Gender Equality](#), Article 6.

¹²⁸ UN Women, "[Kosovo Gender Country Profile](#)", 2024, p. 61-62.

underrepresented, including in diplomatic missions where they held 21-25% of 45-52 positions.¹²⁹ Women have been largely absent from the Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue, particularly in decision-making positions.¹³⁰ Thus, the needs of diverse* women have not been meaningfully addressed in the Dialogue. The lack of a clear process also has undermined both women and men's ability to engage.¹³¹ Failures to address citizens' concerns via the Dialogue risk enabling renewed conflict.

In the 2021 municipal elections, only two women (both K-Serbs) were elected among the 38 mayors (5%).¹³² Women have continually held approximately one-third of municipal assembly seats, largely due to the gender quota. In 2021, 36% of 1,002 electoral candidates were women.¹³³ Within municipal directorates, women held 24% of official positions across 30 municipalities.¹³⁴ An Ashkali, Egyptian, and disabled woman, respectively, were elected to municipal assemblies, marking a modest increase in their representation. Meanwhile, WCSO activists across various ethnic groups and (dis)abilities voiced concerns that women in politics did not necessarily advocate women's interests, rights, or gender equality.¹³⁵ K-Serbs face added challenges with participation; while the Serbian List (SL) once participated in ruling coalitions and voiced K-Serbs' priorities, it has been politically isolated since Kosovo's 2025 elections. Some suggest this is a result of the 2024 Banjska attack,¹³⁶ for which former SL deputy leader Milan Radoičić claimed responsibility. This and the withdrawal of K-Serbs from Kosovo institutions has contributed to underrepresentation of K-Serbs' interests, including women's interests.¹³⁷

A recurring concern among research participants was that political parties, predominantly led by men, continue to exert control over deputies and the issues that are raised, prioritised, and addressed.¹³⁸ A participant stated: "Political parties, including those that represent the Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian community, often fail to adequately prioritise the needs of Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian women. Their issues are sidelined in broader political agendas." Another participant agreed, stating: "Male leaders consider women only as a number to meet the quota, leaving no space for their actual representation in decision-making." A common theme among K-Serb women was that limited capacity among K-Albanian and K-Serb officials leaves them poorly equipped to meet the diverse needs of citizens. Recurrently, participants perceived that women MPs failed to advocate women's needs and priorities.

To serve in the GoK or civil service, K-Serbs, Gorani, Roma, and Bosnians historically faced added challenges due to the GoK's non-recognition of diplomas from secondary schools supported by Serbia in Kosovo.¹³⁹ In 2011, the GoK and Government of Serbia (GoS) reached an agreement to recognise each other's educational qualifications, renewed in 2020.¹⁴⁰ The diploma review process reportedly still has been a barrier when applying for government jobs.¹⁴¹

Several factors contribute to women's underrepresentation in decision-making. First, research participants recurrently pointed to patriarchal social norms in families and communities, which extend into political parties and institutions, largely dominated by men. Social norms affect diverse* women differently, depending on gender identity, location, ethnicity, education, and economic status. For example, Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian women tend to face disproportionate challenges. The average age of marriage is 15-16 years.¹⁴² Limited access to basic rights and services like education and healthcare,

¹²⁹ Ibid., p. 70.

¹³⁰ Ibid., p. 73.

¹³¹ KWN interview.

¹³² UN Women, "[Kosovo Gender Country Profile](#)", 2024, p. 61-62.

¹³³ KWN calculation extracted from the Central Election Commission, "[Results of Candidates Selected by Subjects](#)", 2021.

¹³⁴ UN Women, "[Kosovo Gender Country Profile](#)", 2024, p. 63.

¹³⁵ KWN focus groups and interviews 2025.

¹³⁶ On 24 September 2023, a group of armed ethnic Serbs attacked a Kosovo police patrol in Banjska village, resulting in the death of one officer and the injury of another; the attackers subsequently barricaded themselves in a Serbian Orthodox monastery. Kosovo Prime Minister Albin Kurti called the assault a terrorist act and accused Serbia of supporting it, escalating tensions (Fatos Bytyci & Daria Sito-sucic, "[Serb gunmen battle police in Kosovo monastery siege; four dead](#)", 2023, Reuters).

¹³⁷ Oralinfo, "[Serbian List Out of the Game: How will the interests of Serbs in Kosovo be protected?](#)", 2025.

¹³⁸ KWN interviews and focus groups, 2025.

¹³⁹ Valerie Hopkins, "[Degrees Collect Dust as Diploma War Persists](#)", Prishtina Insight, 2015.

¹⁴⁰ The Dialogue, "[Recognition of Diplomas](#)", 2020.

¹⁴¹ KWN interviews, 2025.

¹⁴² See KCGS & RROGRAEK, "[Position of Roman, Ashkali and Egyptian Women in Kosovo](#)", 2018.

combined with entrenched gender norms, hinders their participation. A Roma participant observed: “Male family members tend to decide on the roles of women in the Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian community.” Women with disabilities and rural women face added challenges, including transportation to attend meetings. For K-Albanian women who experienced sexual violence during the war, stigma continues to hinder equal participation in education, paid labour, and thus decision-making. Meanwhile, some K-Serb women hesitate to engage in politics due to fears of threats.¹⁴³ Research participants felt that meaningful participation of women in decision-making, the security sector, and peacebuilding processes, such as the Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue, is limited due to patriarchal norms embedded in communities, political parties, and public institutions.

5.4. Women’s Participation in the Security Sector

In the Kosovo Police, women are underrepresented. In 2024, among 333 officers in northern Kosovo, K-Albanians made up 57%, K-Serbs 20%, Bosnians 13%, and others 10%; women comprised only 13.8%.¹⁴⁴ K-Serb women have faced barriers joining the Kosovo Police due to inflexible working hours, insecurity, concern of betraying their community, and/or fear of threats.¹⁴⁵ UN resolutions and research suggest that increasing women’s participation in the Kosovo Police could help build trust in the institution.¹⁴⁶ In the Kosovo Police Inspectorate, 72% of staff are men (60). Of all 83, 94% are K-Albanian, 4% are K-Serb, and 2% K-Bosnians.¹⁴⁷ Data were unavailable by ethnicity and gender.

In KSF, women remain underrepresented, comprising 9% of the military.¹⁴⁸ Only 4% of all KSF troops are of non-majority ethnicities, despite a 10% representation quota. Women represent 7% of officers and 13% of non-commissioned officers and soldiers.¹⁴⁹ The highest rank held by a woman in uniform in KSF is Major General (second highest after commander). Social norms and gender roles remain a key barrier to women’s engagement in KSF. Research participants noted that social pressures have diminished with time. However, gender roles, particularly responsibilities such as childcare, limit women’s opportunities to pursue higher ranks because they must be away from home for extended periods for required intensive training.¹⁵⁰ A Ministry of Defense representative explained, “[I]f you do not attend these trainings, you cannot advance. This has been ... a significant challenge.” Women who advanced often did so with support from their families who shared caregiving. Some K-Serb women said the added challenge of prejudice from other K-Serbs hindered their participation. An official observed: “Serb women who express interest in joining KSF might face opposition from their communities, which may see their involvement as disloyal... to their ethnic identity”.¹⁵¹ Officials emphasised that boosting the number of women in KSF empowers women and strengthens the military; thus they are working to recruit more women and minorities via mobile teams, media, social platforms, and outreach to schools.¹⁵² In March 2019, the Ministry of Defense adopted a Human Rights and Gender Equality Policy, which aligns with UNSCR 1325 and the Strategy for Sustainable Integration of Non-Majority Communities (2021-2025); it aims to increase gender and diverse ethnic representation, promote women in decision-making roles, and develop training on human rights and gender equality.¹⁵³ Principles include gender equality, sensitivity to gender-specific needs, diversity, respect, non-discrimination, and zero tolerance for violence against women.

¹⁴³ KWN interviews and focus groups, 2025.

¹⁴⁴ KWN, data request to the Kosovo Police, 2025.

¹⁴⁵ KWN interviews, 2025; Balkan Insight, “[Political Tensions Test Unity of Kosovo’s Police Force](#)”, 2025, para. 24.

¹⁴⁶ KWN, “[A Seat at the Table: Women’s contributions to and expectations from peacebuilding processes in Kosovo](#)”, 2021, p. 69.

¹⁴⁷ Data received from the Kosovo Police Inspectorate through a formal request, 2025.

¹⁴⁸ KWN interview with a KSF representative, 2025.

¹⁴⁹ KWN e-mail correspondence with KSF, 2025.

¹⁵⁰ KWN interview with an official from the Ministry of Defence, 2025.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Email correspondence with KWN, 2025.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

5.5. Media and Security

Kosovo's media landscape faces challenges, recently compounded by a sharp decline in press freedom.¹⁵⁴ Politicised regulation, gag lawsuits, limited access to public information, and threats to journalists have been cited as key concerns.¹⁵⁵ The Law on the Independent Media Commission (IMC) has been criticised for increasing authorities' control over media by expanding IMC board members' terms, allowing the Parliament to dismiss the board, and removing the gender equity clause that required at least two women on the board.¹⁵⁶ The latter violates the LGE and deepens concerns about representation; media fail to adequately represent women, children, minorities, and marginalised groups, often focusing on limited topics like domestic violence and treating LGBTQI+ issues unprofessionally.¹⁵⁷ In a 2024 opinion poll, 85% of respondents believed politicians influence media.¹⁵⁸ Independent Serbian language media are in a particularly difficult position; reliance on project funding undermines long-term stability and forces media to tailor content to donor priorities.¹⁵⁹ Private media outlets are dependent on sponsors and advertising, leaving non-majority community media especially vulnerable.¹⁶⁰

Despite editorial teams often having more gender balance, media owners tend to be men.¹⁶¹ Outlets like QIKA, Grazeta, and Dylberizmi provide coverage on women's rights, LGBTQI+ issues, gender-based violence, and femicide, often overlooked by mainstream media.¹⁶² Although women journalists are steered towards entertainment, lifestyle, education, and human-interest stories, they are often assigned to report from conflict and high-risk zones.¹⁶³ Meanwhile, their male colleagues are more likely to host live TV shows, affording them visibility and perceived prestige from the safety of a studio.¹⁶⁴ Misogyny remains a significant issue, with women, especially in leadership positions, frequently subjected to biased or sexist language that hinders their political engagement.¹⁶⁵ Public opinion research in 2021 found that 38% of citizens believed violence against women hinders their political participation.¹⁶⁶ Meanwhile, 33% of men and 42% of women believed media portrayals hinder women's electoral success.¹⁶⁷ In addition, 25% of K-Serbs and 36% of K-Albanians believed online harassment discourages women's political participation. Female candidates often receive less support than male candidates with major broadcasters dedicating only 10% of their coverage to women candidates in election campaigns, exacerbating gender disparities in political representation.¹⁶⁸ These factors all can hamper women's political participation and representation, particularly that of minority women.

5.6. Gender Roles' Impacts on Women's Participation in Peace Processes

Within households, in 2021, 8% of Kosovars believed that women do not have the right to be elected in high political decision-making positions.¹⁶⁹ Fewer women than men believed women have

¹⁵⁴ Kosovo saw the steepest drop in the Balkans, falling from 75th to 99th (Reporters without Borders, "[2025 World Press Freedom Index](#)", 2025).

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ Marusic, S., "[RSF Report: Media Freedom Tumbling in Most Balkan Countries](#)", Balkan Insight, 2025; Media Freedom Rapid Response, "[Kosovo's media law enables political capture of media regulatory body](#)", 2025.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ UNDP/USAID, "[Public Pulse Brief XXVI](#)", 2024.

¹⁵⁹ Human Rights Watch, "[A Difficult Profession: Media Freedom Under Attack in the Western Balkans](#)", 2015, para. 19-27.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Media Freedom Rapid Response, "[Kosovo's media law enables political capture of media regulatory body](#)", 2025, p. 7.

¹⁶² Ibid., p. 13.

¹⁶³ Getoarë Mulliqi & Artiola Babuni, "[Position and Safety of Women Journalists Kosovo](#)", 2025, Network of Women Journalists of Kosova.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid; National Democratic Institute (NDI), "[Information Integrity in Kosovo: Assessment of the Political Economy of Disinformation](#)", 2022. Research included three polls with face-to-face interviews with respondents over age 18 and youth ages 16-29. The random sample was stratified by region, settlement type, gender, and ethnicity. The 2021 poll had 1,700 respondents, the 2022 poll had 1,200, and the youth poll in 2021 surveyed 3,100 respondents, focusing on minorities.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 28.

¹⁶⁸ European Union Election Observation Mission, "[Kosovo Legislative Elections Final Report](#)", 2017.

¹⁶⁹ KCGS, "[2021 Public Perceptions of Gender Equality and Violence against Women](#)", 2021, p. 17. The sample involved 978 interviews including oversampling of ethnic minorities.

equal legal rights in most areas, except child custody and access to credit.¹⁷⁰ Specifically, 15% of Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptians and 9% of K-Serbs thought that women cannot hold decision-making positions.¹⁷¹ Further, 8% of Kosovars believed that women and girls should be taught to be “good wives and care for domestic work”; and if women focus on their careers, it can negatively affect the family.¹⁷² Women often work in unpaid care work and the informal economy, comprising 65% of the 13% of persons engaged in informal work.¹⁷³ Gender roles, care responsibilities, and informal work can hinder women’s engagement in decision-making, including peace processes, due to insufficient time and social pressure.

5.7. LGBTQI+ Persons and Security

LGBTQI+ individuals face added challenges to engaging in decision-making. As an illustration, in 2024, an MP Human Rights Committee member stated that “sexual relations between people of the same sex cause serious diseases”, but she did not face consequences for homophobic stances, despite CSO reactions.¹⁷⁴ A Ministry of Justice official called for decapitating LGBTI persons but was detained for only 48 hours.¹⁷⁵ Legislation uses language that reinforces the heteronormative formulation of gender, limited to “husband and wife” or “man and woman”.¹⁷⁶ Further, LGBTQI+ persons face risks to their physical security. For example, in the 2023 “EbuUbejdi” case, a person allegedly planned a terrorist attack against the LGBTQI+ persons in Pristina; in 2024, he was sentenced to prison.¹⁷⁷ Political parties often refuse to talk about LGBTQI+ rights in hopes of not being associated with them, aspiring to gain votes.¹⁷⁸ A candidate party in the 2025 Kosovo Elections, the “Family Coalition”, called “love between LGBTI people” a “shame”, “against human nature”, and “not in the general interest of society”. The Electoral Panel for Complaints and Submissions imposed a €5,000 fine.¹⁷⁹ Even so, when public officials and politicians use intolerant language, it can encourage others to act in hateful ways without fear of consequences.¹⁸⁰ Using LGBTQI+ individuals as political targets negatively impacts their lives and wellbeing while weakening social cohesion and potentially contributing to violence.

5.8. Conclusion

- Several political, economic, and legal challenges exist to women’s engagement in furthering peace, including electoral laws that do not provide for women’s equal participation in parliament and government as per the LGE and a Labour Law that contributes to discrimination against women in hiring; unequal economic opportunities resulting from women’s underrepresentation in the labour force, including in political positions; and male-lead political leadership that has ostracised women.
- Socialised gender roles contribute to women’s underrepresentation in employment, quality media coverage, and politics, undermining their engagement in decision-making and peace processes.
- Socialised gender roles for young men to be breadwinners can add fuel to fire when men cannot find employment and face frustrations.
- Transforming gender roles can undo socialised assumptions of women’s and men’s roles, increasing women’s engagement and decreasing potential for men to engage in violence.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 18.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., p. 21.

¹⁷² Ibid., p. 25.

¹⁷³ KWN, “[In the Shadows: A Gender Analysis of Informal Work in Kosovo](#)”, 2024, p. 99.

¹⁷⁴ Nokaj, D., “[The human rights committee must not harbor homophobia](#)”, Kosovo 2.0., 2024.

¹⁷⁵ KOHA Chronicle, “[The official who threatened the LGBT community is detained for 48 hours](#)”, 2019.

¹⁷⁶ Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo, [Law No. 2004/32 Family Law of Kosovo](#), 2006, Part II, c. I, Articles 9 and 14.

¹⁷⁷ Center for Social Group Development (CSGD), “[Annual Report 2023: The LGBTQI+ individuals and their rights in Kosovo](#)”, 2024, p. 12.

¹⁷⁸ CSGD, “[LGBTI and Politics Advocacy Brief](#)”, 2022, p. 3.

¹⁷⁹ Centre for Equality and Liberty of the LGBT community in Kosova (CEL), “[EPCS once again fines the Family Coalition with 5,000 euros for inciting anti-LGBTI+ hatred](#)”, 2025.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 5.

6. Causes and Consequences of Conflict: A Gender Perspective

This section first summarises perceptions of security. It then examines causes and consequences of conflict for diverse* individuals. It discusses possible triggers of violence, including gender-related causes of instability. The section also examines how power relations among diverse* women and men may affect conflict and its effects. It draws from existing literature, survey data, focus groups, and KIs.

6.1. Views towards Peace, Security, and Conflict

Survey data illustrate a rise in negative perceptions of the security situation among K-Serbs.¹⁸¹ K-Serbs feel less safe than K-Albanians. In 2023, 21% of K-Albanians cited the lack of reconciliation with Serbia as a primary threat to peace and security.¹⁸² Meanwhile, 30% of K-Serbs pointed to unemployment and 19% to interethnic relations as top concerns.¹⁸³ In contrast, only 4% of K-Albanians viewed interethnic relations as a significant threat.¹⁸⁴ In 2024, Kosovars generally felt more safe from street crime and violence, with 83% reporting that they felt very or somewhat safe (increasing from 80% in 2023).¹⁸⁵ Slightly more men (83.4%) reported feeling safe than women (82.9%). However, ethnic differences exist. A higher proportion of K-Albanians (85%) and other ethnic groups (83%) reported feeling safe than K-Serbs (32%). Since November 2023, the perception of safety rose by 4.5 percentage points among K-Albanians and by 3.2 points among persons of other ethnicities, while the proportion of K-Serbs feeling safe dropped by 5.7 percentage points.¹⁸⁶ In 2024, CSO Aktiv found a significant decline in perceived security among K-Serbs, reaching the lowest in five years.¹⁸⁷ Most in northern (67%) and several in southern (34%) Kosovo viewed the security situation as “very bad”, while fewer than 3% in the north and 5% in the south considered it “good”.¹⁸⁸ Kosovo lacks gender-disaggregated data on how women and men view security.

Literature and research participants illustrate that conflict cannot be understood as a single historical event, but rather as a continuous experience of violence and insecurity. Participants indicated that the “end” of the war or conflict is not a clearly defined or agreed moment. Rather, conflict is broadly perceived as ongoing in Kosovo. For K-Albanians, insecurity continues in the absence of justice for perpetrators, including of sexual violence, an apology from GoS, and a lasting political solution for Kosovo as a state. For K-Serbs, conflict continues with the closure of public services and fear of sexual harassment and violence targeting young women. All ethnicities remain concerned about missing persons and violent incidents. Perceptions and experiences of conflict influence individuals’ willingness and ability to participate in peace processes. Therefore, this analysis addresses not only the legacy of past conflicts but also the continuation of conflict. Feminist scholars have long argued that women’s experiences of insecurity often persist in the absence of “war”.¹⁸⁹ Earlier research in Kosovo supports this, showing that perceptions of peace and security vary across gender and age.¹⁹⁰ For instance, while older women tend to view peace as the absence of war, young women often associate peace and security with practical,

¹⁸¹ NGO Aktiv, “[Unmasking Security Challenges Within the Kosovo Serb Community](#)”, 2023.

¹⁸² Shpat Balaj & Gramos Sejdiu, “[What Are the Kosovo Citizens’ Perceptions on Inter-Ethnic Relations? Fostering Inter-Ethnic Relations and Reconciliation Survey Results](#)”, 2022, KCSS.

¹⁸³ The methodology involved face-to-face interviews with 1,226 randomly selected respondents in nine multi-ethnic municipalities in 2022. The sample was stratified towards proportional representation by K-Albanians (729) and K-Serbs (497), rural-urban residency (60% rural, 40% urban), and gender (51% male, 49% female).

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 5.

¹⁸⁵ UNDP/USAID, “[Public Pulse Brief XXVI](#)”, 2024, p. 10.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 10.

¹⁸⁷ NGO Aktiv, “[Trend Analysis 2024](#)”, 2024. Research involved field surveys between June and December 2024 with a sample of 503 respondents, including 49% from the north and 51% from Serb-majority municipalities south of the Ibar River. The sample included 49% male and 51% female respondents.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 18.

¹⁸⁹ Jacqui True, “Continuums of Violence and Peace: A Feminist Perspective”, *Ethics & International Affairs*, 2020; Ulrike Krause, “A continuum of violence? Linking sexual and gender-based violence during conflict, flight, and encampment”, *Refugee Survey Quarterly*, 34(4), p. 1–19, 2015.

¹⁹⁰ KWN, “[A Seat at the Table: Women’s contributions to and expectations from peacebuilding processes in Kosovo](#)”, 2021, p. 47.

everyday needs such as adequate street lighting, freedom from sexual harassment, employment opportunities, and access to healthcare.

6.2. Consequences of Conflict

In addition to consequences outlined in the [Background](#) section, conflict disrupts public services and infrastructure, affecting women, men, and other genders differently. Women, especially those in rural areas, face disproportionate challenges in accessing essential services such as healthcare and transportation. Women with disabilities, already affected by hostile attitudes and social exclusion, face barriers due to inaccessible infrastructure and buildings. These limitations restrict their access to education, employment opportunities, and financial independence. Due to established gender roles, women are more likely than men to experience inequalities in property ownership, economic independence, access to transportation, and participation in decision-making. Gender roles also affect the ways in which women, men, and non-binary people experience conflict or violence; women are often a target of sexualised violence while men are disproportionately targeted by police and military, accounting for most casualties; a growing literature illustrates that men and persons of other gender identities experience sexual violence as well.¹⁹¹ Women and LGBTQI+ individuals are disproportionately impacted compared to their participation in conflict.¹⁹²

Gender-based violence was mentioned as a major unresolved legacy of war, aggravated by trauma, stigma, and institutional neglect, especially for survivors of sexual violence. Research has shown that war-related trauma can be transmitted across generations with children of survivors, especially those whose parents have post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), more likely to experience PTSD symptoms despite being born after the war; further, they often report lower levels of perceived social support than their parents.¹⁹³ Untreated trauma among men was hypothesised to contribute to gender-based violence against women in private spaces. Post-traumatic stress among men ex-combatants who return home powerless and unemployed may link to violence in domestic relationships.¹⁹⁴ Yet, research has struggled to find any such causal relationship, and feminist literature has attributed violence more to gender norms and power relations than conflict.¹⁹⁵

After the war, security threats in public and private spaces remained prevalent, impacting women and men differently. Interviews suggest that the collapse of public services particularly contributed to insecurities in terms of health, wellbeing, and public participation for people with disabilities, especially for women and ethnic minorities like K-Serb, Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian women who faced multiple, intersectional challenges. Lack of transport, adequate healthcare, education, economic opportunities, and support for essential accessibility needs for people with disabilities, especially Roma, Ashkali, Egyptian, and K-Serb people with disabilities, have left them facing layered discrimination, segregation, and neglect.¹⁹⁶ The discontinued use of the Serbian Dinar and the closure of Serbian institutions in Kosovo has contributed to consequences for most K-Serbs but particularly the elderly and especially women who face added challenges accessing public services due to limited financial resources and transportation. It has also affected youth, as students at the University of

“[In the north of Kosovo] essential services are lacking. For example, there is no place for a Serbian woman to give birth. They have difficulty getting services. In the north, there are cases where the police deliberately answer the phone in Albanian, or they harass girls. It also happens here (in the south), but it is very scary there.”

– WCSO

¹⁹¹ Henri Myrtilinen, “[Disarming masculinities](#)”, Disarmament Forum; Women, Men, Peace, and Security, 2006.

¹⁹² Ray Acheson, “Gender-based violence and the arms trade”, *Global Responsibility to Protect*, 12(2), 139–155, 2020.

¹⁹³ Zamira Hyseni Duraku, Genta Jahiu, & Donjeta Geci, “[Intergenerational Trauma and War-Induced PTSD in Kosovo: Insights from the Albanian Ethnic Group](#)”, *Frontiers in Psychology*, 14, 2023.

¹⁹⁴ Mimoza Shahini, & Merita Shala, “[Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder in Kosovo Veterans](#)”, 2016.

¹⁹⁵ Andrea García-González, “[Feminist perspectives on peacebuilding and reconciliation](#)”, 2016.

¹⁹⁶ KWN interviews and focus group.

Pristina in North Mitrovica can no longer access loans and scholarships.¹⁹⁷ The closing of Serbian institutions occurred without adequate public consultations to prepare communities, contributing to perceptions of “forced assimilation” rather than fostering gradual, voluntary, and/or sustainable integration. Fear of conflict contributes to feelings of insecurity and decreased participation in public life, particularly for K-Serb women concerned about sexual violence and men fearing possible imprisonment or violence.

The polarised political situation has affected interethnic cooperation. A young woman observed, “The rhetoric of people who were previously part of multi-ethnic cooperation has changed, with regards to how they speak about the other community. [T]hey have been brainwashed.”¹⁹⁸ Reportedly, some WCSOs in the north have stopped collaborating with those in the south, driven by fears that such collaboration could jeopardise their or their families’ security.¹⁹⁹

According to 2025 survey data, 22% of women peace activists in Kosovo reported experiencing online violence or threats of violence due to their efforts. The unravelling of decades of work towards furthering peace has contributed to activist burnout with some reporting fatigue (22%), worsening mental health (17%), and secondary trauma (15%) as negative results of their work.²⁰⁰ Activist burnout could shrink peacebuilding efforts, given their historical leadership in such work.

6.3. Causes and Risks of Violent Conflict

More than two decades since the 1998-1999 war, Kosovo still faces a fragile situation that some participants described as a continuum of conflict. Recurrently mentioned triggers of conflict were politics, nationalism, lack of justice, untreated trauma, poor communication, and a failure to deal with the past.²⁰¹

Generally, transitional justice mechanisms have had a weak gender perspective. Despite improvements in the 2000s, an intersectional approach has remained largely absent, and efforts to address human rights abuses against women and individuals of other gender identities have been insufficient.²⁰² Neither Serbia’s nor Kosovo’s justice systems have provided adequate justice for victims of war, including primarily male civilian victims of war and female survivors of sexual violence. They have made only limited progress in transitional justice,²⁰³ which generally involves accountability through criminal prosecutions, truth-seeking processes, reparative measures, and preventive actions, referred to as guarantees of non-repetition.²⁰⁴ These have been insufficiently implemented in Kosovo, particularly from a gender perspective.²⁰⁵ Former Kosovo President Thaçi was indicted in 2020 by a special international prosecutor in The Hague for war crimes and crimes against humanity, including nearly 100 murders, related to his role in the KLA during the 1998-1999 conflict.²⁰⁶ Thaçi denied the charges.²⁰⁷ In 2023, criminal proceedings related to war crimes against civilians were initiated or ongoing in 26 cases, involving 81 members of Serbian forces and one KLA member.²⁰⁸ As of February 2025, 15 indictments had been filed against 73 members of Serbian forces accused of war crimes in Kosovo. Legal amendments made between 2019 and 2022 enabled the use of trials in absentia, culminating in the 2022 Criminal

¹⁹⁷ Kosovo Online, “[Students from Kosovo: The situation is becoming increasingly difficult, we can't even imagine what lies ahead](#)”, 2024.

¹⁹⁸ KWN focus group with young women, 2025.

¹⁹⁹ KWN interview with a representative of a WCSO working on economic empowerment, 2025.

²⁰⁰ Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security, “The Women, Peace and Security Survey”, 2025.

²⁰¹ Transitional justice refers to “the full range of processes and mechanisms associated with a society’s attempts to come to terms with a legacy of large-scale past abuses, in order to ensure accountability, serve justice and achieve reconciliation” (UNSC, “[The rule of law and transitional justice in conflict and post-conflict societies Report of the Secretary-General](#)”, 2004).

²⁰² Maria Martin de Almagro & Philipp Schulz, “[Gender and Transitional Justice](#)”, *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of International Studies*, 2022.

²⁰³ KWN interviews with CSOs working on transitional justice in Kosovo, 2025.

²⁰⁴ Priscilla Hayner, “[Transitional Justice in Peace Processes: United Nations policy and challenges in practice](#)”, 2023.

²⁰⁵ KWN interview with a CSO representative, 2025.

²⁰⁶ BBC, “[Kosovo president rejects war crimes indictment as ‘attempt to rewrite history’](#)”, 2020.

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

²⁰⁸ HLC, “[Raporti për vitin 2023: Fillimi i një faze të re në gjykimin e krimeve të luftës](#)” [“2023 Report: The beginning of a new phase in the prosecution of war crimes”], 2024.

Procedure Code, which allows such trials for all criminal offenses, including war crimes.²⁰⁹ Little has been done to pursue justice, as most persons accused of war crimes, including sexual violence, live in Serbia.²¹⁰ Since Serbia does not recognise Kosovo, it refuses to extradite perpetrators, contributing to impunity.²¹¹

Reparative measures can encompass a broad range of actions, including public apology, memorialisation, and reparation, among others. For example, President Thaçi visited a K-Serb family who had lost family members, knelt, and apologised, a CSO representative observed. The GoS has not issued any public apology for crimes committed by the GoS,²¹² though several research participants consider it one of the most important steps in dealing with the past. CSO representatives noted that apologies should be followed by indictments of war criminals.

Although symbolic, memorialisation is also an important element in addressing the legacy of the past. A recurring theme among participants was that masculinised, often “heavily militarised” memorials emphasise militarisation and male heroism, overshadowing peaceful resistance and interethnic cooperation. This reinforces nationalistic narratives, marginalises women’s and minorities’ suffering, and risks perpetuating conflict instead of promoting peace.²¹³

“Kosovo institutions have done very little to educate and inform young generations about the past. There has been very little gender-sensitive approach in that. We have a state agency for memorials, which oversees the construction of these memorials in honour of different individuals. But if it weren’t for NGOs, we wouldn’t even have the ‘Heroine’ memorial. [A]lmost all memorials are dedicated to [male] fighters.”

– CSO representative

Kosovo is weakest in the guarantee of non-repetition, which relates to institutional reforms. This links with truth-seeking about the past by all sides.²¹⁴ Educational segregation exists, exacerbating ethnic segregation.²¹⁵ K-Serb and Roma youth usually attend the Serbian education system, receiving financial support from Serbia to do so.²¹⁶ Segregation and different history lessons risk deepening polarisation, as youth do not receive the same, balanced history via formal education. A CSO representative told a story about the reaction of young people from northern Kosovo when they visited the exhibition “Once Upon a Time, Never Again” dedicated to 1,133 children killed in war:

When they saw the exhibition, they were first stunned, and then they began to talk. Their impressions are recorded in the guestbook... They understand. The issue is that they don’t have access to information. Another reason is the language barrier, they are exposed to Serb-speaking media and a one-sided narrative. [...T]he facts documented in court should be accessible to everyone. That’s how people process information, reflect, and that’s how a narrative based on facts, not myths, is created.

²⁰⁹ HLC, “In absentia: Indictments for war crimes in Kosovo”, Newsletter, 2025.

²¹⁰ HLC, “[Breaking the Silence: Justice for War Victims?](#)”, 2024, p. 350.

²¹¹ Ibid.

²¹² International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) has concluded that crimes were committed by GoS officials (ICTY, “[Šainović et al. \(IT-05-87\)](#)”, United Nations, n.d.). Notably, the request is for an apology from the GoS and is not meant to attribute blame to the people of Serbia; some activists of diverse ethnicities emphasised that K-Serb people should not be blamed for the actions of the GoS in the 1990s, but the GoS should acknowledge what occurred and apologise (KWN interviews, 2025).

²¹³ Maria Wendt, “[Gendered Frames of Violence in Military Heritagization: The Case of Swedish Cold War History](#)”, 2023, p. 24.

²¹⁴ KWN interview with a CSO representative, 2025.

²¹⁵ Advocacy Centre for Democratic Culture, “[Research Analysis: Inter-Ethnic Cooperation of Youth in Kosovo—Challenges, Perspectives and Recommendations for Improvement](#)”, 2024.

²¹⁶ KWN interview with a CSO representative, 2025.

Participants tended to agree that different narratives by the GoK and GoS further divisions, hinder interethnic communication and cooperation, and contribute to conflict. The lack of political agreement among primarily male leaders in the GoK and GoS was identified as a root cause. The deeply polarised rhetoric primarily used by male officials in political statements was recurrently identified as a driver of conflict. Participants in the north tended to blame the GoK for inciting conflict, while some participants in the south believed that K-Serbs are under pressure from the GoS. Participants felt that K-Serbs in particular were caught in the political standoff between the male-led GoK and GoS. They observed that the situation in the north was fragile when members of SL were active. The dominance of SL in Serb-majority areas has been maintained through pressure and intimidation with voters instructed on how to vote and non-SL candidates facing threats and job loss, effectively allowing an autocratic political force, evidenced by its 98% electoral support, to operate under the guise of stabilisation.²¹⁷ Some research participants noted that citizens in the north have started “breathing more freely” since the influence of gangs associated with SL has declined. This has come with increased police presence, including special units with visible firearms near schools and residential buildings. While an increased Kosovo Police presence in the north has been implemented to enhance security and decrease crime, especially multi-ethnic tensions, there is a significant disparity between K-Albanian and K-Serb perspectives regarding these GoK actions.²¹⁸ While increased securitisation in the north has garnered strong support from K-Albanians, it has contributed to feelings of insecurity among K-Serbs, particularly women and children.²¹⁹

“If politics and all of this were removed, then there would be peace. [T]here would be a compromise because regular people are eager to cooperate and communicate.”

– Young K-Serb woman

Research participants in the north felt that sexual harassment has increased against young K-Serb women, contributing to a climate of fear and insecurity. K-Serbs fear that the influx of the diaspora over the summer worsens the situation amid heightened nationalistic tendencies, emphasising the need for preventative measures. Sexual harassment affects all women across Kosovo and is notoriously difficult to verify,²²⁰ particularly amid distrust of police, exacerbated in the north. Following resignations of K-Serb police officers, the force is primarily male and K-Albanian.²²¹ Data from a 2024 opinion poll shows that while most K-Albanians report being either satisfied (37%) or very satisfied (51%) with the performance of the Kosovo Police, 34% of K-Serbs report being dissatisfied and 37% very dissatisfied.²²² This divergence evidences broader issues of representation, trust, and legitimacy. Some women have expressed hesitancy to approach male K-Albanian police officers. Evidence illustrates that women feel more secure approaching women officers, suggesting the need for more women officers.²²³ Views varied as to whether K-Serb women would feel safer reporting to K-Serb officers due to shared language and cultural familiarity or to K-Albanian officers who may be perceived as more likely to preserve confidentiality, reducing fears of reporting-related stigma from their communities. Reports of sexual harassment have sparked disagreements among ethnic groups. Some K-Albanian and international actors believe that women’s bodies are being misused by Serb politicians to trigger conflict and maintain power. Regardless, reports of sexual harassment have contributed to real fears of violence against women and feelings of insecurity among K-Serbs. This coupled with political misuse via media could increase interethnic tensions across borders and reinforce patriarchal narratives.

²¹⁷ European Union Election Observation Mission, “[Kosovo Legislative Elections Final Report](#)”, 2017.

²¹⁸ Milica Radovanovic, “[In the Eye of the Storm: Perspectives on Crisis in North of Kosovo](#)”, NSI & CBM, 2024.

²¹⁹ Ibid; KWN interviews, 2025.

²²⁰ KWN, “[Sexual Harassment in Kosovo](#)”, 2016.

²²¹ Mihane Hoxha, “[Political Tensions Test Unity of Kosovo’s Police Force](#)”, Balkan Insight, 2025; Xhorxhina Bami & Milica Stojanovic, “[Serbs Stage Mass Resignation from Kosovo State Institutions](#)”, 2022, Balkan Insight. See also the prior section on women’s participation in the [security sector](#).

²²² Raw data shared by UNDP/USAID, “Public Pulse Brief XXVI”, 2024.

²²³ Jalicca May S. Torres, et al., “[Unveiling the Lived Experiences of Police Officers in Dealing with Violence against Women and Children](#)”, *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science*, 8(11), 3501–3517; UNSC, [UNSCR 1960](#), 2010.

Rising political tensions have been attributed to political leaders. Male political leaders have failed to reach agreement on several issues amid the Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue, heightening tensions through public statements, rather than soothing them. For example, establishing the Association of Serbian Municipalities has been a key area of disagreement between the GoK and GoS, inhibiting reconciliation efforts.²²⁴ Serbia refuses to recognise Kosovo, while the GoK will not negotiate territorial integrity, sovereignty, or internal functions with Serbia.²²⁵ Unmovable positions and lack of progress can and has contributed to unilateral actions and potential conflict. For example, the GoK discontinued the use of the Serbian Dinar and closed Serbian-administered institutions, which can contribute to tensions.²²⁶ As mentioned, these acts undertaken by male leaders have gendered consequences, contributing to insecurity: the elderly, persons with disabilities, and particularly women heads of households and in rural areas who have less access to transport and financial independence, have faced added obstacles accessing public services. This deepens social isolation and economic vulnerability.

Economic instability is another factor contributing to insecurity and emigration among different ethnic groups. The leading drivers of respondents' eventual emigration are reported as family economic hardship, the pursuit of a better future for the family, and unemployment.²²⁷ In addition to the aforementioned risk of unemployed young men engaging in conflict, participants indicated a growing trend of Serbs leaving Kosovo in search of employment amid recent closures of Serb institutions, eroding opportunities for interethnic interaction. The exodus of K-Serbs reinforces exclusion and can fuel nationalistic rhetoric in Kosovo and Serbia. Media coverage risks framing K-Albanians as intentionally marginalising K-Serbs, fuelling tensions across borders.

The sexuality of LGBTQI+ individuals has been manipulated for nationalistic purposes and to fuel violence. In the 1990s, public smear campaigns exploited sexuality to pressure activists to abandon peace initiatives between Serbian and Albanian women.²²⁸ LGBTQI+ activists have since faced harassment and threats of violence via phone, social media, and in public spaces. An online campaign placed gun targets over activists' pictures, encouraging violence against them. Pride campaigns in Serbia have frequently been attacked, and LGBTQI+ activists have continued to experience harassment and threats. Perceived as less likely to have children, LGBTQI+ persons have been portrayed as "enemies" of socialised "family values" and ethno-nationalistic aims, stemming from the notion that LGBTQI+ persons do not contribute to traditional reproductive roles or perform their national duties to increase natality rates for the ethnic majority to retain power. For example, during debates surrounding the Kosovo Civil Code, legalisation of same-sex marriage was a key dividing point among MPs, and some used discriminatory and inflammatory language, exacerbating an already hostile environment towards LGBTQI+ persons.²²⁹ Such nationalistic rhetoric can incite violence against LGBTQI+ persons and activists, contributing to their insecurity and potential conflict.²³⁰

"LGBTI people spread disease."

– MP Labinotë Demi Murtezë, cited by CEL, "Homophobes have no place in Assembly!", 2024

6.4. Conclusion

- Death resulting from conflict has affected more men. Other consequences of conflict have disproportionately affected women, including feelings of insecurity, poor access to services, activist burnout, decreased participation, unwillingness to engage in peace processes, and health issues.

²²⁴ Balkan Policy Research Group, "[The Association of Serb Municipalities: Understanding Conflicting Views of Albanians and Serbs](#)", 2017.

²²⁵ Marko Savković, "[How does Kurti see the dialogue?](#)", 2021, p. 202.

²²⁶ Associated Press, "[Kosovo Shuts 6 Serb Bank Branches Over Use of the Dinar Currency in a Move that Could Raise Tensions](#)", 2024.

²²⁷ Raw data shared by UNDP from the UNDP/USAID, "Public Pulse Brief XXVI", 2024.

²²⁸ KWN interviews with WCSO representatives, 2025.

²²⁹ KWN interviews with CSO representatives, 2025.

²³⁰ CSGD, "[LGBTI and Politics Advocacy Brief](#)", 2022, p. 5.

- Identified causes of conflict include inadequate (transitional) justice; segregated educational systems with history inattentive to the past and reinforcing gender norms; poor communication contributing to distrust; economic instability; and polarised, ethnonationalist patriarchal narratives propagated primarily by male political leaders seeking to retain power.

7. Stakeholders to Conflict and Peace

This section explores perceptions of stakeholders in conflict and peace, their interests, and gender differences.

7.1. Actors Contributing to Conflict

“Women are more inclined to run away from conflict, break barriers, and join for a cause, and we have seen this over the years. They want their children to live in peace for generations to come.” – WCSO

“There are no women who desire conflict, no matter the race, ethnicity, nationality. Because women feel so much differently than men, they can make changes and bring peace to the world. Men on the other hand have this strong sense of pride that often makes them feel conquered and drives them to conflict.” – WCSO

Research participants recurrently suggested that women tend to avoid conflict. Meanwhile, men are perceived to shape politics, disguising nationalism with patriotism. These perceptions reflect heteronormative gender stereotypes, where women are portrayed as naturally peaceful, nurturing, and primarily concerned with the wellbeing of their children and future generations, while men are depicted as pride-driven, aggressors oriented toward conflict. Feminist literature critiques such portrayals as potentially homogenising and reductive, warning they may obscure intersecting identities and reinforce existing power hierarchies.²³¹ Homogenised depictions of women and men ignore socialisation processes through which gender norms are created and thus can change.

Research participants recurrently identified men political leaders in Kosovo and Serbia, influenced by international powers amid broader geopolitical aims, to be main parties to conflict. Participants observed that the GoK and GoS are disinterested in finding peaceful solutions, and thus create aggressive narratives to retain power. These findings are supported by a 2024 opinion poll, in which 45% of respondents identified political parties and 44% identified the Kosovo executive as actors most responsible for the current political situation.²³²

“Conflict means business. War means business... People don’t create war; big powers create war.”

– WCSO

As elsewhere in the world, both the GoS and GoK is led by men. The **GoS** has made clear that it will not recognise Kosovo, emphasising its views via media.²³³ This contributes to an unclear and unstable environment. Backed by the GoS, the male-led **SL** chaired the withdrawal of K-Serbs from Kosovo institutions in 2022,²³⁴ which has contributed to K-Serbs’ under-representation in governance and security, including women. The GoS also has contributed to conflict by supporting SL-led **paramilitary groups** in mobilising against Kosovo Police and KFOR and through increased military presence near the Kosovo border in 2023.²³⁵ In 2024, Kosovo authorities seized weapons and ammunition believed to

²³¹ Laura J. Shepherd, *Gender, Violence & Security*, London, UK: Zed Books Ltd, 2008.

²³² Raw data shared by UNDP from the UNDP/USAID, “Public Pulse Brief XXVI”, 2024.

²³³ Radio Free Europe, “[Serbian President Rules Out ‘Factual or De Jure’ Recognition of Kosovo](#)”, 2023.

²³⁴ Democracy, “[Serbs decide to leave Kosovo institutions](#)”, 2022.

²³⁵ International Crisis Group, “[Northern Kosovo: Asserting Sovereignty Amid Divided Loyalties](#)”, 2024; International Crisis Group, “[Behind the Renewed Troubles in Northern Kosovo](#)”, 2023.

belong to the Serbian armed group responsible for the Banjska attack in 2023.²³⁶ The GoK has stated that it considers Serbia a major security threat.²³⁷

The GoK, administered by *Vetevendosje* (VV) [Self-determination] political party, closed GoS-influenced institutions in Kosovo and has increased the presence of security personnel in the north under the auspices of enhancing security. Both the EU and United States (U.S.) expressed concern that GoK actions risk escalating tensions and damaging prospects for reconciliation.²³⁸ The rapid closure of institutions and discontinued use of the Serbian Dinar, with minimal transition time for the population and poor coordination with international partners, could contribute to conflict.

The EU has expressed concern over potential **Russian** influence in the Western Balkans, hindering its integration into the EU and NATO.²³⁹ K-Serbs may support Russia as a protector of Serb interests, given its position against Kosovo's independence.²⁴⁰ Thus, the primarily male-led Russian government may pose a challenge to Kosovo's stability, including through pro-Russian media in Serbia.²⁴¹

For K-Albanians, Kosovo TV stations (86%) and social media are main sources of information.²⁴² K-Serbs tend to rely on Serbian TV stations daily, expressing more trust in these outlets than in RTK2 and other outlets.²⁴³ **Serbian media** are widely perceived as biased in favour of President Vučić and his administration.²⁴⁴ Mis- and dis-information reportedly target K-Serbs.²⁴⁵ Such media tend to reinforce nationalistic perspectives and further deepen mistrust. Disinformation is oriented towards national lines of polarisation where dichotomies such as "government-opposition" and "Belgrade-Pristina" are emphasised.²⁴⁶ Disinformation has fuelled tensions between K-Albanians and K-Serbs and spread narratives against NATO and EU integration.²⁴⁷ K-Serbs tend to believe disinformation narratives, such as threats of maltreatment and ethnic cleansing by the Kosovo Police, particularly during the Banjska attack.²⁴⁸ While Serbian media feed fears by suggesting that K-Albanians may attack K-Serbs, **Kosovo media** have made claims about an imminent military invasion from Serbia.²⁴⁹ Thus, Kosovo and Serbia's mainstream media contribute to differing, often gendered narratives that can feed fear among K-Albanians and K-Serbs, spread ethno-national political rhetoric,²⁵⁰ and potentially contribute to conflict.

7.2. Actors Contributing to Peace

"I think what really is remarkable of Kosovo is the work of civil society and women's organisations particularly." – International official

In terms of actors working towards peace, research participants tended to mention **CSOs**, particularly **WCSOs**. (W)CSOs initiate actions that bring diverse* people together, working locally and "on the ground". Activities include direct peacebuilding efforts, like dialogue initiatives and community reconciliation, as well as indirect contributions through education, job training, and cultural events.

²³⁶ Reuters, "[Former Officer Detained as Police Seize Weapons Cache in Northern Kosovo](#)", 2024.

²³⁷ Euronews Albania, "[Kurti: Serbia Poses a Threat to Kosovo and its Citizens with Putin Methods](#)", 2024; Reuters, "[Pristina Says Evidence Shows Serbia Planned To Seize Northern Kosovo After Attack](#)", 2023.

²³⁸ The Seattle Times, "[EU reprimands Kosovo's move to close down Serb bank branches over the use of the dinar currency](#)", 2024.

²³⁹ European Parliament, "[Russia and the Western Balkans Political Confrontation, Economic Influence and Political Interference](#)", 2023; International Republican Institute, "[Western Balkans Regional Survey](#)", 2024.

²⁴⁰ Daniel Heler, "[Exploring Roots of Russophilia among North Kosovo Serbs](#)", Western Balkan at the Crossroads, 2024.

²⁴¹ Pëllumb Kallaba, "[Russian Interference in Kosovo: How and Why?](#)", KCSS, 2017.

²⁴² NDI, "[NDI Kosovo Public Opinion Survey](#)", 2021; KCSS, "[How Does Disinformation Target and Affect Interethnic Relations in Kosovo?](#)", 2025.

²⁴³ Ibid.

²⁴⁴ Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom, "[Study confirms Serbian media bias in favour of President Vučić](#)", 2022.

²⁴⁵ IREX, "[Vibrant Information Barometer](#)", 2023.

²⁴⁶ CRTA, "[Report: Mapping disinformation in the Serbian media](#)", 2023.

²⁴⁷ Kreshnik Gashi, et al., "[The Story of Our Lies](#)", BIRN, 2023.

²⁴⁸ KCSS, "[How Does Disinformation Target and Affect Interethnic Relations in Kosovo?](#)", 2025.

²⁴⁹ Ekonomia Online, "[Spahiu: Kosovo at risk of war from Serbia](#)", 2022; Klan Kosova, "[Kastrati: Kosovo at perpetual risk from Serbia](#)", 2024.

²⁵⁰ KCSS, "[How Does the Securitization of Kosovo-Serbia Relations Impact the Escalation of Tensions and the Role of Media in Shaping Narratives?](#)", 2023.

Participants shared examples of activities like multiethnic (feminist) festivals, concerts, and art exhibitions that brought diverse* people together and built relations. While not always framed explicitly as “peacebuilding” activities, these initiatives were seen as important spaces for fostering understanding, trust, and social cohesion among individuals from diverse ethnic backgrounds. **WCSOs** were particularly recognised for contributing to peacebuilding.²⁵¹ Meanwhile, women peacemakers report facing several negative consequences as a result of their efforts including uncompensated time, fatigue, worsening mental health, secondary trauma, online violence, and threats of violence.²⁵² Their work is under threat amid global funding cuts to women’s rights and gender equality. Women peacemakers report that the freeze in aid from the U.S. has had several negative consequences, including decreasing or stopping vital services to vulnerable groups, laying off staff, activist burnout, and closing organisations.²⁵³

(W)CSOs working with **people with disabilities** and **LGBTQI+ activists** have contributed to peacebuilding by promoting inclusivity, equality, and legal protection for marginalised groups. Participants observed their role in advocating for laws against hate crimes, ensuring constitutional protections, and their implementation. LGBTQI+ CSOs have created spaces for dialogue among persons of diverse ethnicities, challenging prejudice and fostering understanding. **Women journalists**, particularly through the recently established Network of Women Journalists of Kosovo, were noted for contributing to peace and resilience by shaping media narratives, raising visibility of gender equality issues, and promoting inclusive public discourse. **International organisations** also were mentioned, though their initiatives were sometimes described as lacking a sufficiently bottom-up approach. Some participants noted how international projects had struggled to meaningfully engage diverse* people at the local level in both planning and implementation. They highlighted the importance of creating safe spaces for participation, ensuring consultations are meaningful, and tailoring interventions to the specific context; projects designed for Pristina may for example not be suitable for rural areas or smaller municipalities. Several participants noted that projects explicitly labelled as “peace projects” could discourage engagement; initiatives framed around locally meaningful concerns are probably more effective in fostering participation. Participants recommended avoiding political topics in peace initiatives. One remarked, “We shouldn’t only talk about the killed, the missing, the raped... Let’s talk about joint production, about a common way of cooperation.”

While institutions tended to be viewed as contributors to conflict, specific officials were mentioned as committed to peacebuilding, such as former President Jahjaga who initiated several processes to implement the WPS Agenda, President Vjosa Osmani with her annual WPS Forum, former Minister of Justice Albulena Haxhiu who worked to address gender-based violence, and former Deputy Minister of Justice and coordinator against domestic violence Nita Shala. Some male public figures were recognised for supporting women’s inclusion in institutions, including Behar Selimi in the Kosovo Police,²⁵⁴ Besim M. Kajtazi in the legal system and as a WPS trainer, former Constitutional Court Judge Bekim Sejdiu, and Minister of Defence Ejup Maqedonci. Participants noted that the KSF Gender Equality Unit has promoted gender equality, a fair inclusive work environment, and equal opportunities for career advancement in KSF. Former President Thaçi sought to establish the Transitional Justice Truth Commission; however, it faced criticism for potential politicisation, and the process halted following Thaçi’s indictment by the Kosovo Specialist Chambers and his resignation.²⁵⁵

The GoK under Prime Minister Kurti has stated that it considers remembering and dealing with the past important for transitional justice.²⁵⁶ Kurti’s government held consultations with various ethnic

²⁵¹ See also, KWN, [1325 Facts and Fables](#), 2022.

²⁵² Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security, “[The Women, Peace and Security Survey](#)”, Research Report, Washington, DC, 2025. This is based on preliminary data from a sample of 41 self-selected women peace activists in Kosovo. While the sample size is small and not random, it still illustrates qualitatively issues affecting many women peacemakers in Kosovo.

²⁵³ This also was illustrated through a rapid survey of WCSOs in Kosovo and the Western Balkans conducted by KWN and Reactor Research in Action, 2025.

²⁵⁴ KWN, [1325 Facts and Fables](#), 2022, p. 90.

²⁵⁵ Balkan Transitional Justice, “[Kosovo Truth Commission’s Future in Doubt After Thaçi’s Indictment](#)”, 2020.

²⁵⁶ Associated Press, “[Kosovo Says It Is Setting up an Institute to Document Serbia’s Crimes in the 1998–1999 War](#)”, 2023; Perparim Isufi, “[Kosovo Remembers Village Massacres as PM Urges More War Crime Probes](#)”, 2024.

groups.²⁵⁷ Women's perspectives were increasingly included after early sessions were criticised for being male dominated. Issues facing women tended to differ from those raised by men. Some K-Serbs did not attend discussions due to fear of backlash and/or political misuse. Some K-Serbs who attended requested confidentiality, asking that meetings not be publicised. Previous incidents of participants being photographed in similar settings had led to consequences for them. Secrecy, while necessary for protecting attendees, made it difficult to promote and build broader public support for dialogue efforts, a GoK official said. Meanwhile, some K-Serb activists felt the GoK misused meetings for political reasons. They provided an example where the GoK organised meetings with K-Serb CSOs under the false pretence of discussing grants. Some K-Serb activists perceived GoK meetings as political moves to signal engagement with K-Serbs rather than a sincere effort to foster meaningful dialogue or address K-Serbs' concerns. Some K-Serb activists later refused to attend meetings until they would be recorded officially, and steps would be taken to address K-Serb concerns.

Regarding media, K-Albanian and K-Serb journalists have stated that positive stories promoting peace, integration, and coexistence are scarce, usually in English-language **media** like Balkan Insight,²⁵⁸ Kosovo 2.0, Prishtina Insight, and Kossev, financed by international donors. These already limited alternative voices for peace are under threat amid the recent, unforeseen U.S. funding cuts.²⁵⁹

7.3. Other Stakeholders

Other stakeholders affected by conflict include the general population. Insufficient reconciliation between the GoK and GoS has contributed to anxiety for K-Albanians and K-Serbs,²⁶⁰ as well as persons of other ethnicities. The absence of a lasting political situation contributes to feelings of insecurity among diverse* women and men. Meanwhile, women and men can facilitate both peace and conflict.

While all **K-Serbs** tend to contest Kosovo's statehood, this is more noticeable in the north. Social pressure and fear of being rejected by other Serbs may contribute to some Serbs' engagement in conflict, research participants said. Some K-Serbs are concerned that the GoK, and K-Albanians, do not recognise the existence of K-Serb missing persons and civilian victims of war. Some feel that the GoK has prioritised K-Albanians' concerns over those of K-Serbs. Insufficient public discussion and address of K-Serb concerns can hinder efforts towards integration and leave room for potential conflict.

Prime Minister Kurti's increased securitisation of majority K-Serb northern municipalities has tended to receive popular support among **K-Albanians**.²⁶¹ K-Albanian youth are more likely to support prosecution of war crimes and addressing past atrocities, whereas K-Serb youth are less likely to support prosecution, believing that it would contribute less to reconciliation.²⁶² Further, 92% of K-Albanian survey respondents believed that Serbia should issue an apology for war crimes in Kosovo; and 79% believed that Kosovo courts should prosecute crimes regardless of state or ethnic origin.²⁶³

All **ethnic groups** are affected by conflict between Kosovo and Serbia.²⁶⁴ **Bosnians, Gorani, and Roma** have received social welfare, salaries, and pensions from Serbia; thus, they were affected by the GoK's decision to close Serbian post offices, banks, and to end bank transactions in Dinars.²⁶⁵ K-Bosnians and Roma living in northern Kosovo feel insecure, stuck between political issues of Serbia and Kosovo.²⁶⁶

²⁵⁷ This paragraph is based on KWN interviews with different CSOs and officials, 2025.

²⁵⁸ Balkan Insight, "[In Divided Kosovo, Some Albanians and Serbs Do Come Together – at Work](#)", 2024.

²⁵⁹ BIRN, "[Central European Media, NGOs Face Uncertain Future After US Funding Freeze](#)", Balkan Insight, 2025.

²⁶⁰ Shpat Balaj & Gramos Sejdiu, "[What Are the Kosovo Citizens' Perceptions on Inter-Ethnic Relations? Fostering Inter-Ethnic Relations and Reconciliation Survey Results](#)", KCSS, 2022.

²⁶¹ Milica Radovanovic, "[In the Eye of the Storm: Perspectives on Crisis in North of Kosovo](#)", NSI and CBM, 2024. Survey conducted by UBO Consulting (29 Feb.-7 Mar. 2024) with 460 respondents ages 18+ from North and South Mitrovica (230 each), using computer assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) and computer-assisted personal interviewing (CAPI). The sample was gender-balanced (49% male, 51% female), predominantly urban (65%), and ethnically composed of 57% Albanians, 38% Serbs, Roma 2%, Bosnians 1%, Ashkali 1%, Egyptians 1%, and Turkish 0.2%.

²⁶² Bekim Baliqi, "[Youth attitudes towards war and war crimes in Kosovo](#)", YIHR KS, 2024.

²⁶³ Ibid.

²⁶⁴ Marius-Ionut Calu, "[Non-Dominant Groups in Kosovo: A Marginalised View on \(De\)Securitisation of Minorities After Conflict](#)", *Journal on Ethnopolitics and Minority Issues in Europe*, 20(1), 2021.

²⁶⁵ KWN interviews.

²⁶⁶ KWN interviews and focus groups.

Roma youth often learn both Albanian and Serbian, but may feel social pressure to “choose sides”.²⁶⁷ K-Turks tend to live far from conflict zones, are rather unaffected, and tend to align with K-Albanian positions. Although geographically far from potential conflict lines, Gorani have received social assistance, healthcare, education, pensions, and social services from the GoS.²⁶⁸ Therefore, Gorani communities were affected by the GoK closing Serbian institutions.

Religious leaders, usually male, across different religions can contribute both to peace and conflict.²⁶⁹ While theorists like Huntington argue that cultural and religious differences are primary sources of global conflict, critics and scholars such as Galtung, Stewart, and Fearon, and Laitin emphasise that religion alone is rarely the root cause.²⁷⁰ Instead, conflict often arises when religious or cultural identities intersect with political and economic inequalities. Religion may serve as a vehicle for conflict when embedded in broader structural injustices, but it can also be a force for peace if used to promote inclusion, reconciliation, and social cohesion.

Youth was pointed out by research participants as a group whose attitudes are still being formed. While they could inherit hostilities from older generations, and thereby potentially contribute to conflict, they could also be influenced toward more inclusive attitudes. Participants therefore tended to identify youth as a priority target group for peacebuilding efforts.

7.4. Conclusion

- Men, particularly male political leaders in Kosovo and Serbia, have contributed to conflict.
- Women, men, and diverse* (W)CSOs have contributed to peace in Kosovo, amid ongoing threats.
- Homogenising women as peaceful or men as violent can overlook the plurality of roles played by diverse* women and men in Kosovo, reinforce rather than challenge gender norms, and limit their roles in furthering peace.

8. The Gender-responsiveness of Peacebuilding Efforts

This section responds to the question: how inclusive and gender-responsive have past and present prevention, peacebuilding, and stabilisation activities been? It draws from interviews and content analysis, including a review of 27 peacebuilding and reconciliation projects selected with purposive sampling. Projects focused on conflict transformation, inter-ethnic dialogue, transitional justice, youth peacebuilding, and supporting survivors of conflict-related sexual violence.

Approximately 60% of the assessed projects were gender neutral, failing to systematically incorporate gender analyses, disaggregate indicators, or include actions towards gender inequality. Intersectional considerations, particularly regarding minority women, youth, persons with disabilities, and LGBTQI+ individuals, were nearly absent. Only a few projects explicitly recognised and sought to address gender inequalities. The analysis illustrated that when gender was considered (in gender analysis, targeted activities, and clear, gender-disaggregated indicators), treating gender inequality as a structural and cross-cutting concern from the outset, rather than as secondary or a “add-on” issue, peacebuilding was more inclusive, locally owned, and potentially more sustainable.

While a comprehensive evaluation of peacebuilding actions was beyond the scope of this analysis, interviews suggest that peace projects’ effectiveness has varied. Some research participants felt that the success of initiatives often depends on the personal commitment and approach of individuals leading them. While some projects contributed to peace, participants said, other initiatives were criticised for not reaching a wide enough target group. For example, peace camps are often in English, which excludes participants from rural or less wealthy backgrounds. A participant noted, “You get the kids ... who are already more open to meeting with each other. You’re not tackling Albanians who’ve never met a Serb, or vice versa.” Some research participants observed that activities often attract the

²⁶⁷ Ibid.

²⁶⁸ United States Department of State, “[Kosovo Country Report on Human Rights](#)”, 2022.

²⁶⁹ KWN interviews.

²⁷⁰ The British Academy, “[The Role of Religion in Conflict and Peacebuilding](#)”, 2015, p. 24-25.

same participants rather than a diverse audience. Given the differing capacities of diverse CSOs, this and prior research suggests that an “ecosystem” of different funding options can support engagement of diverse* CSOs and their constituents.²⁷¹ Participants underlined the need to listen to grassroots voices and ensure that individuals and smaller CSOs are directly consulted in planning and implementation. Meanwhile, impact may be limited by structural and political dynamics. Coordination across government bodies and institutions was cited as a challenge. The broader political situation of disagreements between the GoK and GoS, violence or threat of it, social pressure, and media coverage sometimes deterred participants from engaging in planned interethnic activities, particularly K-Serbs.

“Reconciliation cannot be bought. It will come in our time and our way.”

– Activist

8.1. Conclusion

- Amid a plethora of actions towards peacebuilding, few actions have been gender-responsive and inclusive.
- Lessons learned from past actions illustrate the importance of considering contextual risks to programming like limited outreach, translation, and physical access that may unintentionally exclude disabled, rural, or economically disadvantaged women. Insufficient inclusion of local and minority communities, particularly women, in design and implementation can undermine relevance, reinforce existing inequalities, and limit outcomes. The lack of gender-responsive approaches and failure to engage diverse* women and men may perpetuate social divides and prevent the achievement of comprehensive, inclusive peace.

9. Recommendations

This research sought to identify recommendations towards more effective, inclusive, gender-responsive, conflict-sensitive, and sustainable policies and programs that further peace and security. The research team used an inclusive process, asking research participants to provide their recommendations. Recommendations derive from these and findings from this gender analysis. Recommendations are organised according to the actor responsible for their implementation.

9.1. OPM

- Host at least quarterly discussions between the OPM and diverse* women and WCSOs on topics they suggest, ensuring these consultations meaningfully inform policy and negotiation processes, including the Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue, political dialogue between Kosovo and the EU, and consultations surrounding SAA Committee and Subcommittee meetings. Continue sharing these meeting agendas in advance with diverse* women, WCSOs, and relevant experts; ensure that their input on strengthening gender responsiveness is meaningfully considered and reflected in discussions.
- Improve attention to gender equality in areas of peace, security, and good neighbourly relations as part of the EU Accession process. Continue engaging with WCSOs and explore opportunities to expand this collaboration, addressing their recommendations related to accountability, access to justice, and rule of law.
- Ensure that future renditions of the NPEI and *EU Growth Plan: The Reform Agenda of Kosovo* and their action plans contain clear commitments to the WPS Agenda and women’s engagement in peace processes, including political dialogue and relations with Serbia.
- Amend electoral laws in line with the LGE, ensuring women and men’s 50% participation in all institutions, contributing to their equal representation in peace processes and security institutions.²⁷²

²⁷¹ The Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation, “[Where’s the Money for Women’s Rights?](#)”, 2020.

²⁷² This supports Kosovo CLIP Objective 4: Promoting equal participation and leadership.

- Advise the Kosovo Security Council to ensure that the action plan and monitoring matrix for the current Security Strategy 2022-2027 gender mainstreams objectives, indicators, baselines, targets, measures, and budget in accordance with the LGE. In evaluating and preparing the next Security Strategy, strongly encourage the Security Council to include a gender perspective, based on gender impact analysis that considers the diverse needs of women and men in line with the WPS Agenda, including addressing threats arising from the digital transformation.
- Update digital platforms, ensuring they offer easily accessible, user-friendly, confidential, gender-responsive multilingual resources for governance, public services, health consultations, legal support, justice, and employment opportunities. This can enable diverse* women and men, including in remote areas and with disabilities, to access services without needing to physically visit institutions. This could improve the social and economic integration of minority women and men while empowering them by making them aware of their rights (e.g., related to gender-based violence, child custody, or property rights).
- Take steps to improve access to social benefits and services previously provided by Serbia (e.g., pensions, child and student allowances, healthcare, and medicine) for K-Serb and other non-majority communities, addressing human security threats and the specific challenges faced by women, the elderly, and persons with disabilities.
- Improve the availability and affordability of care services for children,²⁷³ the elderly, ill, and persons with disabilities, providing women with more time to engage in political processes at all levels, including peace processes.
- Ensure that all institutions collect and use data disaggregated by gender, age, ethnicity, location (rural/urban, municipality), and disability, and submit it regularly to KAS for publishing and public transparency, as per LGE requirements.

9.1.1. AGE

- Consider adopting a standalone NAP. Otherwise, design the new WPS pillar of the KPGE in line with global best practices for WPS action plans, ensuring a timely, structured, and inclusive drafting process. This should include:
 - Addressing UNSCR 1325 sister resolutions
 - Covering areas of the WPS Agenda not yet implemented in Kosovo
 - Defining clear steps to engage women in conflict prevention and resolution, consistent with UNSCR 2467
 - Incorporating gender-responsive rehabilitation and humanitarian aid
 - Basing Kosovo's future external development financing on rigorous gender analysis in accordance with UNSCR 1325 and the LGE, including gender-responsive climate change-related financing
 - Earmarking funds to support diverse WCSOs' services, advocacy, and watchdog roles
 - Setting measurable targets, clear budget responsibilities, and ensuring adequate budget allocations from the GoK to reduce dependence on foreign financing
 - Developing and implementing a robust, inclusive monitoring and evaluation mechanism that engages diverse stakeholders, including WCSOs
 - Ensuring regular public reporting on the progress and impact of WPS interventions

9.2. Ministry of Justice

- Ensure that amendments to the Criminal Code include protections against technology-facilitated gender-based violence in line with the new EU Directive, collaborating closely with WCSOs and experts, including through their active participation in working group sessions and incorporating their recommendations.

²⁷³ This is in line with the EU Barcelona Objectives, Reform Agenda of Kosovo, and National Development Strategy. While investments have been made, substantial further investment is needed to meet the demand for such services.

- Amend the Law on the Status and the Rights of Martyrs, Invalids, Veterans, Members of Kosovo Liberation Army, Sexual Violence Victims of the War, Civilian Victims, and their Families to extend the timeframe covering victims of war through 2000 and remove any deadline for applying, consulting (W)CSO experts.
- Ensure accountability for sexual violence and improve access to justice for all victims, as per UNSCR 2467, 1888, and 1960.
- Better gender mainstream objectives, targets, and indicators related to security in the next Rule of Law Strategy, to be drafted in 2026 and adopted by 2027, ensuring it is aligned it with UNSCR 1325 principles. It should include more specific objectives, targets, and indicators to enhance women's representation in security and judicial systems and to better equip security personnel in gender-responsive mediation.
- Ensure that the Transitional Justice Strategy's (2024-2034) implementation, and future renditions of it, have more inclusive language that addresses the experiences of women and men of diverse ethnicities.
- Ensure the next Transitional Justice Strategy Action Plan has specific measures to involve women in decision-making roles in transitional justice processes, particularly in political dialogue and peacebuilding.
- Engage diverse* (W)CSOs in implementing the Transitional Justice Strategy, including through the working group. Support financially diverse* women, including Kosovo-based experts and (W)CSOs with extensive expertise, in promoting gender-responsive transitional justice in line with Transitional Justice Strategy commitments.²⁷⁴
- Establish a robust monitoring and accountability system to track progress on gender-responsive measures in implementing the Transitional Justice Strategy. Targets could focus on women's roles in post-conflict reconciliation, leadership, and security. These improvements would align the Strategy with international gender equality frameworks and contribute to more inclusive, gender-responsive transitional justice.
- Establish an independent Commission for Dealing with the Past via a transparent process inclusive of diverse* (W)CSO representatives and experts. Ensure the Commission is inclusive and gender-responsive, fostering trust among all ethnic groups.

9.3. Ministry of Defense

- Amend the Law on KSF to require equal participation of women and implement quotas towards gender equality.²⁷⁵
- Ensure the Defence Strategy includes a gender-responsive approach in line with the WPS Agenda.
- Include diverse* WCSOs in creating security strategies.
- In consultation with diverse* WCSOs, establish more affirmative measures for engaging additional, diverse* women in the military.
- In consultation with diverse* WCSOs, include in existing gender equality training an intersectional approach to disability rights, including ensuring access to information and security services for women with disabilities in times of crisis or emergency.

9.4. MFLT

- Together with AGE, amend the Law on Public Finance to institutionalise GRB. Ensure that all institutions, including those dealing with security, implement GRB.
- Finish amending the Labour Law in line with the EU Work-Life Balance Directive, consulting WCSO experts and implementing their recommendations.

²⁷⁴ In line with Council of the European Union, [Women, Peace and Security - Council Conclusions](#), 2018.

²⁷⁵ This is in line with [UNSCR 1325](#), [1888](#), [2106](#), [the Constitution](#), and [LGE](#).

- Ensure the forthcoming Strategy to address informality is gender responsive and uses a “do no harm” approach, given that inclusive, careful address of informality can contribute to peace and social cohesion.

9.5. MESTI

- Undertake a gender- and conflict-responsive review of curricula, in cooperation with gender experts and peace activists, towards establishing agreed historical narratives that contribute to peace and prevent conflict.
- Ensure gender-transformative education that seeks through curricula and pedagogy to transform traditional gender norms and roles that contribute to male violence against women, including in conflict.

9.6. Ministry of Internal Affairs and Kosovo Police

- Establish policies ensuring police have had training in intersectional gender and conflict-responsive communication with diverse* women and men, using a victim-centred, disability-aware approach and respecting the Principle of Impartiality.
- Recruit more women of different ages and ethnicities in all levels of police, particularly in northern Kosovo, creating an environment in which diverse* women feel more comfortable reporting crimes and seeking justice. Affirmative measures, designed in consultation with diverse* women, WCSOs, and experts, can include shorter, flexible working hours.
- Ensure officers speaking the population’s native language are available.
- Engage more mixed gender patrol units, including both women and men, particularly in the north.

9.7. Assembly of Kosovo

- Amend the Constitution to explicitly reference the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, UNSCR 1325, and its “sister” resolutions, including principles towards women’s representation in the security sector and in political dialogue.
- Institutionalise as part of the legislative review process quality assurance of gender impact analyses that should accompany all draft laws prior to adoption. Using these analyses, review proposed or amended legislation to ensure they have adequately addressed gender inequalities identified.

9.8. (W)CSOs

- Continue monitoring implementation of the WPS Agenda and advocating for its implementation.
- Continue providing expertise to inform WPS policies and programs.
- Continue supporting diverse* women and men affected by conflict, particularly sexual violence.
- Continue collaborating closely with diverse* women and men within various communities to identify various development priorities that bring people together, building relationships across communities.

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the 1990s, the number of people in the world who are under 15 years of age is expected to increase from 1.1 billion to 1.5 billion.

As the world's population grows, the demand for food and other resources will increase. This will put pressure on the environment and on the world's food supply.

One way to meet this demand is to increase the amount of food that is produced. This can be done by using more land for agriculture.

Another way to meet this demand is to increase the efficiency of food production. This can be done by using better farming techniques.

Both of these methods have their own problems. Increasing the amount of land used for agriculture can lead to deforestation and loss of biodiversity.

Increasing the efficiency of food production can lead to the use of more pesticides and fertilizers, which can be harmful to the environment.

One solution is to use a combination of these methods. This would involve using better farming techniques on existing farmland and also using more land for agriculture.

Another solution is to reduce the amount of food that is wasted. This can be done by encouraging people to eat less meat and by reducing food waste.

Both of these solutions have their own problems. Reducing the amount of meat eaten can lead to a loss of jobs in the meat industry.

Reducing food waste can lead to a loss of jobs in the food service industry.

One way to solve these problems is to use a combination of these methods. This would involve using better farming techniques on existing farmland and also using more land for agriculture.

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