

1.2. "Violence against women" - is understood to be a violation of human rights and a form of discrimination against women, and shall mean all acts of gender-based violence that result in or are likely to result in physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm or suffering of women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether in public or private life;

1.3. "Domestic violence" - shall mean all acts of physical, sexual, psychological and economic violence that occur within the family relationship, or the household unit, regardless of the blood connection or family relationship, or from the former or the current intimate partner, regardless of the fact that the perpetrator of the violence shares or has shared the same residence with the victim, with the aim of violating the dignity and keeping or controlling an individual or a group of persons against whom violence is directed;

Zero Tolerance?

1.4. "Gender-based violence against women" - means violence directed against a woman because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately. Gender-based violence against women is violence that is based on or motivated by the gender relationship between women and men as a result of a social problem rather than an individual one;

Monitoring the Institutional Response to Gender-based Violence in Kosovo

1.5. "Political Harassment" - political harassment is one or several acts of pressure, persecution, harassment or threats, carried out by a person or a group of people, directly or through third parties, against women candidates, elected, appointed or in the exercise of the political-public function or against their families, with the aim of curtailing, suspending, preventing or limiting the functions inherent in their position, to induce or compel them to perform, against their will, an action or not to act, in the performance of duties or in the exercise of their rights;

1.6. "Political Violence" - political violence means actions, behaviour and/or physical, psychological, sexual aggression committed by a person or a group of people, directly or through third parties, against women candidates, elected, appointed or in the exercise of the political-public function, or against her family, to curtail, suspend, prevent or limit the exercise of her duty or to induce or compel her to perform, against her will, an act or omission, in the performance of duties or in the exercise of their rights;

1.7. "Gender" - means the socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities and attributes that a given society deems appropriate for women and men;



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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ADA	Austrian Development Agency
AGE	Agency for Gender Equality
AJ	Academy of Justice
CCK	Criminal Code of Kosovo
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CMIS	Case Management Information System
CoE	Council of Europe
CPC	Criminal Procedure Code
CSO	Civil society organisation
CSW	Centre for Social Work
DVIU	Domestic Violence Investigation Unit
EC	European Commission
ECtHR	European Court of Human Rights
EIGE	European Institute for Gender Equality
EO	Employment Office
EPO	Emergency Protection Order
EU	European Union
EULEX	European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo
GREVIO	Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence
GRETA	Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings
IFM	Institute of Forensic Medicine
IC	Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (“Istanbul Convention”)
ICT	Information and communications technology
IMCG	Inter-Ministerial Coordinating Group
IMC	Independent Media Commission
KAPS	Kosovo Academy for Public Safety
KAS	Kosovo Agency of Statistics
KCS	Kosovo Correctional Services
KJC	Kosovo Judicial Council
KP	Kosovo Police
KPC	Kosovo Prosecutorial Council
KPS	Kosovo Probation Service
KWN	Kosovo Women’s Network
LAO	Legal Aid Officers
LGBTQIA+	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, intersex, asexual, and other identifying persons
LGBV	Law on Prevention and Protection from Domestic Violence, Violence against Women and Gender-based Violence
LPDV	Law on Protection against Domestic Violence
MCM	Municipal Coordination Mechanisms
MCYS	Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports
MED	Municipal Education Departments

MESTI	Ministry of Education, Science, Technology, and Innovation
MFLT	Ministry of Finance, Labour, and Transfers
MH	Ministry of Health
MIA	Ministry of Internal Affairs
MLGA	Ministry of Local Government Administration
MLSW	Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare
MJ	Ministry of Justice
NA	Not available
NC	National Coordinator (used in Strategy)
NCDV	National Coordinator against Domestic Violence
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
No./Nr.	Number
NSPVAW	National Strategy for Protection from Domestic Violence and Violence against Women
NSPDV	National Strategy of the Republic of Kosovo on Protection from Domestic Violence and Action Plan
OIK	Ombudsperson Institution of Kosovo
OPDAT	Office of Overseas Prosecutorial Development, Assistance and Training
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PIK	Police Inspectorate of Kosovo
PO	Protection Order
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SIT	Centre for Counselling, Social Services, and Research
SOPs	Standard Operating Procedures
TEPO	Temporary Emergency Protection Order
TFGBV	Technology-facilitated gender-based violence
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNW	UN Women
UP	University of Pristina
VA	Victim Advocate
VAW	Violence against Women
VAWD	EU Directive on Violence against Women
VAAO	Victims Advocacy and Assistance Office
VD	Victims' Rights Directive
VTC	Vocational Training Centre

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Kosovo Women's Network (KWN) conducted this research to identify remaining gaps in Kosovo's legal framework towards implementing the Council of Europe (CoE) Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, known as the "Istanbul Convention" (IC). It also aimed to inform ongoing processes by assessing the knowledge, attitudes, and performance of responsible institutions in enforcing the legal framework. Findings draw from existing literature and data, 128 interviews with responsible institutions, and court monitoring. This report, covering the period of 2021 to 2024, builds on KWN's regular monitoring of institutional performance since 2008.

Kosovo has improved its legal framework towards addressing gender-based violence. In 2020 Kosovo amended its Constitution to incorporate the IC. It included domestic violence and sexual harassment in the Criminal Code of Kosovo (CCK). Several laws have been revised to align with the IC. In 2022, the Ministry of Justice (MJ) adopted the National Strategy for Protection from Domestic Violence and Violence against Women 2022-2026 (NSPVAW) and the State Protocol for Treating Cases of Sexual Violence. Then, in 2023, the Law on Prevention and Protection from Domestic Violence, Violence against Women, and Gender-based Violence (LGBV) was adopted. Despite advances, a gender-responsive approach to addressing violence against women is not yet fully integrated into Kosovo's legal framework, and additional policies needed to align with the IC remain under review. Cyberviolence and sexual violence remain under-addressed by legislation. Meanwhile, implementation remains a challenge. Approximately 54% of the NSPVAW was fully implemented, 42% partially implemented, and 5.5% unimplemented as of December 2024.

Since 2020, the knowledge and attitudes of institutions handling gender-based violence have improved. However, a weak understanding of gender-based violence, especially sexual violence, and victim-blaming, persist. The belief that violence should be resolved within the family or among friends rather than reported, remains prevalent, undermining reporting. Efforts to reconcile couples "to preserve the family" continue across institutions. Responsible officials still breach confidentiality. Police lack sufficient training and tend to minimise criminal offenses. Victim Advocates lack staff and thus continue to be absent from police stations when violence is reported, despite legal requirements for their presence. Prosecutors still confuse sexual harassment with sexual assault, over-rely on victim testimonies without collecting other sufficient evidence, and face issues with infrastructure; insufficient evidence contributes to low sentencing. The Institute of Forensic Medicine handled numerous cases of domestic and sexual violence, often relying on incomplete medical reports from other institutions due to logistical challenges and institutions' insufficient training. Gaps in documenting psychological trauma remain, impacting legal outcomes and sentencing. Civil and penal judges generally understand gender-based violence offenses, but few fully understand nuanced offenses like incitement to expose intimate body parts and female genital mutilation (FGM). The judicial system still faces significant challenges in implementing the IC, particularly in cases of sexual and domestic violence. While minor improvements have been observed, criminal prosecution remains slow and inconsistent. A groundbreaking development was the Constitutional Court's [decision](#) (2023), which, for the first time, explicitly referenced the IC and obligations of justice authorities, marking an important step in its recognition and application. Meanwhile, educational directors in municipalities lack knowledge regarding laws on gender-based violence. Insufficient psychologists in schools and confidentiality breaches remain challenges. Employment Office (EO) and Vocational Training Centre (VTC) staff lack awareness of gender-based violence laws

and engage in victim-blaming, reflecting patriarchal attitudes. Healthcare institutions do not recognise sexual violence or FGM as serious. Social workers have varying levels of knowledge about gender-based violence, confusing sexual harassment and assault. Ongoing challenges include insufficient understanding of a victim-centred approach and how to manage cases appropriately, staff shortages, and limited availability of long-term shelter. While their financial situation has improved, shelters lack sufficient funds for fully implementing the IC, particularly reintegration support, and have inconsistent cooperation with institutions. Some municipalities continue to fail in their obligation to finance shelters and social workers. Remaining legal gaps, poor risk assessments to ensure victim safety, insufficient training, resource constraints, weak interinstitutional coordination, and harmful attitudes continue to undermine survivors' protection and recovery.

INTRODUCTION

Gender-based violence is violence against a person *because of* her or his gender. However, it disproportionately affects women due to existing gender norms and power imbalances.¹ It includes domestic, physical, sexual, and psychological violence. Among the most prevalent crimes perpetrated, gender-based violence is a critical human rights and rule of law issue.² According to a 2019 survey by the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), 54% of Kosovar women reported suffering psychological, physical, or sexual violence from an intimate partner since age 15, and nearly 30% had experienced sexual harassment.³ Disturbingly, only 2% of women reported severe incidents of partner violence to police, reflecting deep distrust in institutions and fear or social stigma. While the OSCE survey did not involve interviews with men, a 2015 survey by KWN found that 56% of men and 68% of women had suffered some form of domestic violence in their lifetimes.⁴ Numbers in surveys underestimate the extent of violence. Many women in Kosovo (48%) consider violence, particularly domestic violence, a private matter.⁵ Indeed, OSCE found a correlation between respondents experiencing violence and believing that domestic violence is a private matter, that women should be obedient, and that women should be submissive. Women who expressed these beliefs were more likely to indicate that they had suffered domestic violence. Thus, they may hesitate to report it to institutions. Under-reporting hinders institutions' ability to address violence.

General Recommendation 19 of the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) has recognised violence against women, in both private and public spheres, as a violation of human rights.⁶ In 2014, the IC introduced a set of comprehensive obligations for addressing gender-based violence within the legal framework of international human rights law, making it the first legally-binding instrument of its kind.⁷ The IC recognises that violence against women is part of a larger system of repression. Women experience structural gender-based

Box 1. “Zero Tolerance”

involves punishing all forms of gender-based violence, regardless of their severity or any extenuating circumstances. This approach eliminates discretion by institutions responsible enforcing legislation, ensuring consistent, immediate punishment.

¹ CoE, [Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence](#), 2011.

² Following theft (16,287 cases), domestic violence was the second most reported crime in Kosovo over the past four years (10,220 cases) (KWN data request from Kosovo Police, 2024).

³ OSCE, [Survey on violence against women: Well-being and Safety of Women](#), 2019.

⁴ Farnsworth, N., Qosaj-Mustafa, A., Banjska, I., Berisha, A., and Morina, D., for KWN, [No More Excuses: An Analysis of Attitudes, Incidence, and Institutional Responses to Domestic Violence in Kosovo](#), 2015.

⁵ OSCE, [Survey on violence against women: Well-being and Safety of Women](#), OSCE, 2019. This echoes KWN's 2015 survey findings that 31% of Kosovars considered domestic violence a private matter in that neighbours should not report it to police (Farnsworth et al. for KWN, [No More Excuses](#), 2015).

⁶ UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, [CEDAW General Recommendation No. 19: Violence against women](#), 1992. [General Recommendation No. 35](#) has additionally recognised that the prohibition of gender-based violence against women has evolved into a binding principle of customary international law.

⁷ CoE, [Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence](#) (the Istanbul Convention), 2011.

violence, which differs from incidental violence perpetrated against men.⁸ For example, in Kosovo, this broader system of repression manifests in lower employment rates for women, gender-based discrimination in the labour market, women's underrepresentation in decision-making positions, and minimal property ownership. Recent analysis confirms these patterns, showing that women continue to face such systemic barriers.⁹ These all place women in an unequal position in society and thus at greater risk of violence. The IC calls for “zero tolerance” in addressing gender-based violence (Box 1). Kosovo has committed to implementing CEDAW, and in 2020, Kosovo incorporated the IC into its Constitution, rendering it applicable as well.¹⁰ Importantly, the IC [recognises](#) the gendered nature of violence, inequality, and discrimination and that that “violence is committed against women because they are women”. As per the IC, institutions that work with gender-based violence victims must ensure a coordinated, victim-centred approach (see Box 1) to protection, rehabilitation, and reintegration.

Regarding Kosovo's aspirations to join the European Union (EU), in progress reports, the European Commission (EC) has repeatedly emphasised the need for Kosovo institutions to address gender-based violence as an issue of human rights, and, more recently, a rule of law issue.¹¹ Further, preventing gender-based violence can contribute to decreasing state spending on policing, justice, social services, and unemployment, among other costs.¹² In Kosovo, earlier estimates suggest that domestic violence alone cost the state more than €3.1 million in direct costs in both 2011 and 2012, and substantially more in terms of days lost at work, health impacts, and educational or long-term employment outcomes for children, among others.¹³ Thus, addressing and preventing violence, particularly recidivism, is in the state's economic interest. Moreover, it is essential to preventing physical injuries and death, namely femicide.

Box 2. A “Victim-centred Approach”

Using a “victim-centred approach” means that institutions should strive to always place the priorities and needs of persons who have suffered violence first. As a basic principle, institutions must minimise harm and enhance the security of persons who have experienced violence. Empathy and confidentiality must be ensured and information shared with other institutions only following the affected person's consent. Persons who have suffered violence must be informed fully about their legal rights and the support services available to them. Once they are safe and able, institutions should engage victims in developing a plan that ensures their security and eventually support them with rehabilitation services tailored to their needs. Moreover, victims should have the right to provide feedback on how institutions have treated them, including related to referrals; and institutions should use this feedback to improve services. All service providers should receive training on a victim-centred approach and ensure its application in practice.

⁸ Berisha et al. for KWN, *From Words to Action*, 2017.

⁹ UN Women, *Kosovo Gender Country Profile*, 2024.

¹⁰ The IC is now applicable under Article 22 [[Direct Applicability of International Agreements and Instruments](#)].

¹¹ EC, *Commission Staff Working Document, Kosovo* 2024 Report*, 2024.

¹² For example, a case-study in the United Kingdom by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) estimated that gender-based violence costs the country more than €32.5 billion annually (*Estimating the costs of gender-based violence in the European Union: Report*, 2014).

¹³ Farnsworth, N., Qosaj-Mustafa, A., Ekonomi, M., Shima, A., and Dauti-Kadriu, D. for KWN, *At What Cost? Budgeting for the Implementation of the Legal Framework against Domestic Violence in Kosovo*, 2012.

Why This Research?

KWN's mission is to support, protect, and promote the rights of women and girls. One of KWN's long-term strategic aims is for women and girls to live lives free from gender-based violence.¹⁴ To progress towards this vision, KWN regularly monitors the performance of institutions to assess their progress in implementing the legal framework. Through monitoring, KWN seeks to secure evidence that can be used in communication and advocacy with institutions, towards an improved response. KWN thus aims to provide useful information and constructive criticism that will improve the lives of persons affected by violence, particularly women.

In 2008,¹⁵ 2009,¹⁶ 2015,¹⁷ 2017,¹⁸ and 2021,¹⁹ KWN conducted Kosovo-wide research that examined the institutional response to gender-based violence, focusing on domestic violence and, since 2015, sexual harassment. Conducted in close cooperation with the Agency for Gender Equality (AGE) in the Office of the Prime Minister of Kosovo (OPM), MJ, and other relevant institutions, these studies have made significant contributions to informing the LGBV, successive national strategies to address gender-based violence,²⁰ and Standard Operating Procedures for Protection from Domestic Violence in Kosovo (SOPs). Most recently, KWN's 2021 report *From Laws to Action* used findings from monitoring institutional responses to domestic violence to make institution-specific recommendations.²¹ Since then, KWN has met with institutional representatives to discuss these recommendations and to support their implementation. Further, KWN has sent 105 advocacy letters, provided input on 23 laws and policies, participated in governmental working groups, instigated awareness campaigns, engaged in protests, and appeared regularly in media to advocate implementation of recommendations from prior research reports. This research thus sought to assess whether institutions have implemented KWN's prior recommendations and the extent to which their performance has improved since the 2021 monitoring exercise. It aimed to measure changes in institutions' attitudes, awareness, and treatment of gender-based violence, and to monitor their implementation of the legal framework.

There have been several changes in the legal framework since 2021. This report analyses the extent to which legal reforms have been implemented and what steps remain to harmonise Kosovo's legal framework with the IC. Moreover, this monitoring exercise aimed to assess independently the implementation of the NSPVAW from 2022 to 2024.

¹⁴ KWN, [Strategy 2019-2022](#), 2018.

¹⁵ Farnsworth, N. and Qosaj-Mustafa, A. for KWN in close cooperation with AGE, [Security Begins at Home: Research to inform the national strategy and action plan against domestic violence in Kosovo](#), AGE: 2008.

¹⁶ Qosaj-Mustafa, A. and Farnsworth, N. for KWN, [More than "Words on Paper"? The Response of Justice Providers to Domestic Violence in Kosovo](#), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 2009.

¹⁷ Farnsworth et al. for KWN, [No More Excuses](#), 2015.

¹⁸ Berisha et al. for KWN, [From Words to Action](#), 2017.

¹⁹ Banjska, E., Breznica, B., Ryan, D., and Farnsworth, N. for KWN, [From Laws to Action](#), 2021.

²⁰ An estimated 70% of KWN's recommendations resulting from its report [No More Excuses](#) were incorporated into the Strategy for 2022-2026.

²¹ Banjska et al. for KWN, [From Laws to Action](#), 2021.

Methodology

Towards the aforementioned aims, this research sought to respond to three interrelated research questions and accompanying sub-questions:

- To what extent is Kosovo's legal framework related to gender-based violence harmonised with the IC; to what extent is the framework being implemented?
 - Which parts need further revision; and how has this improved since 2021, if at all?
 - To what extent has the NSPVAW 2022-2026 been implemented?
 - To what extent are the new provisions of the CCK pertaining to gender-based violence being implemented?
- To what extent are representatives of responsible public institutions aware of their duties related to treating gender-based violence, and how has this awareness changed since 2021, if at all?
 - How aware are they of the different types of gender-based violence?
 - How aware are they of their duties regarding domestic violence?
- To what extent are relevant institutions implementing their responsibilities?
 - To what extent are coordination mechanisms functioning?
 - What challenges exist to their sustainability and appropriate functioning?

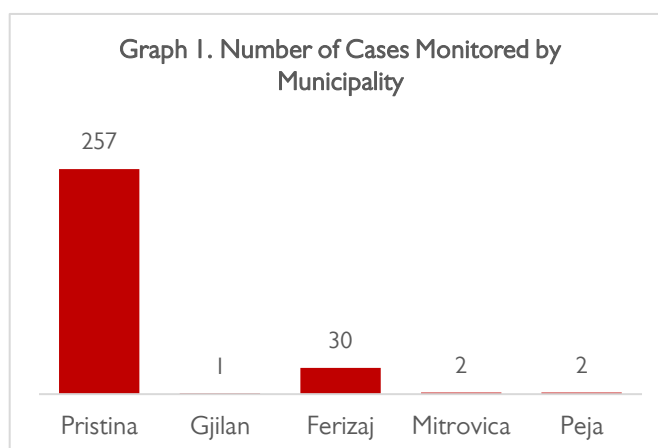
For this research, gender-based violence was operationalised (i.e., defined) to include domestic violence, physical violence, psychological violence, forced marriage, forced abortion, forced sterilisation, technology-facilitated violence, sexual harassment, rape, sexual assault, FGM, stalking, and murder. The research team acknowledges that other forms of gender-based violence exist, most notably human trafficking, and wartime sexual violence, but these were not examined due to time and resource constraints. KWN uses the term “victim” in this report because the IC, EU law, and Kosovo's legal framework use this term. Despite this, KWN recognises the potential agency and autonomy of persons who have suffered violence.²²

This research used the same methodology as KWN's prior research on gender-based violence, to enable comparison over time. It involved mixed methods including a review of the relevant legal framework, observation of the institutional response to gender-based violence, desk research, interviews, and a review of statistical data.

First, KWN examined Kosovo's law and policy landscape with reference to the IC and relevant aspects of the EU *acquis*. This sought to identify any changes still needed to the legal framework. This legal review helped inform the design of interview questions.

²² EIGE, “[Victim](#)”, 2012.

Second, KWN monitored the work of responsible institutions in addressing 292 gender-based violence cases between 2021-2024 in five court-hosting municipalities: Pristina, Ferizaj, Mitrovica, Peja, and Gjilan (Graph 1). Substantially more cases were monitored in Pristina where more courts are located and more cases reported. This included monitoring cases when people approached KWN and requested such assistance. A monitoring protocol



was used to observe cases, which included assessing the work of all institutions engaged in each court hearing. KWN also attended hearings at Centres for Social Work (CSWs), when relevant.

Third, KWN's five-member research team conducted 128 semi-structured interviews with institutions and actors responsible for implementing the legal framework pertaining to gender-based violence (64% women, 36% men). Using variation sampling, respondents were selected according to their legal responsibilities from the following institutions: Kosovo Police, Victim Advocates (VA), CSWs, civil courts, criminal courts, prosecution services, the Ombudsperson Institution of Kosovo (OIK), correctional services, probation services, educational institutions, health institutions, Employment Offices (EOs), Vocational Training Centres (VTCs), the Institute of Forensic Medicine (IFM), and shelters for persons who have suffered violence. Courts, police, and prosecutor's offices typically delegated research participants for interviews. The higher proportion of women participants may reflect the gender composition of the institution or institutional decisions regarding who would participate. KWN also interviewed diverse civil society organisations (CSOs) working to address gender-based violence, including shelters. Interviews took place in Prizren, Peja, Gjakova, Gjilan, South Mitrovica, Pristina, and Ferizaj, with interview guides tailored to each institution. Questions related to their legal responsibilities, knowledge of these responsibilities, attitudes, and experiences handling gender-based violence cases, as well as any relevant institutional changes since 2021.

Towards triangulation of researchers and enhanced validity, two researchers participated in most interviews.²³ Researchers also used reflexivity, considering, after each interview, how they may have influenced interview responses given their positionality. To reduce the potential influence of gender and power dynamics, the team sought to ensure same-gender interactions in interviews. However, this was not always feasible given scheduling issues. Research participants' responses may have differed based on the gender of the interviewer, affecting findings. For instance, research team members observed male participants speaking more honestly and openly with male researchers than with female researchers.

Fourth, KWN requested and reviewed all available statistical data related to gender-based violence provided by relevant institutions including the police, prosecution, courts, and shelters.²⁴ KWN also retrieved data from the new centralised database for domestic violence cases: the Case Management Information System (CMIS). Data analysis aimed to examine trends

²³ In a few instances, a note-taker could not participate due to scheduling challenges. These interviews were recorded, transcribed, and analysed by multiple researchers.

²⁴ For all data received, see Annex 2.

over time related to the reporting and management of gender-based violence cases by various responsible institutions.

The research team coded research findings in a database established in line with the research questions. To enhance validity during the coding process, at least two team members analysed every interview. The authors also distributed the final draft report for participant checks and peer review. Revisions were made based on feedback prior to publishing.

About This Report

The first chapter analyses Kosovo's current legal framework in reference to the IC, aiming to identify remaining revisions required to adequately address gender-based violence in law as part of ongoing review and amendment processes. The second chapter examines the institutional response to addressing gender-based violence with sections focusing on each responsible institution, as well as inter-institutional coordination. The third chapter outlines recommendations targeting each institution. Annexes include (1) data on institutions' treatment of various forms of gender-based violence; and (2) a summary of KWN's independent evaluation of the implementation of the NSPVAW.

LEGAL ANALYSIS

This chapter analyses the legal and policy framework related to gender-based violence in Kosovo.¹ It first outlines the relevant international legal framework and then examines thematic issues related to the IC. It subsequently reviews the extent to which Kosovo law has been harmonised with substantive provisions of the IC, including various offences involving gender-based violence and victim compensation. Then, it examines the extent to which Kosovo's legal framework is aligned with IC provisions relating to investigation, prosecution, procedural law, and protective measures. Finally, it outlines measures in the IC for violence prevention and data collection, respectively, and their applicability in Kosovo.

The International Legal Framework

This section provides an overview of the applicable international legal framework relevant to addressing gender-based violence and the extent to which international instruments are applicable in Kosovo.

The Istanbul Convention

The CoE Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, known as the “Istanbul Convention”, (IC) entered into force in August 2014. The IC intended to provide a set of comprehensive obligations for addressing gender-based violence against women within the legal framework of international human rights law, making it the first legally binding instrument of its kind in Europe.² Drawing on the United Nations (UN) Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women, the IC recognises violence against women as a manifestation of historically unequal gendered power relations, which have led to the subordination and discrimination of women and to the prevention of their full advancement in society.³

The IC defines and criminalises various forms of gender-based violence and requires signatories to enact legislative changes to domestic civil and criminal law, if necessary. The crimes listed therein are psychological violence, stalking, physical violence, and sexual violence, including rape, forced marriage, FGM, forced abortion, forced sterilisation, and sexual harassment. The IC takes a holistic approach in addressing gender-based violence through four pillars: prevention; protection and support services; prosecution; and coordinated policies. It envisions a broad range of measures on the implementation of coordinated and comprehensive policies among institutions.⁴

¹ This chapter is an updated, revised version of a similar chapter published in KWN's prior report, [From Laws to Action](#), 2021. It was originally written by David JJ Ryan and updated by Arthur Cox LLP, including by David JJ Ryan, as a pro bono contribution to KWN.

² Nousiainen, K. and Chinkin, C., “[Legal Implications of EU Accession to the Istanbul Convention](#)”, European Commission, 2015, p. 39.

³ [CoE Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence](#), Preamble.

⁴ Jürviste, Ü., European Parliamentary Research Service, “[The Istanbul Convention: a tool to tackle violence against women and girls](#)”, 2015, p. 1.

On 25 September 2020, Kosovo amended its Constitution to incorporate the IC as directly applicable law.⁵ The IC requires states to ensure or encourage certain measures by amending their domestic legal and policy framework. Therefore, for IC provisions to have practical effect, Kosovo must take further legislative action, accompanied by rigorous accountability, monitoring actions, and strict implementation of the law. This report analyses the extent to which Kosovo's legal framework aligns with standards set by the IC and identifies what further amendments are necessary.

Kosovo is currently seeking CoE membership. If membership is attained, Kosovo will be entitled to ratify the IC, thereby becoming a "Party" to the Convention. Ratification of the IC by Kosovo would bring about certain jurisdictional and reporting obligations which do not currently apply to Kosovo, as discussed below.

International Cooperation

Chapter VIII of the IC relates to inter-party cooperation for the purpose of:

- preventing, combatting and prosecuting all forms of violence covered by the scope of the IC;
- protecting and providing assistance to victims;
- ensuring investigations or proceedings concerning the offences covered by the IC; and
- enforcing relevant civil and criminal judgments, including protection orders.⁶

More particularly:

- Kosovo will be required to ensure that residents can file cross-border complaints domestically regarding offences committed in the territory of another Party to the IC.⁷
- If Kosovo authorities have reasonable grounds to believe that a person is at immediate risk of being subjected to acts of violence referred to in Articles 36 (sexual violence, including rape), 37 (forced marriage), 38 (female genital mutilation) and 39 (forced abortion and forced sterilisation) in the territory of another Party, it will be encouraged to transmit this information to that other Party without delay, to ensure that appropriate protective measures are taken.⁸

⁵ CoE, "[The National Assembly of Kosovo* decides to apply the Istanbul Convention](#)", 2020. Given Kosovo's current international legal status limiting access to ratifying UN or CoE conventions, this method of implementing international instruments has been utilised for several important human rights documents, including CEDAW's General Recommendations 19 and 35 on violence against women. Accession to the Convention is possible for states that are not members of the CoE. However, the process by which this is done is likely inaccessible for Kosovo. The Parties to the Convention must be consulted and their unanimous consent must be obtained. After this, the Committee of Ministers may invite any state to accede. This decision requires a two-thirds majority provided for in Article 20.d of the Statute of the CoE and the unanimous vote of the Parties to this Convention (Article 76). Currently, 12 of the 47 members of the CoE do not recognise Kosovo. This system of "constitutionalisation without ratification" has its challenges for international oversight and enforcement mechanisms (De Hert, P. and Korenica, F., "[The New Kosovo Constitution and its Relationship with the European Convention on Human Rights: Constitutionalization 'Without' Ratification in Post-Conflict Societies](#)", ZaöRV 76(1), 2016, p. 165).

⁶ IC, Article 62.

⁷ Article 62.2.

⁸ Article 63.

- Where Kosovo authorities come across information through their own investigations which might assist another Party in preventing criminal offences, or initiating or carrying out investigations, or information that might lead to a request for cooperation under Chapter VIII, Kosovo will be entitled to forward this information to the other Party, if in accordance with its internal laws.⁹ A Party which receives such information must submit it to its competent authorities.¹⁰

Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO)

The monitoring mechanism of the IC, GREVIO, is established under Chapter IX. GREVIO is an independent monitoring body composed of 10 to 15 members, including representatives of each Party to the IC, elected by the Committee of the Parties. If Kosovo ratifies the IC, it will become a member of this Committee and will be obliged to submit to monitoring and evaluation by GREVIO.

Parties are required to submit a report on legislative and other measures aimed at implementing the IC to the Secretary General of the CoE for consideration by GREVIO.¹¹ GREVIO prepares a draft report containing its analysis from the evaluation process, as well as its suggestions and proposals to address any identified problems.¹² Non-governmental organisations (NGOs), civil society, national institutions for the protection of human rights, and certain bodies of the CoE or those established under other international instruments, may submit information to GREVIO while it is preparing its draft report.¹³ The draft report is transmitted for comments to the Party, and those comments are considered by GREVIO when adopting a final report.¹⁴

The Committee of the Parties may also adopt recommendations directed to a Party based on GREVIO's report.¹⁵ In circumstances when GREVIO receives reliable information indicating a situation requiring immediate attention, it may request a Party to submit urgently a special report concerning measures to be taken to prevent a serious, massive, or persistent pattern of violence against women.¹⁶ GREVIO also has the power to adopt non-country specific general recommendations on the implementation of the IC.¹⁷ While general recommendations are not legally binding, they are part of future monitoring.¹⁸

Parliamentary Involvement

National parliaments must be invited to participate in monitoring measures taken to implement the IC.¹⁹ Parties also are required to submit GREVIO's reports to their national parliaments for consideration. Additionally, the Parliamentary Assembly of the CoE (composed of parliamentarians from each member state) will be "invited to regularly take stock of the implementation" of the IC.²⁰

⁹ Article 64(2).

¹⁰ Article 64(3).

¹¹ Article 68(1).

¹² Article 68(10).

¹³ Article 68(5) and Article 68(8).

¹⁴ Article 68(10).

¹⁵ Article 68(12).

¹⁶ Article 68(13).

¹⁷ Article 69.

¹⁸ CoE, [Explanatory Report – CETS 210 – Violence against women and domestic violence, Article 69](#), 2011.

¹⁹ IC, Article 70(1).

²⁰ Articles 70(2) and 70(3)

EU Directive 2024/1385 on Combatting Violence against Women and Domestic Violence

The EU adopted the Violence against Women Directive (VAWD) on 14 May 2024. The Directive largely follows the structure of the IC but has several important additions. For example, the VAWD contains offences relating to technology-facilitated crime, or cyber-crime, which are not in the IC, and elaborates how protection measures and support services must operate. EU Member States must transpose the Directive by 14 June 2027.

Owing to the EU's limited legal competence in criminal law, not all offences covered by the IC are addressed by the VAWD. While the Directive only criminalises certain forms of gender-based violence (FGM, forced marriage, and technology-facilitated offences), provisions on the protection and support of victims and the prevention of violence still apply to the broader scope of gender-based violence detailed in the IC and should not be limited to the specific offences criminalised by the VAWD.

Other EU Law Related to Gender-based Violence

In addition to the VAWD, the EU *acquis* in this area largely consists of Council conclusions, Parliament resolutions, and Commission strategies. Unlike the VAWD, these are not legally-binding for Member States.²¹ Additionally, relevant directives are not specific to gender-based violence and only reference violence against women. However, some legal acts are relevant to Kosovo, which, as an aspiring EU member, must align its legislation with that of the EU under the Stabilisation and Association Agreement.²² Relevant instruments include: the Victims' Rights Directive (VD);²³ the Anti-trafficking Directive;²⁴ the Recast Equal Treatment Directive²⁵ and the Gender Goods and Services Directive,²⁶ which both define and condemn harassment²⁷ and sexual harassment;²⁸ and the Directive on Combating Sexual Abuse of Children.²⁹

Thematic Issues Under the IC and Their Applicability to Kosovo Law

This section examines themes in the IC and the extent to which they are reflected in Kosovo's legal and policy framework, including the integration of an adequate gender

²¹ Bonewit, A. (European Parliament Directorate-General for Internal Policies), "[Study on the Issue of Violence Against Women in the European Union](#)", p. 44, 2016.

²² [Stabilisation and Association Agreement between the European Union and Kosovo](#) (OJ L 71, 16.3.2016).

²³ Directive 2012/29/EU [on common minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims](#).

²⁴ Directive 2011/36/EU [on preventing and combatting trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims](#).

²⁵ Directive 2006/54/EC [on the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation \(recast\)](#).

²⁶ Directive 2004/113/EC [on implementing the principle of equal treatment between men and women in the access to and supply of goods and services](#).

²⁷ "Where unwanted conduct related to the sex of a person occurs with the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of a person, and of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment."

²⁸ "Where any form of unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature occurs, with the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of a person, in particular when creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment."

²⁹ Directive 2011/93/EU [on combating the sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children and child pornography](#). Protection is also found in Directive 2011/99/EU [on the European protection order](#) and Regulation (EU) No 606/2013 [on mutual recognition of protective measures in civil matters](#). However, the application of these instruments is only effective within the EU.

perspective, a comprehensive inter-institutional victim-centred approach, and ample monitoring mechanisms.

Implementing the Gender-perspective of the IC

The term “gender” as a social construct has proven instrumental in describing structural oppression against women and in evaluating the historical, systemic, and institutionalised power imbalances leading to gender inequality and gender-based violence.³⁰ While the term was already in use in international human rights prior to the IC (see Box 3),³¹ the IC was the first legally binding international treaty to define “gender” in social constructionist terms. It acknowledges the socially constructed nature of gender, as “the roles, behaviours, activities and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for women and men”. This progressive interpretation of gender sets the IC apart from previous international treaties. The IC requires gender-sensitive policies and use of a gender perspective when implementing and evaluating the impact of its provisions. Its obligations on protection, support,³² and the criminal process are to be based on a gendered understanding of violence against women.³³ Parties must take measures, where appropriate, to include teaching material on

matters of gender equality, mutual respect, and non-stereotyped gender roles.³⁴ The IC requires Parties to protect the rights of victims without discrimination on any ground, including, for the first time in an international treaty, on the basis of gender identity or sexual orientation.³⁵

The IC is partially gender specific by focusing on gender-based violence against women, defined as “violence directed at a woman because of her gender or violence which affects women disproportionately”.³⁶ While the IC aims to protect to all victims of domestic violence, it pays particular attention to women as the disproportionately affected gender (Article 2).

Box 3. IC Terminology

Sex

Refers to “biological differences between women and men.”

- CEDAW, General Recommendation 28

Gender

Refers to “socially constructed identities, attributes and roles for women and men and society’s social and cultural meaning for ... biological differences, resulting in hierarchical relationships between women and men and in the distribution of power and rights favouring men and disadvantaging women. The social position of women and men is affected by political, economic, cultural, social, religious, ideological and environmental factors that can be changed by culture, society and community.”

- CEDAW, General Recommendation 28

Gender-based violence

Means violence that is perpetrated against a person because of her or his gender or that affects persons of a particular gender disproportionately.

³⁰ Antić, M. and Radačić, I., “The evolving understanding of gender in international law and ‘gender ideology’ pushback 25 years since the Beijing conference on women”, *Women’s Studies International Forum*, 2020, p. 83.

³¹ See, for example, General Recommendation 28 of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (2010, section 5).

³² Articles 18 and 49.

³³ Article 6.

³⁴ Article 14.

³⁵ Article 4.3; see the Non-discrimination and an Intersectional Approach to Addressing Gender-based Violence section below.

³⁶ Article 3(d).

While this solution has been described as innovative, incidences of domestic violence against men are not rooted in structural discrimination or subordination.³⁷ The previous UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, Rashida Manjoo, has written that the use of gender neutrality in this context “favours a more pragmatic and politically palatable understanding of gender, that is, as simply a euphemism for ‘men and women’, rather than as a system of domination of men over women.”³⁸ She argues that this suggests that male victims of violence “require, and deserve, comparable resources to those afforded to female victims, thereby ignoring the reality that violence against men does not occur as a result of pervasive inequality and discrimination, and also that it is neither systemic nor pandemic in the way that violence against women indisputably is.” She continues:

Violence against women cannot be analysed on a case-by-case basis in isolation of the individual, institutional and structural factors that govern and shape the lives of women. Such factors demand gender-specific approaches to ensure an equality of outcomes for women. Attempts to combine or synthesize all forms of violence into a “gender neutral” framework, tend to result in a depoliticized or diluted discourse, which abandons the transformative agenda.

In Kosovo, the Law on Gender Equality recognises gender-based violence as a form of discrimination that “seriously inhibits women’s and men’s ability to enjoy rights and freedoms on a basis of equality”.³⁹ The primary legal act in the sphere of gender-based violence in Kosovo, the Law on Protection against Domestic Violence (LPDV),⁴⁰ was replaced in 2023 with the Law on Prevention and Protection From Domestic Violence, Violence against Women and Gender-based Violence (LGBV).⁴¹ The LPDV had been criticised for failing to adequately acknowledge that violence against women constitutes a form of discrimination and a violation of women’s human rights.⁴² Now, the LGBV more closely aligns with the IC and explicitly recognises that “[d]omestic violence, violence against women and gender-based violence is a violation of human rights and freedoms, and constitutes discrimination that restricts them from enjoying rights and freedoms on an equal basis with men”.⁴³

Gender in Criminal Law

Criminal provisions of the IC are generally gender-neutral, as the gender of the victim or perpetrator should, in principle, not be a constitutive element of a crime. This is not intended to prevent states from introducing gender-specific provisions,⁴⁴ and there are exceptions. In Kosovo, an understanding of the gendered effects of violence related to crime is somewhat identifiable. According to CCK Article 173, murder motivated on the basis of gender, gender identity, and/or sexual orientation are considered as aggravated murder, punishable by at least 10 years of imprisonment or life imprisonment. The Kosovo Criminal Procedure Code (CPC)

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Manjoo, R., “[Report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences](#)”, (A/HRC/26/38), p. 17.

³⁹ Law No. 05/L-020 on [Gender Equality](#), Article 4.2, 2015.

⁴⁰ Law No. 03/L-182 on [Protection against Domestic Violence, 2010](#).

⁴¹ Law No. 08/L-185 on [Prevention and Protection from Domestic Violence, Violence against Women, and Gender-Based Violence](#), 2023.

⁴² OSCE, [Adjudication of petitions for protection orders in domestic violence cases in Kosovo](#), 2012, p. 23.

⁴³ LGBV, Article 4.1.

⁴⁴ “Explanatory Report to the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence”, Istanbul, 11.V.2011, para. 153.

requires “due consideration” for “the injured party or victim who is a victim of ... human trafficking, gender-based violence, violence in a domestic relationship, sexual violence, exploitation or discrimination and victim[s] who have suffered considerable harm due to the severity of the criminal offense”.⁴⁵ No definition of gender is included in the CPC.

The CCK primarily understands the gendered aspects of violence only in a domestic setting. It defines a “vulnerable victim” as: “a victim of a crime who is ... a pregnant woman, ... or a person whose relationship to and dependence on the offender make them particularly vulnerable to repeat victimisation, intimidation or retaliation”.⁴⁶ “Vulnerable victims” are addressed specifically in several crimes relevant to gender-based violence,⁴⁷ but any crime that is committed against a victim who is “particularly vulnerable” is to be treated as aggravated during sentencing.⁴⁸ The Supreme Court Sentencing Guidelines explain that the greatest consideration in sentencing when these provisions apply is the level of vulnerability of the victim and the extent to which the perpetrator perceived that vulnerability.⁴⁹ In relation to domestic violence, the Guidelines state that “a prolonged period of mental and physical abuse will increase the defencelessness of the victim and the likelihood of a finding of significant aggravation.”⁵⁰

Other crimes are considered aggravated when the perpetrator shares a domestic relationship with the victim.⁵¹ The principle of “aggravating factors” also applies generally across a broad range of offenses.⁵² The definition of “gender” in the CCK has not yet been harmonised with the wider definition of gender given by the IC; it currently contains the ambiguous definition used in the Rome Statute: “Gender - refers to the two sexes, male and female, within the context of society”.⁵³ Regardless, several crimes are aggravated if committed on the grounds of gender,⁵⁴ and there is a generally applicable aggravating factor with the same principle.⁵⁵

Coordinating a Comprehensive Institutional Response

The IC requires implementation of integrated, effective, comprehensive, and coordinated policies that encompass all necessary measures to combat and prevent all forms of violence, as well as to protect and support victims.⁵⁶ Signatories should establish a holistic, victim-centred response to violence against women.⁵⁷ The IC requires appropriate allocation of

⁴⁵ No. 06/L-151 [Criminal Procedure Code](#), Article 63.1.4.

⁴⁶ Code No. 06/L-074 [Criminal Code of the Republic of Kosovo](#), Article 113.39.

⁴⁷ See in particular: Light bodily injury (Article 185), grievous bodily injury (Article 186), female genital mutilation (Article 180), assault (Article 184), kidnapping (Article 191), and unlawful deprivation of liberty (Article 193).

⁴⁸ Article 70.2.6.

⁴⁹ Supreme Court of Kosovo, [Sentencing Guidelines](#), First Edition, 2018, p. 79. A second edition exists (2024), but the official website was not working at the time of publishing to include the citation and hyperlink.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ See in particular: rape (Article 227), sexual assault (Article 229), degradation of sexual integrity (Article 230), and slavery, slavery-like conditions and forced labour (Article 163).

⁵² Article 70.2.14.

⁵³ Article 143.1.10. Some argue that using the phrase “within the context of society” explicitly incorporates the social construction of gender (Copelon, R., “Gender Crimes as War Crimes: Integrating Crimes Against Women into International Criminal Law”, *McGill Law Journal*, 46, 2000, 237), while conservative evaluations of this definition generally conclude that it situates gender within the confines of biological sex (Singson, S., “New European Convention Defines ‘Gender’ as Social Construct”, *Catholic Family and Human Rights Institute* [C-FAM], 7 April 2000, 1).

⁵⁴ See, for example: aggravated murder (Article 173), assault (Article 184), and grievous bodily injury (Article 186).

⁵⁵ Article 70.2.12.

⁵⁶ Articles 7.1 and 18.2, respectively.

⁵⁷ Article 7.2.

financial and human resources for the adequate implementation of integrated policies, measures, and programs, including those carried out by NGOs.⁵⁸ The IC recognises the important work of civil society, especially women's rights NGOs, and requests States encourage and support their work.⁵⁹ States must designate official, central bodies responsible for coordination, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of policies and measures to prevent and combat all forms of violence as mandated in the IC.⁶⁰

Similarly, the VAWD calls for coordination and cooperation in policy and institutional response to violence against women. Member States are required to adopt and implement effective, comprehensive, and coordinated policies at the national level to prevent and combat violence against women and domestic violence. These policies must be overseen by one or more specifically designated official bodies.⁶¹ The VAWD also recognises the important role played by NGOs and requires Member States to cooperate and consult with NGOs regularly in providing support services, policymaking initiatives, information and awareness-raising campaigns, research and education programs, training, and monitoring and evaluation of the impact of measures to support and protect victims of violence against women.⁶²

The VAWD goes further than the IC in calling for the adoption of national action plans for preventing and combating gender-based violence formulated in conjunction with specialist support services. These plans may include priorities and actions for preventing and combatting violence against women, monitoring mechanisms, details of resources required, and how resources should be allocated. National action plans should be reviewed and updated on a rolling basis.⁶³ Also beyond the IC, Member States are required to put in place appropriate mechanisms for ensuring coordination and cooperation among relevant authorities and bodies including the ombudsperson, local and regional authorities, law enforcement, the judicial system, support services, NGOs, social services, and education and healthcare providers.⁶⁴

The LGBV builds on the LPDV, addressing prior gaps by clearly defining responsibilities of actors involved in coordinating the institutional response to gender-based violence. While responsibilities and inter-institutional coordination for domestic violence⁶⁵ and trafficking⁶⁶ were previously set out in SOPs, comparable measures for other forms of gender-based violence were lacking. Responsibilities were therefore not recognised in law, leading to limited budgets and inadequate financial support for coordination mechanisms. The LGBV largely rectifies this by specifying the responsibilities of the following actors.

The **National Coordinator** for protection from domestic violence and violence against women and gender-based violence is the highest authority for coordination, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of policies and measures to prevent and combat all forms of violence under the IC, LGBV, and National Strategy.⁶⁷ The **Minister of Justice** holds this position and must report to the parliament at least once annually. The National Coordinator:

⁵⁸ Article 8.

⁵⁹ Article 9.

⁶⁰ Article 10.

⁶¹ Article 38.

⁶² Article 41.

⁶³ Article 39.

⁶⁴ Article 40.

⁶⁵ OPM, [Standard Operating Procedures for Protection from Domestic Violence in Kosovo](#).

⁶⁶ Ministry of Internal Affairs Office of the National Anti-Trafficking Coordinator, [Standard Operating Procedures for Trafficked Persons in Kosovo](#).

⁶⁷ Article 13 and 25.4.

- leads the drafting, monitoring and implementation of the National Strategy and Action Plan;
- coordinates, implements, monitors and evaluates policies and measures to prevent and combat all forms of violence that are covered by the LGBV and IC;
- chairs and represents the Inter-Ministerial Coordinating Group (IMCG) for protection from domestic violence and violence against women;
- leads the process of raising the capacities of coordinating mechanisms for protection from domestic violence and violence against women, in cooperation with AGE; and
- regularly monitors the work of local coordinating mechanisms (with the support of the IMCG).

A **Secretariat** is established within M J to support the National Coordinator and the IMCG. The Secretariat is responsible for collecting information, preparing monitoring reports, and other actions requested by the National Coordinator.

AGE is the **Deputy National Coordinator**, which can undertake responsibilities of the National Coordinator if requested by them, with the approval of the IMCG.⁶⁸ AGE is responsible for ensuring “the inclusion of the gender perspective in all public policies and legislation, systems and processes”, including in leading review and evaluation of SOPs, coordinating the process of building institutional and cross-sectoral capacities for implementing SOPs, and coordinating capacity-building of media for eliminating gender stereotypes and sexist language, all in coordination with MJ and responsible ministries.

The **IMCG** is chaired by the National Coordinator.⁶⁹ The deputy chair is AGE. It involves a member from ministries of Internal Affairs (MIA); Finance, Labour and Transfers (MFLT); Justice (MJ); Health (MH); Education, Science, Technology, and Innovation (MESTI); Local Government Administration (MLGA); Culture, Youth, and Sports (MCYS); as well as from the Kosovo Police (KP), State Prosecutor’s Office, Kosovo Judicial Council (KJC), Academy of Justice (AJ), Kosovo Shelter Coalition, Victims Advocacy and Assistance Office (VAAO), and Centres for Social Work (CSW). Each ministry should be represented by a Deputy Minister, though membership may be delegated to a cabinet official “in case of impossibility”. This provision is unclear regarding how often such responsibilities can be delegated and could be clarified. The National Coordinator may invite representatives of other ministries or institutions, depending on obligations in the National Strategy. Representatives of CSOs and strategic partners may be invited by the National Coordinator as observers. IMCG is responsible for: implementation, review, and evaluation of the National Strategy; coordination, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of policies and measures for the prevention and combating of all forms of violence; and ensuring inter-institutional and inter-sectoral cooperation, including collecting and processing data, ensuring the budget and human resources for implementing the Strategy. All institutions at all levels must respond to all requests of the IMCG.

Local Coordinating Mechanisms must be created by all municipalities and sufficient financial and human resources must be allocated to coordinate the implementation of the provisions of the LGBV and National Strategy.⁷⁰ Their non-exhaustive obligatory responsibilities include local government inter-institutional coordination of the implementation of the LGBV and

⁶⁸ Articles 13.5 and 14.

⁶⁹ Article 15.

⁷⁰ Article 25.

the National Strategy; reporting to the Office of the National Coordinator on implementation; and drawing-up action plans to implement the National Strategy.

The previous edition of this report found that Kosovo needed to urgently develop a comprehensive strategy addressing all forms of violence against women, containing a gendered understanding of violence and a holistic response to such violence, including all measures covered by the IC.⁷¹ The Strategy in force (the NSPDV) was well developed and accompanied by concrete, measurable, and applicable objectives, including costing and financing sources for each measure.⁷² However, it focused on domestic violence and failed to address other forms of gender-based violence.⁷³ The CoE drew attention to the many forms of violence covered by the IC, including sexual violence, forced marriage, stalking, forced sterilisation, forced abortion, psychological violence, and FGM that were completely absent from targeted policy interventions, and specialist and general support services.⁷⁴ The CoE recommended that Kosovo's strategy address the links between all forms of violence against women in a coherent, consistent manner, as well as address gender-based violence as a human rights violation and form of discrimination.⁷⁵

The LGBV requires that a National Strategy be drafted by the National Coordinator and approved by the Government.⁷⁶ It must “define the institutional tasks and responsibilities for the implementation of policies aimed at prevention, protection, coordination, processing, resocialization and reintegration”. The LGBV provides that “all institutions have the obligation to fulfil the tasks and responsibilities arising from the action plan of the strategy.” While the relevant article refers to the “National Strategy for Protection *from Domestic Violence*”, it requires the strategy to be drafted in accordance with the requirements of the LGBV and IC, meaning that all forms of violence against women therein must be addressed. The LGBV also establishes several “general obligations” on institutions, which include:

- placing the rights of victims in the centre during the drafting of all policies, documents and legislation;
- adopting measures to promote social and cultural changes in the behaviour of women and men with the aim of eliminating prejudices, customs, traditions and all other practices that are based on the idea of the inferiority of women or on the stereotyped roles of women and men;
- allocating adequate human and financial resources to programs, projects and initiatives to prevent domestic violence, and providing comprehensive responses to violence against women, empowering and reintegrating victims, and ensuring that the specific needs of vulnerable victims are taken into account and be properly addressed;
- cooperating with civil society and professional associations of journalists and media workers, to strengthen the media's capacity for professional reporting on issues related to domestic violence, violence against women and gender-based violence;

⁷¹ Kosovo Women's Network, *From Laws to Action*, 2020, p. 24.

⁷² MJ, [National Strategy on Protection Against Domestic Violence and Violence against Women 2022-2026](#), 2022.

⁷³ Annex 3 of the Strategy included definitions of forms of violence covered by the IC. However, this had no substantive impact on the measures in the Strategy because all specific objectives referred only to domestic violence.

⁷⁴ Krol, et al., *Mapping support services for victims of violence against women in Kosovo*, 2017, p. 45.

⁷⁵ Ibid, p. 79.

⁷⁶ LGBV, Article 12.

- recognising, encouraging and supporting, at all levels, the work of relevant non-governmental organisations and the work of civil society active in the fight against violence against women, and to create effective cooperation with these organizations;
- raising the capacities of the persons responsible for dealing with cases of violence in the family and against women, in order to prevent and identify the violence, the needs and rights of the victims, as well as to prevent their re-victimization;
- organisation of awareness campaigns for domestic violence, violence against women and gender equality, in cooperation with civil society, non-governmental organizations, especially women's organizations, human rights mechanisms and the media;
- regularly collecting and reporting statistical data broken down by gender for all forms of violence regulated by this law; and
- preparing and supporting research related to the causes, effects and level of cases of violence and their punishment.⁷⁷

These general obligations must be addressed by, and reflected in, the National Strategy and all legislative and other measures to prevent and eliminate domestic violence and violence against women.

The 2022-2026 National Strategy acknowledges the importance of coordinated institutional responses. The Strategy outlines coordination as a cross-cutting principle, calling for strengthened cooperation among justice, health, education, and social welfare sectors. It further emphasises the role of the National Coordinator in overseeing the implementation of actions and ensuring integrated service delivery for survivors. While coordination is addressed, some responsibilities particularly around accountability mechanisms and local-level coordination may benefit from further clarification and operational guidance.

Progress in 2025

Although this research covers the period of 2020–2024, in 2025 several important policies were adopted related to treating gender-based violence. These include:

- Administrative Instruction (GRK) No. 01/2025 on the Emergency Telephone Line for Victims of Domestic Violence, Violence against Women, and Gender-Based Violence, which sets forth the state responsibility for establishing a 24/7 emergency telephone line providing immediate, confidential, and free support for victims of gender-based violence. The line should serve as a central contact point, offering information, counseling, crisis guidance, and referrals to specialised services to ensure victim protection and empowerment.
- Regulation (GRK) No. 01/2025 on the Local Coordinating Mechanism for Protection from Domestic Violence, Violence against Women, and Gender-Based Violence defines the responsibilities and coordination role of Local Coordinating Mechanism to provide protection, support, and assistance to victims. It calls for victim-centered, non-discriminatory approaches, confidentiality, and compliance with national and European legal standards.

⁷⁷ LGBV, Article 10.

- Regulation (GRK) – No. 37/2024 on the Organization and Functioning of the Office of the National Coordinator for Protection against Domestic Violence, Violence against Women and Gender-based Violence and the Functioning of the Inter-ministrial Coordination Group establishes duties and responsibilities of the Office of the National Coordinator and the Interministerial Working Group, including policy development, coordination, data collection, awareness campaigns, and reporting to ensure effective prevention and protection of victims.

Monitoring

GREVIO is tasked with monitoring the implementation of the IC.⁷⁸ Parties to the IC submit reports to GREVIO, but GREVIO does not process individual complaints of violations.⁷⁹ The only body that handles individual complaints under the IC is the European Court of Human Rights (“ECtHR”). As Kosovo is not yet a member of the CoE and is unable to formally ratify the IC, citizens do not currently have access to the ECtHR. Thus, these monitoring mechanisms are currently inaccessible. This may change in the future should Kosovo attain membership. In the meantime, in 2022, GREVIO monitored Kosovo to assess the alignment of national legislation, policies, and measures with the IC.⁸⁰ The report highlights progress, including legal reforms and the establishment of specialised institutions, such as police units, prosecutors, and judges trained to handle domestic violence cases. However, it identifies significant shortcomings: domestic violence is often insufficiently considered in custody and visitation decisions; women’s economic dependency persists due to weak social support and limited access to property and employment; and there are gaps in systematic data collection and professional training. Findings underscore the need for deeper reforms, sustainable funding for support services such as shelters, and inclusive policies addressing the needs of vulnerable groups, including women with disabilities, Roma, Ashkali, Egyptian communities, and LGBTI persons.

The IC requires states to designate official bodies to monitor and evaluate policies and measures to prevent and address all forms of violence.⁸¹ As per the LGBV, the National Coordinator is responsible for implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. Meanwhile, Kosovo’s lack of access to monitoring mechanisms places importance on the work of civil society, including CSOs, academics, trade unions, and bar associations in monitoring implementation of the legal framework.⁸² Opportunities exist to establish an independent inter-institutional body with civil society representatives to monitor and evaluate implementation of the IC, facilitating a stronger domestic monitoring system.

Substantive Law

This section examines Chapter V of the IC on substantive law, including forms of gender-based violence that are criminalised and provisions on victim compensation. It focuses on the extent to which the IC’s substantive provisions are reflected in Kosovo law. Since 2021, several

⁷⁸ IC, Article 66.

⁷⁹ However, GREVIO can initiate an inquiry procedure where there is reliable information indicating that action is required to prevent a serious, massive, or persistent pattern of any acts of violence covered by the IC (Article 68).

⁸⁰ GREVIO, [Assessment of the alignment of Kosovo’s laws, policies and other measures with the standards of the Istanbul Convention](#), 2022.

⁸¹ Article 10.

⁸² Article 9.

new offences have been introduced, including violence against women in public life and virginity testing.⁸³

Domestic Violence

The IC defines domestic violence as, “all acts of physical, sexual, psychological or economic violence that occur within the family or domestic unit or between former or current spouses or partners, whether or not the perpetrator shares or has shared the same residence with the victim”.⁸⁴ In Kosovo, domestic violence is addressed by the LGBV and CCK.

The IC does not require classifying domestic violence as a dedicated offence. Any crime under the IC may be aggravated in a domestic setting, when the offence was committed against a current or former spouse or partner by a family member, a person cohabiting with the victim, or someone who has abused the victim or misused her or his authority.⁸⁵ Kosovo has adopted a multifaceted approach to treating domestic violence in the CCK by including both a dedicated offence on domestic violence and making domestic relationships an aggravating circumstance for other crimes.⁸⁶ The dedicated offence contains two formulations of domestic violence:

- Whoever commits physical, psychological or economic violence or mistreatment with the intent to violate the dignity of another person within a domestic relationship (Article 248.1),
- Every member of the family who exerts physical, psychological, sexual or economic violence or mistreatment against another member of his/her family (Article 248.3).⁸⁷

While both carry the same penalty, this repetition causes an unnecessary lack of clarity, particularly owing to the omission of sexual violence from the first offence formulation. The Law would be clearer if it was simplified to only one formulation that accounted for physical, psychological, sexual, or economic violence or mistreatment within a “domestic relationship”. The definition of “domestic relationship”, used in the first offence formulation, includes persons who are:

- engaged or were engaged or are married or were married or are in extra marital union or were in extra marital union or are co-habiting in a common household or were co-habiting in a common household;
- who use a common house and who are related by blood, marriage, adoption, in-law or are in a guardian relationship, including parents, grandparents, children, grandchildren, siblings, aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews, cousins; or
- who are the parents of a common child.⁸⁸

The acknowledgement of “common household” living arrangements may be useful in Kosovo to account for multiple or extended families residing together. However, the IC specifies that it

⁸³ CCK, Articles 236/A and 248/A, as amended by Law 08/L-188, 2023.

⁸⁴ The VAWD contains a similar definition (Article 2(b)).

⁸⁵ Article 46a.

⁸⁶ Article 70.2.14. An additional punishment is imposed on public officials who are convicted of domestic violence under the CCK; they are prohibited from exercising public administration or service for one to five years (Article 62.4).

⁸⁷ Article 248.

⁸⁸ Article 113.25.

is immaterial whether the perpetrator shares or has shared the same residence with the victim. Thus, tying a common household requirement to certain relationships may be problematic by limiting the scope of application of the law. This definition should be clarified to account for *all* family members (regardless of living arrangements) *or* any persons who share a common living arrangement (regardless of relationship). Clarifying the definition would positively impact the aggravating provision for other crimes related to domestic relationships.

The definition of domestic violence under the LGBV broadly aligns with the IC.⁸⁹ However, the Kosovo definition adds a specific element of the perpetrator having “the aim of violating the dignity and keeping under constant control and position of dependence, the persons against whom violence has been exercised”. Under the IC, this additional mental element is not required for domestic violence. The LGBV defines “family relations” as relationships between persons who are or have been engaged, married, in an extramarital union, in joint economy, joint parents, or use a common household where they are related by “by blood, affinity, adoption, or are in a custodial relationship”. As with the CCK, notably absent from this definition is family members who do not share a household, as required by the IC.

Psychological Violence

The IC criminalises the intentional serious impairing of a person’s psychological integrity through coercion or threats.⁹⁰ What is considered “serious” is not defined, but the provision is directed towards a course of conduct rather than a single event.⁹¹ Psychological violence comes within the definition of domestic violence in Kosovo law, both in the LGBV and the CCK. This is important considering that several studies have indicated that it may be the most prevalent form of violence in a domestic setting, including restriction of financial resources, education, or medical care, or isolation, humiliation, and threats.⁹² Such violence often accompanies physical or sexual abuse.⁹³ The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women has emphasised the importance of recognising psychological violence in the domestic setting in *V.K. v. Bulgaria*,⁹⁴ concluding that:

gender-based violence ... within the meaning of ... [CEDAW] and general recommendation No. 19, does not require a direct and immediate threat to the life or health of the victim. Such violence is not limited to acts that inflict physical harm, but also covers acts that inflict mental or sexual harm or suffering, threats of any such acts, coercion and other deprivations of liberty.

⁸⁹ Article 3.1.3: “all acts of physical, sexual, psychological and economic violence that occur within the family relationship, or the household unit, regardless of the blood connection or family relationship, or from the former or the current intimate partner, regardless of the fact that the perpetrator of the violence shares or has shared the same residence with the victim, with the aim of violating the dignity and keeping under constant control and position of dependence, the persons against whom violence has been exercised”.

⁹⁰ Article 33.

⁹¹ “Explanatory Report to the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence”, Istanbul, 11.V.2011, para. 181.

⁹² Truchero Cuevas, J. and Khrystova, G., “Good International Practices and Standards on Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence”, CoE, 2015, pp. 24-25.

⁹³ Krug, E., Dahlberg, L., Mercy, J., Zwi A., and Lozano, R. (eds.) for the World Health Organisation, [*World Report on Violence and Health: Chapter 4 - Violence by Intimate Partners*](#), 2002, p. 89.

⁹⁴ CEDAW Committee, *VK v Bulgaria* (CEDAW/C/49/D/20/2008).

The ECtHR has reached similar conclusions. For example, in the case of *Hajduová v. Slovakia*,⁹⁵ the Court found that although repeated threats made by a victim's former husband never materialised, they were enough to affect the psychological integrity and wellbeing of the victim.⁹⁶ The Kosovo Constitution provides that human rights and fundamental freedoms shall be interpreted in line with the decisions of the ECtHR,⁹⁷ so this line of reasoning may inform Kosovo courts dealing with cases of psychological violence.

Psychological violence, however, may occur *outside* the sphere of domestic violence, and the IC does not limit the application of this offence to the domestic setting. For example, the Explanatory Report to the IC draws attention to the workplace or school environment.⁹⁸ Criminalising psychological violence solely within a domestic relationship may fail to consider patterns of behaviour foreseen by the IC. Although psychological violence occurs in school settings, our monitoring shows that it remains largely under-reported, as we have not encountered any documented cases of psychological violence in schools during our monitoring. The domestic violence offence relies on a particular relationship existing for psychological violence to occur, which may not apply in environments such as work or school. In Kosovo, relevant offences in this context include threats, blackmail,⁹⁹ and harassment.¹⁰⁰ However, a dedicated provision on psychological violence in the CCK may better address psychological violence from a gender-perspective by more clearly defining it for improved application.

Since the previous edition of this report, the LGBV has introduced a dedicated non-exhaustive definition of “psychological violence”, including:

constant control, verbal abuse, isolation, humiliation or emotional abuse through insults, blackmail, intimidation, constant tracking and surveillance, withholding of information, misinformation and threatening behaviour, degrading treatment, threats or similar forms of control or psychological pressure, putting a person under reasonable fear of the use of violence against him or persons in a family relationship, the threat of damage to property or being kept under constant emotional distress.¹⁰¹

Physical Violence

The IC criminalises any intentional acts of physical violence against another person, irrespective of the context in which such acts occur.¹⁰² This refers to bodily harm suffered following physical force.¹⁰³ Physical violence comes within the definition of domestic violence in the CCK and within the definitions of “violence against women” and “domestic violence” in the LGBV. Within the CCK, three offences generally criminalise such conduct: assault, light bodily injury, and grievous bodily injury.¹⁰⁴ These offences are subject to a higher penalty if the offence

⁹⁵ See for example: *Opuz v Turkey* (Application no. 33401/02); *A v Croatia* (Application no. 55164/08); and *X and Y v the Netherlands* (Application no. 8978/80).

⁹⁶ *Hajduová v Slovakia* (Application no. 2660/03).

⁹⁷ Article 53.

⁹⁸ “Explanatory Report to the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence”, Istanbul, 11.V.2011, pgh. 181.

⁹⁹ KCC articles 181 and 329, respectively.

¹⁰⁰ See Stalking below.

¹⁰¹ Article 3, 1.8.

¹⁰² Article 35. “Explanatory Report to the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence”, Istanbul, 11.V.2011, para. 187.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, para. 188.

¹⁰⁴ Articles 184, 185, and 186, respectively.

involves use of a weapon, is perpetrated against a vulnerable victim,¹⁰⁵ and/or is motivated by a number of protected grounds, including gender.

Femicide and Due Diligence

Femicide refers to gender-based killing of women and girls. There is no standardised definition of femicide. The UN considers femicide to include the killing of women and girls in relation to intimate-partner violence, domestic violence, “honour” or dowries, and/or sex work.¹⁰⁶ The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) additionally refers to female foeticide, deaths related to unsafe abortions, and FGM-related deaths.¹⁰⁷

Within Kosovo law, the CCK offence of murder attracts a minimum penalty of five years imprisonment.¹⁰⁸ The offence is aggravated by several factors, raising the penalty to a minimum of ten years or lifelong imprisonment if the victim is a child, a pregnant woman, a family member, or if the motivation is based on grounds including gender, gender identity, or sexual orientation.¹⁰⁹ The definition of a “member of the family” includes spouses and persons who “live in an extra-marital communion”.¹¹⁰ The aggravated offence could be broadened to include partners and ex-partners who do not live with the victim. Additionally, several crimes relevant to gender-based violence are subject to stricter penalty if they result in the death of the victim: rape, sexual assault, forced abortion, forced sterilisation, and FGM, including inciting or assisting.¹¹¹

The IC does not use the term “femicide”, but the crime of physical violence is intended to encompass violence resulting in the death of the victim.¹¹² Perhaps more significant is the duty of due diligence imposed on states to prevent, investigate, punish, and provide reparation for acts of violence perpetrated by non-state actors.¹¹³ This refers to situations of extreme danger where state authorities knew or ought to have known of the risk but did not react. This duty can be seen in the context of intimate partner violence in ECtHR case law,¹¹⁴ in which the court has referred to opinions of the Committee for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and jurisprudence of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights on due diligence. In *Branko Tomasic v. Croatia* the ECtHR held:

A positive obligation will arise where it has been established that the authorities knew or ought to have known at the time of the existence of a real and immediate risk to the life of an identified individual from the criminal acts of a third party and that they failed to take measures within the scope of their powers which, judged reasonably, might have been expected to avoid that risk.¹¹⁵

¹⁰⁵ See the “[Gender in Criminal Law](#)” section above.

¹⁰⁶ UN Office on Drugs and Crime, *Global Study on Homicide: Gender-related killing of women and girls*, 2018, pp. 29-37.

¹⁰⁷ EIGE, *Terminology and Indicators for Data Collection: Rape, femicide and intimate partner violence*, 2017, pp. 34-35.

¹⁰⁸ Article 172.

¹⁰⁹ Article 173.

¹¹⁰ Article 113.26.

¹¹¹ Articles 227.5, 229.4, 178.3, 179.2, and 180.4, respectively.

¹¹² Article 35. “Explanatory Report to the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence”, Istanbul, 11.V.2011, para. 188.

¹¹³ Article 5.

¹¹⁴ *Opuz v. Turkey* (Application no. 33401/02).

¹¹⁵ *Branko Tomasic v. Croatia* (Application no. 46598/06).

In Kosovo, in recent years, increased attention has been drawn to femicide in the context of domestic violence and the inadequate institutional response to such crimes, including by police and in sentencing. Within the last 15 years, at least 59 women have been killed by their husbands, ex-husbands, fathers, or other male family members.¹¹⁶ The due diligence obligation under the IC would require investigation after such crimes into whether state authorities had prior knowledge of a woman's exposure to violence, if state institutions knew or should have known that the woman's life was at risk, and if appropriate measures were taken.¹¹⁷ In one instance, Kosovo's Constitutional Court found that state institutions failed to protect a victim of domestic violence in a landmark ruling in 2023.¹¹⁸ Consideration should be given to establishing a "femicide watch" focused on prevention by identifying shortcomings in law, policy, or implementation.¹¹⁹ The remedies under the IC must be accessible to the descendants of the victim in the event of her or his death.¹²⁰

Box 4. Implementing the Duty of Due Diligence in Kosovo

Obligations of due diligence require investigation after crimes like femicide to ascertain whether state authorities had prior knowledge of a woman's exposure to violence and knew or should have known that the woman's life was at risk, taking appropriate measures where needed. In the case of Sebahate Morina (2021), despite prior reports of domestic violence, a protection order, and a criminal conviction against her husband, authorities did not act with the required speed, did not perform a proper risk assessment, and failed to coordinate with social services. Ten days after reporting renewed violence, Morina was killed by her husband. In this case, state institutions failed to protect victims of domestic violence. In a landmark ruling, the Constitutional Court of Kosovo concluded that these omissions amounted to violations of the right to life under Article 25 of the Constitution and Article 2 of the ECHR, as well as Kosovo's obligations under the IC and CEDAW. Citing ECtHR jurisprudence (*Opuz v. Turkey*, *Kurt v. Austria*), the Court emphasised that positive obligations require state action to be immediate, proactive, and comprehensive in addressing risks of gender-based violence.¹²¹

The case of Hamide Magashi is a tragic example of the state's failure to protect victims of domestic violence. Despite having an active protection order, the authorities did not take adequate measures to ensure her safety. She was killed by her former husband in November 2022, just one day before giving birth. Although some police officers were suspended afterward, no further investigation was carried out, and the case was not referred to the Constitutional Court to review potential institutional inaction. This case suggests serious gaps in protection and accountability mechanisms for victims of violence in Kosovo.

¹¹⁶ Center for Information Critique and Action (QIKA), "[The last 15 years, at least 59 women have been killed](#)", 25 March 2025.

¹¹⁷ Duhaček, D., Branković, B. and Miražić, M. for the European Parliament FEMM Committee, *Women's Rights in Western Balkans*, January 2019, p. 41.

¹¹⁸ EC Kosovo 2023 Report, p. 19.

¹¹⁹ United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, "[Femicide Watch Call 2020](#)".

¹²⁰ "Explanatory Report to the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence", Istanbul, 11.V.2011, pgh. 164.

¹²¹ [Judgment in case no. KI129 / 21 Applicant Velerda Sopi](#), Constitutional review of the "actions and omissions" of the Basic Court in Gjilan, the Basic Prosecutor's Office in Gjilan, the Police Station in Gracanica and the Basic Prosecutor's Office in Prishtina.

Forced Marriage

The IC and VAWD require states to take measures to ensure that intentional forced marriage of an adult or child is criminalised.¹²² Under the VAWD, this offence must be punishable by a maximum imprisonment term of at least three years.¹²³ The CCK adequately provides this. Forcing a person into marriage or entering a marriage knowing that the other person was compelled, is punishable by imprisonment of one to eight years.¹²⁴ The penalty increases if the offence is committed:

- against a child under age 18 (imprisonment of two to 10 years);
- by a parent of a child between the ages of 14 and 18 (imprisonment of three to 10 years);
- by a parent of a child between 14 and 16 (imprisonment of five to 10 years);
- by a parent of a child under 14 (imprisonment of at least 15 years); and
- with the purpose of obtaining a material benefit (a fine and imprisonment of at least five years) by a parent (a fine and imprisonment of at least 15 years).

The CCK also mandates punishment of any official who knowingly permits unlawful marriage (with imprisonment of three months to three years).

The VAWD adds that, since victims are often minors, the limitation period for this criminal offence must only commence once the victim has reached 18 years of age.¹²⁵ The CCK aligns with the VAWD.¹²⁶

Civil law has a crucial role in addressing forced marriage. This is reflected in the IC as forced marriages must be annulled or dissolved without undue financial or administrative burden on the victim.¹²⁷ Kosovo Family Law provides that a marriage is not valid when established “under coercion, threat or by mistake or any other lack of free will” and shall be annulled if the “spouse” has provided consent under fear, violence, or serious threat.¹²⁸

Commentators have said that it may be difficult to satisfy the burden of proof that a marriage was “forced”. While courts may accept physical threats or emotional pressure, there has been reluctance among judges to accept as “forced” factors like fear of ostracism or shame, which may be particularly onerous for women in certain communities.¹²⁹ In Kosovo, child and early marriage occur more in Roma, Ashkali, Egyptian, rural, and diaspora communities.¹³⁰ Thus, judges’ training on forced marriage should integrate attention to the fact that certain cultural or gendered aspects¹³¹ must be considered in their understanding of what may constitute “force”, “threat”, and “coercion” in the Family Law. Meanwhile, training must make clear that no culture,

¹²² IC Article 37.1 and VAWD Article 4.1. Luring an adult or child to a territory other than where they reside for the purpose of forced marriage is also criminalised (IC Article 37.2 and VAWD Article 4.2).

¹²³ VAWD, Article 10.3.

¹²⁴ CCK, Article 239.

¹²⁵ VAWD, Article 13.2 and recital 16.

¹²⁶ CCK, Article 100.2.

¹²⁷ Article 32.

¹²⁸ Nr. 2004/32, articles 18 and 63, respectively.

¹²⁹ European Agency for Fundamental Rights, “[Addressing forced marriage in the EU: legal provisions and promising practices](#)”, 2014, p. 19.

¹³⁰ Krol, et al., *Mapping support services for victims of violence against women in Kosovo*, 2017, p. 4.

¹³¹ Anitha, S. and Gill, A., “Coercion, consent and the forced marriage debate in the UK”, *Feminist Legal Studies*, 17(2), 2009, 165-184, p. 175.

custom, religion, tradition, “honour” may justify forced marriages in any circumstances, as required by the IC.¹³²

Stalking

The IC defines stalking as “the intentional conduct of repeatedly engaging in threatening conduct directed at another person, causing her or him to fear for her or his safety”.¹³³ Although the CCK does not use the term “stalking”, the offence of “harassment” captures the same behaviour.¹³⁴ Harassment in the CCK is “a pattern of repeated and unwanted attention or communication with the intent to harass, intimidate, injure, damage property or kill another person or his or her children, family, relatives or pets” or subjecting a person under surveillance with the same intent.

The phrasing of this provision in the IC has faced some criticism as emphasising the consequences of the behaviour on the victim may set a particularly high threshold that leaves many victims unduly unprotected.¹³⁵ Some argue that the effect on the victim should be omitted, as the intrusive invasion of psychological space or mental privacy is sufficient for criminalisation.¹³⁶ Kosovo law faces the same critiques by requiring the victim to be “placed in a reasonable fear of death, grievous bodily injury, serious damage to property or substantial emotional stress”.¹³⁷ Future reform should consider removing this aspect of the offence.

The penalty increases if the crime is committed against a former or current domestic partner or family member. An additional aggravating circumstance is the use of a weapon, instrument, or other object.

The VAWD has introduced new offences of cyber stalking and cyber harassment, discussed below under “Technology Facilitated Crime”.

Sexual Harassment

The IC prohibits sexual harassment, defined as: “any form of unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature with the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of a person, in particular when creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment”.¹³⁸ The CCK now contains a similar offence.¹³⁹ It protects all persons from sexual harassment, but specifically addresses “vulnerable” persons due to age, illness, disability, addiction, pregnancy, or severe physical or mental disability, but not based on gender. The penalty increases if the perpetrator is in a position of authority over the victim or if a weapon, instrument, or object is used. A recent amendment further increased penalties and introduced new aggravating factors (if the offence is committed against a person under 10 or a vulnerable person under 15).¹⁴⁰ The new provision provides that a person who commits sexual

¹³² Article 42.

¹³³ Article 34.

¹³⁴ Article 182. Some commentators criticise this approach, arguing that although stalking and harassment are related, they are different phenomena and warrant separate criminalisation (Van der Aa, S., “New Trends in the Criminalization of Stalking in the EU Member States”, *European Journal of Criminal Policy and Research*, 24, 2018, 315-333, p. 326).

¹³⁵ Ibid., p. 325.

¹³⁶ Guelke, J. and Sorel, T., “Violation of privacy and law: the case of stalking”, *Law, Ethics and Philosophy*, 4, 2016, 32-60.

¹³⁷ Article 182.

¹³⁸ Article 40.

¹³⁹ Article 183.

¹⁴⁰ CCK Article 183, as amended by Law no. 08/L-188.

harassment against a child must be prohibited from any profession or activity related to working with children.

Kosovo law also contains protection against sexual harassment outside the criminal sphere under the Law on Gender Equality and the Law on Protection from Discrimination.¹⁴¹

Sexual Violence

The IC prohibits various crimes related to sexual violence, including:

- engaging in non-consensual vaginal, anal or oral penetration of a sexual nature of the body of another person with any bodily part or object;
- engaging in other non-consensual acts of a sexual nature with a person;
- causing another person to engage in non-consensual acts of a sexual nature with a third person.¹⁴²

The CCK includes offences of rape and sexual assault, which broadly correspond with offences A and B above, respectively.¹⁴³ The definition of rape is subjecting another person to a sexual act without that person's consent.¹⁴⁴ Sexual assault is where a person touches another for a sexual purpose or persuades a person to touch them or another person for a sexual purpose, without consent.¹⁴⁵ The CCK contains a wide range of aggravating circumstances. One is unique to rape: if the act is accompanied by a threat "to reveal a fact that would seriously harm the honor or reputation of such person or of a person closely connected". Punishments for both rape and sexual assault are increased if there is a threat of violence, imminent danger, exploitation, use of a weapon, torture, bodily injury, intoxication, awareness of a victim's vulnerabilities, or a domestic relationship between the perpetrator and victim.

Consent

The IC adopts the approach of international and human rights law in considering autonomy central to the definition of rape, stating that "[c]onsent must be given voluntarily as the result of the person's free will assessed in the context of the surrounding circumstances." The CoE offers the following guidance:

Prosecution of this offence will require a context-sensitive assessment of the evidence in order to establish on a case-by-case basis whether the victim has freely consented to the sexual act performed. Such an assessment must recognise the wide range of behavioural responses to sexual violence and rape which victims exhibit and shall not be based on assumptions of typical behaviour in such situations. It is equally important to

¹⁴¹ Article 3.1.12; and Law No. 05/L-021 on the [Protection from Discrimination](#), Article 4.1.3. Some shortcomings exist with these laws (see Banjska et al. for KWN, [Gender-Based Discrimination and Labour in Kosovo](#), Second Edition, 2022, pp. 18-28).

¹⁴² Article 36.

¹⁴³ The offence of Degradation of Sexual Integrity (Article 230) broadly follows the same structure of these offences, albeit with different penalties. This offence is where a person is induced to expose the private parts of their body, to masturbate or to commit another act that degrades their sexual integrity, without their consent.

¹⁴⁴ Article 227. Article 225.4 defines "sexual act".

¹⁴⁵ Article 229.

ensure that interpretations of rape legislation and the prosecution of rape cases are not influenced by gender stereotypes and myths about male and female sexuality.¹⁴⁶

In the Explanatory Report to the IC, the CoE also draws attention to the ECtHR case of *M.C. v. Bulgaria*:

the Court is persuaded that any rigid approach to the prosecution of sexual offences, such as requiring proof of physical resistance in all circumstances, risks leaving certain types of rape unpunished and thus jeopardising the effective protection of the individual's sexual autonomy. ... [Member states must require] the penalisation and effective prosecution of any non-consensual sexual act, including in the absence of physical resistance by the victim.¹⁴⁷

Under the CCK, "consent" means voluntary agreement of a person over age 16 to engage in a sexual act.¹⁴⁸ It can also mean voluntary agreement between two persons over the age of 14 where the difference in their ages does not exceed two years. A defence exists under the CCK where a person mistakenly believes that a victim is over the age of 16 for "justifiable reasons".¹⁴⁹ In such circumstances, a person may not be criminally liable for engaging in a consensual sexual act with a person below the age of consent. The negligence of the accused is insufficient to satisfy this defence, meaning that the perpetrator should be convicted if they ought to have been aware that the victim was under the age of consent or if they acted recklessly.

The CCK defines some non-exhaustive circumstances where no consent is obtained. These are: where the victim expresses by words or conduct that they do not want to engage in a sexual act; where consent is expressed by someone other than the victim; where consent was obtained through deception, fear or intimidation; or where someone is not capable of agreeing to a sexual act because of diminished mental or physical capacity or intoxication.

Inadmissible Evidence

While the *International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia* and *International Criminal Court* rules of procedure both state that the prior sexual conduct of a victim cannot be admitted as evidence, the IC allows this "only when it is relevant and necessary",¹⁵⁰ allowing considerable discretion.¹⁵¹ The VAWD now provides that evidence concerning "the past sexual conduct of the victim or other aspects of the victim's private life related thereto" is only permitted in criminal proceedings where it is relevant and necessary.¹⁵² In Kosovo, the CPC provides:

Any evidence that is related to the past sexual conduct of the witness, injured party or victim is ruled to be inadmissible in criminal proceedings of criminal offenses of [a] sexual

¹⁴⁶ "Explanatory Report to the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence", Istanbul, 11.V.2011, pgh. 192.

¹⁴⁷ Application no. 39272/98.

¹⁴⁸ Article 225.1 – 225.2.

¹⁴⁹ Articles 25 and 226.

¹⁵⁰ Article 54.

¹⁵¹ Nousiainen, K. and Chinkin, C., "[Legal Implications of EU Accession to the Istanbul Convention](#)", European Commission, 2015, p. 44.

¹⁵² VAWD, Article 20.

nature, unless relevant and strictly necessary and not unduly degrading to the witness, victim or injured party.¹⁵³

The only circumstances in which such evidence can be introduced are to prove that physical evidence originates from a person other than the defendant or to prove consent based on prior sexual contact between the defendant and the witness, victim, or injured party. However, prior sexual conduct may not be used as sole or decisive evidence proving consent. The Supreme Court of Kosovo Sentencing Guidelines direct judges that “[t]he victim’s past sexual history is not relevant to her credibility. Nor should it be a reason to reduce an offender’s sentence”.¹⁵⁴

Sexual Violence within Relationships, including Marital Sexual Violence

The IC requires law to recognise that the above sexual offences apply to acts committed against former or current spouses or partners.¹⁵⁵ This provision recognises that sexual violence and rape are a common form of exerting power and control in abusive relationships and are likely to occur during relationships and after couples breakup.¹⁵⁶ Therefore, there must be “no exceptions to the criminalisation and prosecution of such acts when committed against a current or former spouse or partner”.¹⁵⁷

For both rape and sexual assault, the CCK recognises their occurrence within a domestic relationship as an aggravating circumstance.¹⁵⁸ Despite these provisions, concern has been raised over inadequate implementation and widespread issues surrounding marital rape in Kosovo.¹⁵⁹ Notably, the previous CCK limited the domestic relationship aggravating circumstance to instances in which the victim was between 16 and 18 years old, thereby unjustifiably excluding many potential victims of marital rape.¹⁶⁰ The clarity in the new CCK is thus a welcome development, but may need monitoring to ensure appropriate application given this history. Issues remain with enforcing laws against rape, including marital rape; courts still impose lighter penalties than the legal minimum.¹⁶¹

Female Genital Mutilation

The IC and the VAWD prohibit performing any mutilation to a woman’s genitalia or coercing a woman or girl to undergo any acts of genital mutilation.¹⁶² The VAWD adds that “any mutilation” should be understood to refer to all physical alterations of female genitals.¹⁶³ The CCK provides that whoever “for non-medical reasons, partially or totally removes or permanently alters the external female genitalia” shall be punished by imprisonment from six months to five years. The penalty increase for “vulnerable” victims and if the victim dies as a result of the mutilation.¹⁶⁴ These penalties align with the VAWD, which requires a maximum

¹⁵³ Article 257.

¹⁵⁴ Supreme Court of Kosovo, [Sentencing Guidelines](#), First Edition, 2018, pp. 135-136.

¹⁵⁵ Article 36.3.

¹⁵⁶ “Explanatory Report to the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence”, Istanbul, 11.V.2011, para. 194.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ Articles 227.4.9 and 229.3.9, respectively

¹⁵⁹ See, for example, Gjocaj, S., for *Kosovo 2.0*, “[Marital rape, ‘legitimate’ and granted in Kosovo](#)”, 2019.

¹⁶⁰ Code No. 06/I-074 [Criminal Code of the Republic of Kosovo](#) (Abolished), Article 230.4.9.

¹⁶¹ U.S. Department of State [Human Rights Report on Kosovo](#), 2023.

¹⁶² IC Article 38 and VAWD Article 3.

¹⁶³ VAWD, Recital 15.

¹⁶⁴ Article 180.

penalty of at least five years imprisonment.¹⁶⁵ In Kosovo, inciting or assisting the crime is also punishable. The “non-medical reasons” aspect of the CCK provision is also foreseen by the World Health Organisation, but concern was raised in 2014 due to an increasing trend of medically trained personnel performing FGM.¹⁶⁶

Beyond punishment, support and protection measures for victims are also necessary, and should include training of frontline professionals.¹⁶⁷ A good practice in legislating against FGM is to protect victims from suffering mutilation overseas¹⁶⁸ and criminalising the failure to protect a girl from it.¹⁶⁹ This means that if parents or another guardian expose a girl to such risk, they may face prosecution. Consideration should be given to adopting this approach in Kosovo.

Forced Abortion and Forced Sterilisation

The IC addresses forced abortion and forced sterilisation in the same article.¹⁷⁰ These crimes are addressed separately in the CCK.¹⁷¹ The IC prohibits the intentional performing of an abortion on a woman without her prior and informed consent.¹⁷² Kosovo law on forced abortion prohibits the termination of pregnancy without the consent of the pregnant person. It also prohibits terminating a pregnancy *with* consent of the pregnant person when the procedure violates the Law on Termination of Pregnancy.¹⁷³ Undergoing or assisting with such abortions is punishable with imprisonment. Forced abortions carry penalty increases if they result in grievous bodily injury, serious impairment to health, or the death of the pregnant person.

Regarding forced sterilisation, the IC prohibits performing surgery which has the purpose or effect of terminating a woman’s capacity to naturally reproduce without her prior and informed consent or understanding.¹⁷⁴ In Kosovo, forced sterilisation is formulated in gender-neutral terms. The offence of forced sterilisation carries a penalty increase if the offence results in grievous bodily injury, serious impairment to health, or the death of the person. The Kosovo provision relies exclusively on a lack of consent, while the IC provision additionally prohibits sterilisation if the victim does not understand the procedure.

Technology Facilitated Crime

Several emerging forms of gender-based violence are instigated or facilitated by information and communications technology (ICT). These include online harassment, stalking, bullying, and sexual abuse.¹⁷⁵ The IC does not explicitly address technology facilitated crime, but the VAWD contains offences on the non-consensual sharing of intimate or manipulated material, cyber stalking, cyber harassment, and cyber incitement to violence or hatred.

Non-consensual sharing of intimate or manipulated material

¹⁶⁵ VAWD, Article 10.

¹⁶⁶ World Health Organisation, “[Female Genital Mutilation: Fact Sheet](#)”.

¹⁶⁷ Gardner-Rhys, R., “Recent Developments in the Law Relating to Female Genital Mutilation”, *Child and Family Law Quarterly*, 28(1), 2016, 87-98, pp. 96 – 97.

¹⁶⁸ For example, see the United Kingdom Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003, s.3 (as amended).

¹⁶⁹ Ibidem, s.3A (as amended).

¹⁷⁰ Article 39.

¹⁷¹ Articles 178 and 179.

¹⁷² Article 39a.

¹⁷³ No. 03/L-110.

¹⁷⁴ Article 39b.

¹⁷⁵ Council of the European Union Conclusions, “Preventing and combating all forms of violence against women and girls, including female genital mutilation”, Justice and Home Affairs Council Meeting, Luxembourg, 5-6 June 2014, p. 2.

One form of online sexual abuse is “revenge porn”, which refers to the distribution of sexually explicit images or videos without the consent of the pictured person and for no legitimate purpose (e.g., within a criminal trial). Perpetrators are often, but not always, ex-partners who obtained the material consensually, and the motive is not always revenge.¹⁷⁶ Empirical research on sexual abuse online is lacking, but women and girls seem disproportionately affected.¹⁷⁷

The VAWD provides that the following intentional conduct must be punishable as a criminal offence:

- making images, videos or similar material depicting sexually explicit activities or the intimate parts of a person accessible to the public by means of ICT, without that person’s consent, where such conduct is likely to cause serious harm to that person;
- producing, manipulating or altering images, videos or similar material making it appear as though a person is engaged in sexually explicit activities, and subsequently making that material accessible to the public by means of ICT without that person’s consent, where such conduct is likely to cause serious harm to that person; and
- threatening to engage in the conduct referred to above in order to coerce a person to do, acquiesce to or refrain from a certain act.¹⁷⁸

The VAWD is clear that the offence of non-consensual sharing of intimate material arises irrespective of whether the victim consented to creating the material or shared it with a particular person.¹⁷⁹ The criminal conduct is the non-consensual *distribution* of the material to the public. Recitals to the Directive note that “accessible to the public” is intended to refer to potentially reaching a number of persons.¹⁸⁰ Recitals also clarify that the “likely to cause serious harm” requirement was included “to only set minimum rules for the most serious forms of cyber violence.” The specific circumstances of the case should be considered, and the “likelihood” of harm should be determined based on objective factual circumstances. The recitals explicitly remind States that they are free to adopt more stringent criminal rules.

Cyber stalking and cyber harassment

Cyber stalking under the VAWD is the intentional conduct of repeatedly or continuously placing a person under surveillance to track or monitor that person’s movements and activities without that person’s consent or legal authorisation.¹⁸¹ The offence must be punishable by a maximum term of at least one year imprisonment.

Recitals to the Directive note that surveillance might be enabled by processing the victim’s personal data, such as “by means of identity theft, by stealing passwords, by hacking the victim’s devices, by secretly activating keylogging software to access the victim’s private spaces,

¹⁷⁶ EIGE, “[Cyber violence against women and girls](#)”, p. 2.

¹⁷⁷ See for example: Drouin, D., Ross, J., and Tobin, E., “Sexting: a new, digital vehicle for intimate partner aggression?”, *Computers in Human Behaviour*, 50, 2015, 197, and Franks, M.A. and Citron, D., “Criminalizing Revenge Porn”, *Wake Forest Law Review*, 49, 2014, 345.

¹⁷⁸ VAWD, Article 5.

¹⁷⁹ VAWD, Recital 19.

¹⁸⁰ VAWD, Recital 18.

¹⁸¹ VAWD, Article 6.

by installing geo-localisation apps, including stalkerware, or by stealing the victim's devices."¹⁸² "Tracking" should be understood to mean tracing the location of a person and "monitoring" should be understood to mean watching over a person more generally.¹⁸³ In the VAWD, **cyber harassment** refers to:

- (a) repeatedly or continuously engaging in threatening conduct directed at a person by means of ICT, at least where such conduct involves threats to commit criminal offences, where such conduct is likely to cause that person to seriously fear for their own safety or the safety of dependants (this is analogous to the offence of stalking under the IC but in the online context);
- (b) engaging, together with other persons by means of ICT, in publicly accessible threatening or insulting conduct directed at a person, where such conduct is likely to cause serious psychological harm to that person (this includes coordinated online mob attacks, which often target women politicians, journalists, human rights defenders and other well known women¹⁸⁴);
- (c) the unsolicited sending, by means of ICT, of an image, video or other similar material depicting genitals to a person, where such conduct is likely to cause serious psychological harm to that person (this includes so-called "cyberflashing"¹⁸⁵);
- (d) making accessible to the public, by means of ICT, material containing the personal data of a person, without that person's consent, for the purpose of inciting other persons to cause physical or serious psychological harm to that person (known colloquially as "doxing").¹⁸⁶

These offences must be punishable by a maximum term of imprisonment of at least one year (except for (c) above, for which no specific period is imposed by the Directive).

Cyber incitement to violence or hatred

The VAWD notes a sharp rise in public incitement to violence and hatred in recent years, including based on gender:

The easy, fast and broad sharing of hate speech through the digital world is reinforced by the online disinhibition effect, as presumed anonymity on the internet and a sense of impunity reduce people's inhibition to engage in such speech. Women are often the target of sexist and misogynous hate online, which can escalate into hate crime offline.¹⁸⁷

To combat this, the Directive introduced a new offence of intentionally inciting violence or hatred directed against a group of persons or a member of such a group, defined by reference to gender, by publicly distributing material containing such incitement through ICT.¹⁸⁸ Member States may choose to limit this offence to conduct which is either carried out in a manner likely to disturb public order or which is threatening, abusive, or insulting.

¹⁸² VAWD, Recital 21.

¹⁸³ VAWD, Recital 22.

¹⁸⁴ VAWD, Recital 24.

¹⁸⁵ VAWD, Recital 24.

¹⁸⁶ VAWD, Article 7.

¹⁸⁷ VAWD, Recital 25.

¹⁸⁸ VAWD, Article 8.

Remedies

Cyber offences carry an increased risk of repeated, prolonged, or even continuous victimisation because of the ease and speed with which material can be distributed on a large scale and the difficulties that often exist when it comes to removing such material.¹⁸⁹ Because of this, the Directive urges Member States to take “suitable measures which aim to promptly remove the material in question.” Because removal at source might not always be feasible (e.g. because of legal or practical difficulties relating to the execution or enforcement of an order to remove), Member States should be allowed to provide for measures to promptly disable access to such material.¹⁹⁰ This is achieved through the following:

- (a) Member States must take the necessary measures to ensure that online publicly available material relating to the offences of (1) non-consensual sharing of intimate or manipulated material, (2) cyber harassment and (3) cyber incitement to violence or hatred, are promptly removed or that access thereto is disabled.

This may include issuing binding legal orders to remove, or to disable access to, such material, provided that those orders meet certain criteria.¹⁹¹ Orders must be addressed to hosting service providers.¹⁹² If removal is not feasible, orders also can be issued to intermediary service providers to disable access.¹⁹³ Where criminal proceedings terminate without a finding that an offence has been committed, the orders are discharged, and the addressees must be notified. Orders and other measures also must be subject to adequate safeguards (e.g. be limited to what is necessary and proportionate). Hosting service providers, intermediary service providers and content providers must have access to judicial redress.

- (c) The removal of, or disabling of access to, material pursuant to an order or other measure must not prevent competent authorities from obtaining or securing the evidence necessary for the investigation and prosecution of offences without undue delay.

As these measures are now part of the EU acquis, Kosovo must adopt targeted criminal provision in the CCK and the above measures within the appropriate law (e.g. Law no. 08/L-173 on Cyber Security).¹⁹⁴ The Kosovo Police has a Cybercrime Investigation Unit; adequate training to respond such issues should be considered.

¹⁸⁹ VAWD, Recital 51.

¹⁹⁰ VAWD, Recital 51.

¹⁹¹ These criteria are set by Article 9(2) of Regulation 2022/2065 on a Single Market For Digital Services (e.g. reference the legal basis for the order, provide a statement of reasons, identify the issuing authority etc.).

¹⁹² “Hosting service provider” means a provider of a hosting service, which is a service consisting of the storage of information provided by, and at the request of, a recipient of the service (VAWD, Article 2(d)).

¹⁹³ “Intermediary service provider” means a provider of an intermediary service, which is any one of the following information society services: (i) a “mere conduit” service, consisting of the transmission in a communication network of information provided by a recipient of the service, or the provision of access to a communication network; (ii) a “caching” service, consisting of the transmission in a communication network of information provided by a recipient of the service, involving the automatic, intermediate and temporary storage of that information, performed for the sole purpose of making more efficient the information's onward transmission to other recipients upon their request; (iii) a “hosting” service, as defined *ibid.* (VAWD, Article 2(e)).

¹⁹⁴ No. 03/L –166.

Aggravating Circumstances

The IC and the VAWD provide that certain factors must be considered as aggravating circumstances in sentencing determinations.¹⁹⁵ While the VAWD list is longer than the IC, it applies to a narrower group of offences (FGM, forced marriage, non-consensual sharing of intimate or manipulated material, cyber stalking, cyber harassment and cyber incitement to violence or hatred). The rules set by the Directive are minimum rules, and Kosovo can apply aggravating factors to additional offences, including those covered by the IC.

As noted, certain offences have aggravating factors in Kosovo law. The CCK also contains general rules on aggravation (and mitigation) of punishment that apply to all offences. The following table compares the aggravating factors in the IC and VAWD with the CCK's general rules. The CCK is broadly aligned with the VAWD and IC. However, notable gaps are the high bar for recidivism to be considered an aggravating factor, the absence of an aggravating factor where an offence is committed in the presence of a child, and the inclusion of an aggravating factor for where an offense is committed within a domestic relationship only (rather than the broader "against a current or former partner", which does not require co-living).

VAWD, Article 11	IC, Article 46	CCK
(a) the offence, or another criminal offence of violence against women or domestic violence, was committed repeatedly ;	(b) the offence, or related offences, were committed repeatedly;	75. the perpetrator has been previously sentenced two or more times to imprisonment of at least one year for criminal offenses committed intentionally, and less than five years have elapsed;
(b) the offence was committed against a person made vulnerable by particular circumstances, such as a situation of dependence or a state of physical, mental, intellectual or sensory disability;	(c) the offence was committed against a person made vulnerable by particular circumstances	70.2.6 whether the victim of the criminal offense was particularly defenseless or vulnerable
(c) the offence was committed against a child ;		70.2.7 the age of the victim, whether young or elderly
(d) the offence was committed in the presence of a child ;	(d) the offence was committed against or in the presence of a child;	
(e) the offence was committed by two or more persons acting together;	(e) the offence was committed by two or more people acting together	
(f) the offence was preceded or accompanied by extreme levels of violence;	(f) the offence was preceded or accompanied by extreme levels of violence;	70.2.3 the presence of actual or threatened violence in the commission of the criminal offense 70.2.4 whether the criminal offense was committed with particular cruelty;
(g) the offence was committed with the use of a weapon or the threat of using a weapon;	(g) the offence was committed with the use or threat of a weapon;	
(h) the offence was committed with the use of force or threats to use force, or by means of coercion ;		

¹⁹⁵ IC, Article 46 and VAWD Article 11.

VAWD, Article 11	IC, Article 46	CCK
(i) the conduct caused the death of the victim or severe physical or psychological harm to the victim;	(h) the offence resulted in severe physical or psychological harm for the victim;	70.2.8 the extent of the damage caused by the convicted person, including death, permanent injury, the transmission of a disease to the victim, and any other harm caused to the victim and his or her family
(j) the offender has previously been convicted of offences of the same nature;	(i) the perpetrator had previously been convicted of offences of a similar nature	70.2.13 any relevant prior criminal convictions of the convicted person
(k) the offence was committed against a former or current spouse or partner ;	(a) the offence was committed against a former or current spouse or partner as recognised by internal law, by a member of the family, a person cohabiting with the victim or a person having abused her or his authority	
(l) the offence was committed by a member of the family of, or a person cohabiting with, the victim;		70.2.14 if the offense is committed within a domestic relationship.
(m) the offence was committed by abusing a recognised position of trust, authority or influence;		70.2.9 any abuse of power or official capacity by the convicted person in the perpetration of the criminal offense 70.2.10 evidence of a breach of trust by the convicted person
(n) the offence was committed against a person because that person was a public representative, a journalist or a human rights defender ;		
(o) the intention of the offence was to preserve or restore the so-called ' honour ' of a person, a family, a community or another similar group;		
(p) the intention of the offence was to punish the victim for the victim's sexual orientation, gender, colour, religion, social origin or political beliefs		70.2.12 if the criminal offense is a hate act (including race, color, gender, gender identity, national or social origin, relation to any community, sexual orientation, or other personal status) except if one of the enumerated characteristics constitutes an element of a criminal offense.
		70.2.1. a high degree of participation of the convicted person in the criminal offense; 70.2.2. a high degree of intention on the part of the convicted person; 70.2.5. whether the criminal offense involved multiple victims ; 70.2.11. whether the criminal offense was committed as part of the activities of an organized criminal group

Victim Compensation

The IC requires states to ensure victims have the right to claim compensation from perpetrators for any offence covered by the IC.¹⁹⁶ State compensation must be awarded within a reasonable time if persons have sustained serious bodily injury or impairment of health, to the extent that the damage is not covered by other sources such as the perpetrator, insurance, or state-funded health and social provisions.¹⁹⁷ The EU Directive on Compensation for Crime Victims also provides detailed procedures by which victim compensation should be awarded.¹⁹⁸ The VD also requires mechanisms for recovering compensation from offenders.¹⁹⁹ The VAWD adds that victims have the right to claim full compensation from offenders for damages resulting from offences of violence against women or domestic violence, and victims should be able to obtain a decision on compensation during criminal proceedings.²⁰⁰

In Kosovo, the Law on Crime Victim Compensation is broadly aligned with the EU Directive on Compensation for Crime Victims.²⁰¹ The Law provides that compensable offences are all acts that result in death, serious injury or impairment of physical or mental health. Certain “immediate compensation” is available for cases involving children, human trafficking, rape, and domestic violence. The Law foresees compensation for mental suffering. The Crime Victim Compensation Committee is the competent authority.²⁰² However, concern has been raised of insufficient budget allocations for compensating victims and inadequate assistance for victims in filing requests for compensation.²⁰³ The LGBV requires victim advocates to inform victims of their right to compensation and to guide them in submitting requests.²⁰⁴

Other Substantive Provisions

Offences under the IC apply irrespective of the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator.²⁰⁵ The IC requires that culture, custom, religion, tradition, or so-called “honour” are unacceptable justifications for offences.²⁰⁶ As these are not provided as mitigating circumstances in the CCK, the Kosovo criminal framework does not foresee that they could be used in defence arguments related to acts of gender-based violence. Moreover, the Supreme Court Sentencing Guidelines direct judges not to consider any sentence reduction if a perpetrator claims to have acted out of these factors, drawing attention to the fact that the IC demands harsher punishment when a family member commits such a crime.²⁰⁷

Mandatory alternative dispute resolution processes are prohibited by the IC related to all forms of violence within its scope.²⁰⁸ The LGBV provides that alternative processes (including but not limited to mediation and reconciliation) are prohibited in criminal and administrative procedure for cases of domestic violence, violence against women, and gender-based

¹⁹⁶ Article 30.1.

¹⁹⁷ Article 30.2.

¹⁹⁸ Council Directive 2004/80/EC of 29 April 2004 relating to compensation to crime victims.

¹⁹⁹ See also: Milquet, J. for the President of the European Commission, “[Strengthening Victims’ Rights: From compensation to reparation – for a new EU Victims’ rights strategy 2020-2025](#)”, 2019.

²⁰⁰ Council Directive 2024/1385 of 14 May 2024 on combating violence against women and domestic violence, Article 24.

²⁰¹ No. 08/L-109. European Commission, [Kosovo 2022 Report](#), 2022, p. 39.

²⁰² See Chapter III of the Law.

²⁰³ See Victim Advocates below.

²⁰⁴ LGBV, Article 16.3.

²⁰⁵ Article 43.

²⁰⁶ Article 42, reiterated in Article 12.5.

²⁰⁷ Supreme Court of Kosovo, [Sentencing Guidelines](#), First Edition, 2018, p. 135.

²⁰⁸ Article 48.

violence.²⁰⁹ The CPC similarly provides that crimes of domestic violence and crimes “against sexual integrity” shall not be referred to mediation, as does the Law on Mediation.²¹⁰ The Code of Conduct of Mediators also requires mediators to terminate any mediation process where there are elements of domestic violence, notify the parties of the reason for termination, and instruct the parties to follow “the procedures in accordance with the legislation in force”.²¹¹ This could be relevant in other civil proceedings, such as child custody, alimony, and divorce, where the potential exists for mediation to traumatize victims and exploit their vulnerable positions. Meanwhile, the Family Law still contains a provision encouraging spouses to take all practicable steps, including reconciliation measures, to save a marriage, which officials have referenced in seeking to “reconcile” couples.²¹² Notably, the same provision requires any risk of harm or violence to spouses or children be avoided.

Investigation, Prosecution, Procedural Law, and Protective Measures

The following sub-sections focus on the protection of victims, first during the legal process and second in terms of support services and protection from recidivist violence. Many relevant IC measures overlap with the VD and the recently adopted VAWD. The adoption of the revised CPC has improved significantly the legal framework’s harmonisation with the IC and VD. However, certain adjustments are recommended for further harmonisation with these instruments. The VAWD has several new requirements that require transposition into Kosovo law.

Victims’ Rights Overview

The CPC offers significant, necessary detail related to victims’ rights.²¹³ First, it expands the definition of an injured party or victim to include someone who has suffered physical, mental, or emotional harm, or economic loss.²¹⁴ While the CPC applies to all victims, a new provision addresses vulnerable victims:

the injured party or victim who is a victim of ... human trafficking, gender-based violence, violence in a domestic relationship, sexual violence, exploitation or discrimination and victim who have suffered considerable harm due to the severity of the criminal offense as well as victims with disabilities and those who are particularly vulnerable, shall be duly considered.²¹⁵ [sic]

Kosovo’s legal framework meets many requirements of the IC and VD since adoption of the CPC.

Guiding Principles of Procedural Protections

Chapter VI of the IC is on investigation, prosecution, procedural law, and protective measures. Guiding principles include:

²⁰⁹ LGBV, Article 55.

²¹⁰ [CPC, Article 229.2](#); and [Law No. 06/L-009, 2022, Article 2.3](#).

²¹¹ Code Moj-No.12/2019 of [Conduct of Mediators in the Republic of Kosovo](#), Article 7.8.

²¹² Article 59. See findings in the Courts [section](#) below.

²¹³ [Criminal Procedure Code no. 08/L-032](#).

²¹⁴ Article 19.1.7.

²¹⁵ Article 63.1.4.

- investigation and prosecution of crimes without undue delay;
- adequate and immediate protection and support for victims;
- full consideration of victims' rights, including a gendered understanding of violence; and
- ensuring governmental and non-governmental organisations and domestic violence counsellors may assist and/or support victims, at their request, during investigations and judicial proceedings.²¹⁶

Chapter 3 of the recently adopted VAWD contains a number of provisions which support and supplement the IC. The LGBV now provides that state institutions must “undertake with priority all the appropriate legislative, administrative, judicial and other measures, to prevent, protect, investigate, punish and ensure fair compensation of the victims”.²¹⁷ An amendment to the CPC in November 2023 provides that investigations relating to rape and domestic violence must be completed within a period of one year (extendable by six months in “complex circumstances”).²¹⁸ This is half the standard time limit. Trials are similarly expedited for rape and domestic violence.²¹⁹

The following is an overview of the protective measures for victims foreseen in the IC, the VAWD and the VD, and how they are transposed in Kosovo law.

Risk Assessment

Central concepts in victim protection under the IC are risk assessment and management. All relevant authorities should assess the lethality risk, the seriousness of the situation, possession or access to firearms, and the risk of repeat violence on a case-by-case basis to manage risks and establish the need for coordinated safety and support measures.²²⁰ A similar obligation exists under the VD.²²¹ The Directive applies to all victims but requires particular attention to victims of gender-based violence, violence in close relationships, and sexual violence, among others. The same approach is adopted in the CPC.

The VAWD introduced the concept of an “individual protection assessment” to identify a victim’s unique protection needs; it must be undertaken at least in cases of sexual or domestic violence.²²² The requirements of this assessment are in addition to those in the VD. The assessment must be carried out “at the earliest possible stage” such as the first contact of a competent authority with a victim. Authorities should collaborate where appropriate (e.g. support services, healthcare professionals, social services, etc.). The assessment must focus on the threat posed by the offender or suspect and may include, as under the IC, (a) the risk of repeat violence; (b) the possible use of and access to weapons; but also, (c) the risk of bodily or psychological harm; (d) the fact that the offender or suspect lives with the victim; (e) the misuse of drugs or alcohol by the offender or suspect; (f) child abuse; (g) mental health issues; or (h) stalking behaviour. Adequate protection measures must be taken based on the assessment, which should be reviewed regularly. A review of the assessment must be

²¹⁶ Articles 49, 50, and 55.2.

²¹⁷ LGBV, Article 5.

²¹⁸ CPC, Article 157.5 – 157.6 (as inserted by Article 2 of Law No. 08/L-87).

²¹⁹ CPC, Article 310.4 (as inserted by Article 3 of Law No. 08/L-187).

²²⁰ IC, Article 51.

²²¹ Article 22.

²²² VAWD, Article 16.

considered if a protection order is breached.²²³ The VAWD provides that dependants must be presumed to have specific protection needs without an individual assessment, unless there are indications to the contrary.

The LGBV now provides that public institutions must adapt measures, activities, and services to the specific needs of vulnerable victims (which includes women and children).²²⁴ Victims (and/or their legal representatives) are entitled to participate in the assessment of their needs, to be notified of available measures, activities and services for their protection, and to participate in selecting support and protection measures.²²⁵ Police are required to immediately evaluate the level of risk of reported cases and to take security measures for victims and their families.²²⁶ The CPC provides that victims have the right to receive information on the types of support they may obtain following their individual assessment.²²⁷ The SOPs for the Victim Protection and Assistance Office (VAAO) require a victim needs assessment when a VA is assigned a case.²²⁸ Then, appropriate actions should be taken to meet identified needs.²²⁹ The SOPs for Protection against Domestic Violence detail the risk assessment procedure that police should follow in domestic violence cases.²³⁰ A VA should be present. If a victim contacts an actor other than police, the same Basic Form should be used.

Protections in the Legal Process

Chapter VI of the IC establishes several procedural protections to protect and empower victims at all stages of proceedings, including during investigations and trials. The measures are indicative, and parties may adopt more favourable provisions. In the following tables “VD” refers to the Victims’ Rights Directive and “VAWD” refers to the EU Directive on Violence against Women.

General Measures	
IC, VD, and VAWD	Kosovo
<i>Provide for the protection of victims, their families and witnesses, from intimidation, retaliation and repeat victimisation</i> (IC Article 56a; VD Article 18).	Victims will have the right to request protection (CPC 63.I.17). The risk assessment procedures outlined above should be carried out to determine what emergency, health and security needs are relevant for a victim. The prohibition of victimisation in the LGBV is extremely broad (including, for example, an inaction that unintentionally puts a victim in a less favourable position) (Article 6). This “ban” appears largely aspirational as no sanctions are included. The IC provision does not necessarily require a ban or sanctions on victimisation. Rather, the provision requires States to ensure that victims are safe from intimidation, retaliation, and repeat victimisation. Measures by which this can be achieved are not prescribed. For example, measures in the VD to protect against secondary or repeat victimisation include procedures for the physical protection of victims and their

²²³ VAWD, Article 19.5.

²²⁴ LGBV, Article 7.1.

²²⁵ LGBV, Article 7.2.

²²⁶ LGBV, Article 19.2.

²²⁷ Article 63.I.3.I.

²²⁸ The SOPs refer to the Victim Protection and Assistance Office, so this term is used here. Notably, its name has changed, and it is now called the Victims Advocacy and Assistance Office (VAAO).

²²⁹ Article 8.

²³⁰ SOPs for Protection against Domestic Violence, p. 29. See also Annex 8 (Risk Assessment Checklist), 2013.

General Measures	
IC, VD, and VAWD	Kosovo
	family members, providing shelters/interim accommodation, and “safe and competent” restorative justice systems.
<i>Provide victims with appropriate support services at all stages of investigations and judicial proceedings so that their rights and interests are duly presented and taken into account (IC Article 56e).</i>	All victims of crime have the right to access victim support services (CPC 63.1.18) and may request assistance from the VAAO (SOPs).

Reporting	
IC, VD, and VAWD	Kosovo
<i>Ensure victims can report acts of VAW or domestic violence through accessible, easy-to-use and safe and readily available channels (VAWD Article 14.1)</i>	Reports can be made in person; by phone via the emergency number (192) or non-emergency number (038 550 999); and by email (info@kosovopolice.com).
<i>At least for cybercrimes covered by the VAWD, online reporting must be possible (VAWD Article 14.1).</i>	The only online reporting currently available is by email. While an app has existed, <i>Lajmëro Policinë</i> [Inform Police], it was not functioning as of August 2025. ²³¹
<i>Ensure that online reporting includes the possibility to submit evidence (VAWD Article 14.1).</i>	Evidence could be submitted via email.
<i>Take the necessary measures to encourage any person witness to the commission of acts of violence covered by the scope of the IC or who has reasonable grounds to believe that such an act may be committed, or that further acts of violence are to be expected, to report this to the competent organisations or authorities (IC Article 27) without fearing negative consequences (VAWD Article 14.3)</i>	The CCK criminalises a person having knowledge but failing to report preparation of a criminal offence (if such an offence is committed or attempted) (Article 377.1) and failure to report criminal offenses (Article 378). There are higher penalties for failure to report several specific crimes (Article 377.2). There is one exception, but it does not apply for offences involving child abuse and domestic violence (Articles 377.3 and 378.3). Therefore, an obligation to report exists if a person has knowledge of domestic violence, regardless of the relationship. Additional specific requirements exist to report any form of physical or mental violence, mistreatment, abandonment, abuse, neglect, and exploitation of children under the Law on Child Protection (Article 26).
<i>Ensure that confidentiality rules on professionals are not an obstacle to the possibility of reporting if they have reasonable grounds to believe that a serious act of violence has been committed and further serious acts of violence are to be expected (IC Article 28) or that there is an imminent risk of physical harm (VAWD Article 14.4) or that serious physical harm has been inflicted on a child (VAWD Article 14.5)</i>	There is no exception to the above requirements for professionals who are subject to confidentiality rules. The Law on Child Protection explicitly requires professionals such as doctors, psychologists, social workers and teachers to report suspected violence or abuse against children (Article 26.3).
<i>Where children report violence, ensure reporting procedures are safe, confidential, designed and accessible in a child-friendly manner. If a holder of parental responsibility is involved in the act of violence, ensure the report is not conditional on their consent and that protection measures are taken before that person is informed (VAWD Article 14.6)</i>	The Law on Child Protection provides for “child friendly justice” (meaning age appropriate, fast, cautious, tailored and focused on the needs and rights of the child) in criminal, civil or administrative proceedings and establishes a right to free legal assistance for children (which includes legal advice and representation) (Articles 55 and 56). The Law provides that, where a parent, family member or guardian fails to protect a child or puts them at risk of any

²³¹ KWN requested information about this application from the Kosovo Police in July and August 2025, respectively, but received no response.

Reporting	
IC, VD, and VAWD	Kosovo
	form of violence or exploitation, the competent municipal institution is responsible for protecting the child (Article 35.3). The Law could be better aligned with the VAWD by defining specific procedures to protect children before a parent or guardian who is involved in an act of violence is informed of a child's report.

Interviewing	
IC and VD	Kosovo
<i>Protect victims during the criminal investigation by conducting victim interviews without unjustified delay after the complaint, keeping the number of interviews to a minimum, allowing the victim to be accompanied by a legal representative or a person of their choice and only carrying out medical examinations where they are strictly necessary (VD Article 20).</i>	The CPC transposes these requirements (Articles 127.6, 127.7, and 142.4).
<i>Where an individual assessment finds it necessary, interviews with the victim should be carried out in a premises designed or adapted for the victims' needs, carried out by or through professionals trained for that purpose, and being conducted by the same persons unless this is contrary to the good administration of justice</i> (VD Article 23.2a - 23.2c).	This requirement is in the LGBV (Article 19.10). KWN observation suggests that all police stations currently have at least one room in each police station.
<i>All interviews with victims of sexual violence, gender-based violence or violence in close relationships, unless conducted by a prosecutor or a judge, should be conducted by a person of the same sex as the victim, if the victim so wishes, provided that the course of the criminal proceedings will not be prejudiced</i> (VD Article 2d).	The CPC transposes this requirement (Article 127.8).
<i>Enable victims, in a manner consistent with the procedural rules of internal law, to be heard, to supply evidence and have their views, needs and concerns presented, directly or through an intermediary, and considered</i> (IC Article 56d; VD Article 10).	The CPC transposes these requirements (Article 63.1.8).

Information	
IC and VD	Kosovo
<i>Inform victims on first contact of (VD Article 4):</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o complaints procedures; o access to legal advice, legal aid and any other sort of advice including interpretation and translation; o how and under what conditions they can access compensation o complaints procedures for where their rights are not respected by competent authorities operating within the context of criminal proceedings; o the contact details for communications about their case; o the available restorative justice services; o how and under what conditions expenses incurred as a result of their participation in the criminal proceedings can be reimbursed. 	The CPC transposes these requirements (Article 63.1.3). Also, as per the LGBV, VAs, police, and support services are all required to inform victims of their rights (Articles 16.1.2; 19.4; 22.1.1).
<i>Inform victims of their rights and the services at their disposal and the follow-up given to their complaint, the charges, the general progress of the investigation or proceedings, and their role therein, as well as the outcome of their case (IC Article 56c) including</i> (VD Article 6): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o the decision to not proceed with or to end an investigation or not to prosecute the suspect; o the time and place of the trial and nature of the charges; o any final judgment; o the state of the criminal proceedings. 	Various provisions of the CPC partially transpose these requirements (Articles 63.1.3.1, 63.1.9, 371.6). Victims do not have an express right to receive information on the general progress of the investigation or proceedings in the CPC. However, there is a right to inspect the case file (Article 212).

Information	
IC and VD	Kosovo
	Police are also now obliged to “ensure official contact” with the victim (LGBV, Article 19.4.9) and, if there is a “well-founded suspicion” of domestic violence, the police must regularly notify a victim of the process of investigations (LGBV Article 19.7).
<i>In order to assist in the voluntary securing of evidence, in particular in cases of sexual violence, direct victims without undue delay to relevant healthcare professionals / support services that are specialised in assisting with securing evidence and inform victims of the importance of collecting such evidence at the earliest possible time</i> (VAWD Article 15.4)	The State Protocol for Treatment of Sexual Violence cases provides that, if it is within the time limits to collect evidence through physical examination, the police should explain to a victim the importance of collecting evidence and, after obtaining informed consent, prepare the required documentation and accompany the victim (p. 48).
<i>Ensure victims are informed, at least in cases where the victims and the family might be in danger, when the perpetrator escapes or is released temporarily or definitively</i> (IC Article 56b; VD Article 6.5).	The CPC transposes these requirements (Article 63.1.9).

Procedural Rights	
IC and VD	Kosovo
<i>Ensure victims have the right to review a decision not to prosecute</i> (VD Article 11).	The CPC transposes this requirement (Article 82.8).
<i>Ensure that measures may be adopted to protect the privacy and the image of the victim</i> (IC Article 56f; VD Article 21).	The CPC provide for this protection (CPC Articles 217). Petitions for anonymity may be submitted at any stage, where there is a serious risk to an injured party, witness, or family member.
<i>Provide victims with independent and competent interpreters when victims are parties to proceedings or when they are supplying evidence</i> (IC Article 56h; VD Article 7) <i>and ensure victims are enabled to make the complaint in a language that they understand or by receiving the necessary linguistic assistance</i> (VD Article 5.2).	The CPC contains the right to interpretation “of a quality sufficient to safeguard the fairness of the proceedings” (Article 14.2). It contains a new right of victims to interpretation in interviewing and questioning (Article 63.1.12), to file a motion and complaint in a language they understand or with linguistic assistance (Article 63.1.13) and for translation of information essential to exercise their rights in the criminal process (Article 63.1.14).
<i>Ensure that contact between victims and perpetrators within court and law enforcement agency premises is avoided where possible</i> (IC Article 56g; VD Article 19) <i>and enable victims to testify, according to the rules provided by their internal law, in the courtroom without being present or at least without the presence of the alleged perpetrator, notably through the use of appropriate communication technologies</i> (IC Article 56i; VD Article 23.3).	The CPC has introduced the possibility for a victim or witness to testify at a session that is closed to the public, or at a different location by means of technology (Article 337).
<i>Provide the right to legal assistance and to free legal aid for victims, under the conditions provided by internal law</i> (IC Article 57; VD Article 13).	The CPC transposes this provision exactly without any qualification such as a needs-based or resource-based individual assessment (Article 63.1.15). Thus, the effort to transpose the VD may have lacked adequate consideration as to the practicalities of the rights therein. The EU has criticised this legal aid provision in the CPC as “insufficient in practice to meet the

Procedural Rights	
IC and VD	Kosovo
	<p>obligations of the relevant Kosovo legislation and the requirements of the EU acquis and the European Convention on Human Rights and its jurisprudence”.²³²</p> <p>The LGBV now also provides that institutions must offer free legal aid and representation during civil and criminal procedures (Article 22.1.4).</p> <p>The entitlement under the IC and Directive is not a right to automatic free legal aid, as states should provide conditions for access. The Law on Free Legal Aid (No. 04/L-017) offers more detail as to the qualifications for applying for aid. Under Article 64 of the CPC, victims have the right to be represented by a member of the bar or a VA.</p>
<p>Ensure that the statute of limitations for initiating proceedings for the offences of sexual violence [Article 36], forced marriage [Article 37], female genital mutilation [Article 38] and forced abortion and forced sterilisation [Article 39] continues for a period of time that is sufficient and commensurate with the gravity of the offence in question, to allow for the efficient initiation of proceedings after the victim has reached the age of majority (IC Article 58)</p>	<p>Kosovo law provides that where an offence is committed against a person under the age of 18, the limitation period only begins to run from the day the victim reaches the age of 18 (CCK Article 100.2). The statutory limitations on criminal prosecutions in Kosovo are determined by reference to the maximum penalty for the offence, ranging from a four-year period (for crimes punishable with imprisonment up to one year or a fine) to a 30-year period (for crimes punishable with life imprisonment) (CCK Article 99).</p>

Remedies	
IC and VD	Kosovo
<p>Safeguard the victim from secondary and repeat victimisation, intimidation and retaliation when providing any restorative justice services (VD Article 12). Such services may only be used with the victim's free and informed consent, which may be withdrawn at any time.</p>	<p>While these services are provided informally and in some instances by shelters and social workers, they are not adequately detailed within the relevant legal framework.</p>
<p>Ensure victims are entitled to obtain a decision on compensation by the offender (VD Article 16) during the course of criminal proceedings (VAWD, Article 24).</p>	<p>The CPC provides the right of victims to reasonable, court-ordered restitution from a defendant (Article 63.1.19). If such compensation is not possible, the victim is entitled to claim from the Crime Victim Compensation Program (Article 63.1.20).</p>

Victim Protection and Support

The IC requires states to protect victims from any further acts of violence.²³³ Many IC provisions in this area overlap with those in the VD.²³⁴ According to the IC's guiding principles, measures must:

- be based on a gendered understanding of violence against women, focusing on the human rights and safety of the victim;

²³² European Commission, *Kosovo 2019 Report*, 2019, p. 30.

²³³ Article 18.

²³⁴ Directive 2012/29/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2001/220/JHA.

- use an integrated approach that takes into account the relationship between victims, perpetrators, children, and their wider social environment; avoid secondary victimisation; aim at the empowerment and economic independence of women victims of violence; and
- address the specific needs of vulnerable persons.

The emphasis of this chapter of the IC is on cooperation among actors. While law enforcement may have the first contact with victims, they must be able to refer victims to specialist support services such as sexual violence referral centres, rape crisis centres, shelters, for forensic evidence collection, psychological support, and/or legal counselling.²³⁵ These steps often bring victims into contact with lawyers, VAs, or courts.

As with the individual risk assessment, authorities should collaborate where appropriate to provide support services, and the assessment should be reviewed regularly. It must be ensured that support services contact victims to offer support if needs were identified or requested by the victim (with due regard for their safety and subject to their consent).²³⁶

The LGBV requires officials in institutions involved in social protection, internal affairs, health, child protection and education, as well as courts, “to act urgently, with advanced priority to the interests and needs of the victim.”²³⁷ CSWs must assign a case manager to each victim for the identification, coordination, and provision of social services. After assessing the situation in terms of social protection and integration, CSWs have a number of obligations including referring the victim to a rehabilitation and employment programme, providing temporary housing, referring or offering psychosocial counselling to victims and their dependents, coordinating activities for reintegration, and referring victims to social assistance schemes if they have no income.²³⁸

Protection Orders

The IC requires states to make **protection orders** available to victims of **all** forms of violence covered by the Convention. Such orders must be available irrespective of other legal proceedings.²³⁹ States must ensure relevant authorities have the legal authority to issue **emergency barring orders** in situations of immediate danger arising from **domestic violence**.²⁴⁰ The VAWD similarly provides for the issuing of emergency barring orders, restraining orders, and protection orders for all forms of violence covered by the Directive.²⁴¹

Previously, Kosovo’s legal framework limited the availability of protection orders to victims of domestic violence. This has been resolved by the LGBV, which provides that protective orders can be sought for “domestic violence, violence against women and gender-based violence”. Temporary orders, issued while courts are closed, remain limited to cases of domestic violence, though this is consistent with the IC. The VAWD requires that victims be informed of the availability of protection orders and of the possibility to seek cross-border recognition of protection orders.²⁴² The CPC provides that victims be informed of how and

²³⁵ “Explanatory Report to the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence”, Istanbul, 11.V.2011, pgh. 114.

²³⁶ VAWD, Article 18.1

²³⁷ LGBV, Article 5.3.

²³⁸ LGBV, Article 21.1.

²³⁹ Article 53.

²⁴⁰ Article 52.

²⁴¹ VAWD, Article 19.

²⁴² VAWD, Article 19.4.

under what conditions they “can obtain protection, including protection measures.”²⁴³ Issuing an order does not prevent filing of criminal proceedings.²⁴⁴ The LGBV includes three forms of protection orders:

- Regular Protection Orders (POs), issued by a court decision to provide protection measures to a victim. POs may be issued for up to 12 months and can be extended up to 24 months, after which an applicant may submit a new request.
- Emergency Protection Orders (EPOs), issued by a court in an expedited procedure to provide immediate protection.
- Temporary Emergency Protection Orders (TEPOs), issued by the police outside the working hours of courts. TEPOs are valid until the first working day of the court.

The OSCE expressed concern regarding the lack of distinction between POs and EPOs in the previous law (the LPDV), which caused confusion for victims and courts in determining the most appropriate order.²⁴⁵ The LGBV has clarified this:

- **POs** are issued by a local basic court “with the aim of preventing domestic violence, violence against women and gender-based violence, protection of the safety and well-being of the protected party and persons in family relations with him/her [sic]”.²⁴⁶ Through the order, the court “aims to avoid the consequences and ... circumstances that affect or may affect the repetition of violence”.²⁴⁷ Decisions must be made within 15 days of the request. The responsible person(s) must be summoned for the hearing, but the hearing may proceed in their absence if they have been properly summoned and the request is based on sufficient evidence. Decisions may be appealed to the Court of Appeal within eight days. The PO remains in force while the appeal is being determined.
- **EPOs** are issued by a local basic court where the court “suspects that in the absence of this measure, the responsible party presents a direct and immediate danger to the safety, health or well-being of the protected party”.²⁴⁸ Decisions must be made within 24 hours of the request. The decision is made without a hearing based solely on the material and evidence submitted with the request. Any party may object to the decision within three days. If no one objects, it becomes a PO. If an objection is issued, a hearing must be held within seven days. The objection hearing must result in either the issuance of a PO or the revocation of the EPO; either decision can be appealed.
- For **TEPOs**, the Regional Supervisor for Domestic Violence or the Head of Investigations in a police station must confirm (1) that there is reasonable suspicion that domestic violence has been committed or threatened; (2) the responsible party poses “a direct and immediate threat to the safety, health and well-being of the protected party or a person with whom the protected party has a family relationship”; and (3) a TEPO is necessary to ensure the health or well-being of the

²⁴³ CPC, Article 63.1.3.3.

²⁴⁴ LPDV, Article 26.2.

²⁴⁵ OSCE, “[Adjudication of petitions for protection orders in domestic violence cases in Kosovo](#)”, 2012, p. 23.

²⁴⁶ LGBV, Article 45.1.

²⁴⁷ LGBV, Article 45.2.

²⁴⁸ LGBV, Article 46.1.

protected party or person with whom the protected party has a family relationship.²⁴⁹

Unlike the IC, the VAWD lists the measures that should be available in POs. These include: vacating the residence of the victim or dependants; and/or prohibiting the offender or suspect from entering the residence, coming closer than a prescribed distance, entering the victim's workplace, or contacting the victim or her/his dependants.²⁵⁰ The LGBV provides that these measures, among others, may be granted in POs and EPOs:

- **Prohibition of the exercise of violence** obliges the responsible party to stop and not repeat any violent action.
- **Protection from disturbance** prohibits the responsible party from “harassing, disturbing, manipulating, insulting, threatening, stalking or monitoring the protected party and the persons in family relationship with him/her directly, through third parties or by any other means of communication”.
- **Prohibition from approaching** the protected party, persons in a family relationship with him/her, and places they frequent (where there is a risk of repeated violence). Electronic monitoring is implemented by the police.
- **Removal from the living space**, where the victim is a family member that lives with the responsible person.
- **Accompaniment** of the protected party (by a police officer and a social worker) to retrieve personal belongings when the protected party wants to leave the living premises.
- **Confiscation of items** used to commit the offence, or which may be used to conduct or repeat violence. This can include prohibition from issuing, or revocation, of a weapon permit.
- **Temporary assignment of custody** in cases of domestic violence, on the condition that the best interests of the child are respected. The discretion is limited where violence has been exercised against the child.
- **Financial maintenance**, which may include child support, rent, and other reasonable living expenses.
- **Psycho-social treatment or medical treatment** for substance dependence of responsible persons.
- **Compulsory psychiatric treatment** for responsible persons where violence was committed “in a state of mental incapacity or essentially reduced mental capacity” and where there is a risk of repeat violence.
- **Prohibition on property transactions**, including transfers, encumbrances, or any other transactions for specified property.
- **Other necessary measures**, which may include ordering the responsible party to allow the protected party to use property that the parties live in together, or which is owned jointly or separately by the parties, or to allow the protected party to return home.²⁵¹

²⁴⁹ LGBV, Article 52.3.

²⁵⁰ VAWD, Article 19.1.

²⁵¹ LGBV, Articles 29 – 41.

These examples are non-exhaustive. The measures that may be imposed in TEPOs are limited to items 1-6 above. These measures are broadly similar to those under the prior LPDV. Based on the monitoring of protection order cases during the period 2021–2024, improvements have been noted in practice, with protective measures being implemented more consistently. In particular, courts have ordered the removal of perpetrators from the home, the payment of rent and alimony to victims, as well as psycho-social treatment, among other measures.²⁵²

Administrative instructions to regulate the imposition of psycho-social treatment and medical treatment for substance dependence were introduced under the LPDV but were criticised for insufficiently attending to protected persons, inadequately detailing treatment evaluation, overemphasising reconciliation, and potentially conflicting with LPDV aims.²⁵³ Mandatory rehabilitation treatment for persons who committed criminal offences under the influence of alcohol or drugs may also be imposed for other crimes under the CPC.²⁵⁴ However, Kosovo historically has lacked state-funded infrastructure and specific intervention programmes for perpetrators of domestic violence and sex offenders, as stipulated in the IC, which has hampered implementation of these measures.²⁵⁵ The MJ established a program in 2023 for perpetrators, but it does not yet provide services throughout Kosovo.²⁵⁶ According to MJ officials, a pilot program has begun at the Dubrava Correctional Center involving prisoners who, among other crimes, have committed domestic violence. The process is being supported by the CoE. Two rounds of piloting have been conducted: the first with a group of 12 prisoners, and the second with 10 prisoners.²⁵⁷ In 2025, the Ministry planned to extend the pilot to include probation services and shelters for survivors of domestic violence whose staff would be trained in implementing the perpetrator programme. One challenge identified in implementing the programme within correctional facilities has been the relatively short sentencing of gender-based violence perpetrators. Many receive prison terms of less than six months, while the full programme is designed to run over a six-month period, making full participation difficult under current sentencing practices. Police must regularly monitor protection orders as their violation constitutes a criminal offence for which the perpetrator must be immediately prosecuted (i.e., a complaint is not necessary).²⁵⁸ Repeat violations are considered an aggravating circumstance impacting sentencing.²⁵⁹ The VAWD provides that any breach of a PO shall be subject to effective, proportionate, and dissuasive criminal or non-criminal penalties.²⁶⁰ Victims must be notified when there is a breach of an emergency barring order, restraining order, or PO that could impact their safety,²⁶¹ and, when a breach occurs, a revision of the victim's individual risk assessment should be considered.²⁶² This is not yet adequately addressed in SOPs.

²⁵² From KWN monitoring of court cases and referral of cases who came at KWN office.

²⁵³ Farnsworth et al. for KWN, *No More Excuses*, p. 12.

²⁵⁴ Chapter XXXII.

²⁵⁵ Krol, et al., *Mapping support services for victims of violence against women in Kosovo*, 2017, pp. 76-77.

²⁵⁶ OPM, “*Lansohet Programi i parë Kombëtar për Trajtimin e Kryerësve të Dhunës ndaj Grave*” [First National Programme for Treating Perpetrators of Violence against Women Launched] [Albanian only], 2023. KWN and Kosovo Law Institute are monitoring the implementation of the program (report forthcoming).

²⁵⁷ Numbers from MJ (comment on draft report during peer review process).

²⁵⁸ LGBV, Article 54.

²⁵⁹ LGBV, Article 542.

²⁶⁰ VAWD, Article 19.5.

²⁶¹ VAWD, Article 19.6.

²⁶² VAWD, Article 19.2.

The LGBV provides that a PO issued by another state can be registered in court and thereafter be implemented as if it had been issued under the LGBV.²⁶³

Support Services

The following table summarises support services required by the IC, VAWD, and VD and the extent to which they exist in Kosovo.

Support Services	
IC, VAWD, and VD	Kosovo
<p>Ensure victims receive adequate and timely information on support services and legal measures in clear intelligible language²⁶⁴ (IC Article 19, VD Articles 3 and 4). Specialist support services must include (VAWD Article 25.1):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information and support on practical matters, including access to housing, education, childcare, training, financial support, legal advice, legal aid and employment; • Information and referral to services providing medical and forensic examinations, which may include comprehensive healthcare services and psychosocial counselling, including trauma care; • Information and referral to women's support services, rape crisis centres, shelters and sexual violence referral centres; and support on how to document cybercrimes and information on remedies to remove online content; • Information and referral to specialist support services for victims at an increased risk of violence, which may include services for rehabilitation and socio-economic integration after sexual exploitation 	<p>This entitlement is transposed in the CPC (Articles 63.1.3.1 and 63.1.10). The particular requirements of the VAWD are partially reflected in the State Protocol for Treatment of Sexual Violence Cases.</p>
<p>Unless contrary to the interests of the victim or unless the course of proceedings would be prejudiced, allow victims to be accompanied by a person of their choice in the first contact with a competent authority where, due to the impact of the crime, the victim requires assistance to understand or to be understood (VD Article 3.3).</p>	<p>This entitlement is transposed in the CPC (Articles 63.1.6).</p>
<p>Ensure victims have access to services facilitating their recovery from violence, including legal and psychological counselling, financial assistance, housing, education, training and assistance in finding employment (IC Article 20.1; VD Articles 8 and 9).</p>	<p>Rehabilitation and reintegration programmes for victims of gender-based violence remain weak in Kosovo.²⁶⁵ The EU observed the need for measures for effective reintegration of victims.²⁶⁶</p>
<p>Ensure victims have access to health and social services which are adequately resourced and where professionals are trained to assist victims and refer them to the</p>	<p>The CoE reports insufficient training and understanding of gender-based and intersectional violence amongst professionals working with</p>

²⁶³ LGBV, Article 56. Courts may refuse to recognise foreign protection orders in certain circumstances (Article 57).

²⁶⁴ Victims also must have access to applicable regional and international individual/collective complaints mechanisms (Article 21). However, such mechanisms may be limited for Kosovo citizens.

²⁶⁵ Gavrić, S. for the European Women's Lobby, "Mapping of Policies and Legislation on Violence Against Women and the Istanbul Convention in Kosovo", 2018, p. 18; KWN monitoring.

²⁶⁶ EC, [Kosovo 2019 Report](#), 2019, p. 28; EC, [Assessment of the Alignment of Kosovo's laws, policies, and other measures with the standards of the Istanbul Convention](#), 2022.

Support Services	
IC, VAWD, and VD	Kosovo
appropriate services (IC Article 20.2). Ensure sufficient human and financial resources to provide specialist support services. Provide adequate funding to NGOs providing specialist services (VAWD, Article 25.3).	victims, a lack of standardised procedures, protocols, guidelines, or common framework, and a lack of sufficient or sustainable funding from government budgets. ²⁶⁷ While improved, KWN's monitoring suggests NGOs require further funding to provide quality specialist services. ²⁶⁸
Ensure adequate geographical distribution , immediate, short- and long-term specialist support services to any victim subjected to any of the acts of violence covered by the scope of the IC, which should include specialist women's support services for women victims and their children (IC Article 22). The VAWD provides for sufficient geographical distribution and capacity of services for victims of sexual violence (Article 26.4).	The CoE reports that this standard has not been met in Kosovo. Where specialist services are available, it is important that such services and their staff can address different types of violence against women that occur outside domestic relationships. ²⁶⁹
Ensure shelters are easily accessible and in sufficient numbers to provide safe accommodation for and to reach out pro-actively to victims, especially women and their children (IC Article 23). The Explanatory Report to the Convention specifies that the security situation of each victim should be assessed and an individual security plan drawn up. Effective co-operation with the police on security issues is indispensable. ²⁷⁰ Shelters and other appropriate interim accommodation must be equipped to accommodate the specific needs of women (e.g. women-only shelters with room for children), must be available to victims and dependents under 18 regardless of nationality, and must assist victims in their recovery by providing safe, easily accessible, adequate and appropriate living conditions with a view to a return to independent living and by providing information on support services and referrals, including for further medical care (VAWD, Article 30).	The CoE reports that the provision of shelters in Kosovo does not meet the European standard of one family place per 10,000 inhabitants. Insufficient long-term housing or economic opportunities risks forcing victims to return to perpetrators. ²⁷¹ Limited options exist to safely accommodate women with boys older than 12 years of age. ²⁷² The LGBV includes stable and adequate financing of shelters from the Kosovo budget; contracting of social services from licensed NGOs; and a requirement for the organisation of shelters to meet the CoE standard of 1/10,000 people (Article 24).
Ensure rape crisis or sexual violence referral centres for victims are easily accessible and in sufficient numbers to provide for medical and forensic examination, trauma support and counselling for victims (IC Article 25, VAWD Article 26). These services must be free of charge and accessible every day of the week (VAWD Article 26).	Kosovo has no specialised services for victims of sexual violence (rape crisis or sexual violence referral centres); other service providers devote only a small portion of their work to sexual violence. ²⁷³ Access to forensic medical examinations is limited to one institution. Several services require a victim to file a report or undertake a forensic medical examination to access support services, which can hinder access. ²⁷⁴
Provide state-wide round-the-clock telephone helplines free of charge to provide advice to callers, confidentially or with due regard for their anonymity, in relation to all	Kosovo law is aligned with the IC but further measures are required to comply with the VAWD. The LGBV requires police assure a

²⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 37. .

²⁶⁸ KWN, forthcoming, 2025.

²⁶⁹ Ibid.; and Krol, et al., p. 38.

²⁷⁰ "Explanatory Report to the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence", Istanbul, 11.V.2011, pgh. 134.

²⁷¹ Krol, et al., *Mapping support services for victims of violence against women in Kosovo*, p. 76.

²⁷² Ibidem.

²⁷³ Ibid.

²⁷⁴ Ibid.

Support Services	
IC, VAWD, and VD	Kosovo
<p>forms of violence covered by the scope of the IC (IC Article 24). Helplines may be operated by specialist support services (VAWD Article 29). The VAWD additionally:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • encourages states to provide helplines through other secured and accessible ICT, including online applications; • requires appropriate measures to be taken to ensure that the helplines are accessible for end-users with disabilities, including by providing support in language that is easy to understand and in line with certain accessibility requirements for electronic communications services set out in Annex I of Directive 2019/882; • requires states strive to ensure these services are provided in a language that victims understand, including by means of telephone interpretation; • requires that sufficient human and financial resources be allocated to provide the services. If provided by NGOs, states must provide them with adequate funding, taking into account the proportion of specialist support services that are already provided by public authorities; • requires states aim to ensure that services remain fully operational in times of crisis, such as health crises or other states of emergency; and • requires states to ensure that end-users are adequately informed of the existence of and number for helplines, including by means of regular awareness-raising campaigns. 	<p>special telephone line for reporting domestic violence and violence against women (Article 19.4.1). Calls must be registered. An emergency telephone line must provide accurate, timely, confidential information on victim protection, services available to victims, and telephone counselling for victims of domestic violence, gender-based violence and violence against women at any time of the day in all official languages of Kosovo (Article 23). A sub-legal act has been adopted, but this service had not been established as of August 2025.</p> <p>The VAAO manages a free hotline (0800 11 112) available 24 hours a day.²⁷⁵ The helpline's specialist coverage of forms of violence beyond domestic violence is limited.²⁷⁶ It is not compliant with IC standards, which require a dedicated helpline for all forms of gender-based violence with trained operators. VA and free legal aid helplines are also reported to be unreliable and sometimes not functioning.</p>
<p>Ensure that the provision of protection and support services takes due account of the rights and needs of child witnesses, including age-appropriate psychosocial counselling (IC Article 26). Support to children must be specialised and appropriate to the age, developmental needs, and individual situation of the child while respecting the best interests of the child (VAWD, Article 31).</p>	<p>The CPC provides for a child psychologist or counsellor to assist in the examination of child witnesses (Article 127.5). The Law on Child Protection also provides for specialised medical treatment, including psychological assistance. Reportedly few support services offer specialised and age-appropriate psychosocial support.²⁷⁷</p>
<p>Aim to ensure that specialist support services remain fully operational in times of crisis, such as health crises or states of emergency.</p>	<p>The State Protocol for the Treatment of Sexual Violence Cases emphasises “the importance of priority and multi-sector coordinated treatment of cases of sexual violence, even in situations of civil emergencies, natural disasters, pandemics, etc.” and contains general recommendations for such scenarios based on the experience of Covid-19.</p>

²⁷⁵ NSPDV 2016-2020, p. 18.

²⁷⁶ Krol, et al., *Mapping support services for victims of violence against women in Kosovo*, p. 76; KWN monitoring.

²⁷⁷ Ibidem, including KWN monitoring.

As the table illustrates, issues persist with the provision of support services for victims of gender-based violence in Kosovo. A key issue is inadequate funding of support services.²⁷⁸ Inadequate state funding is an obstacle to victims' long-term rehabilitation, reintegration, and empowerment.²⁷⁹ To implement the IC, VAWD, and VD, Kosovo's legal framework requires more complete inclusion of services, enabling clearer responsibilities for their funding.

Measures to Prevent Violence

Generally, all early legislative responses to violence against women focused heavily on the criminal sphere without addressing root causes of violence. The importance of preventative measures has since received increased emphasis, as reflected in Chapter III of the IC. This section discusses these measures in the context of Kosovo.

Changing Patterns and Engaging Men

Drawing on CEDAW,²⁸⁰ the IC calls on states to change social and cultural patterns of behaviour to eradicate "prejudices, customs, traditions and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority of women or on stereotyped roles for women and men."²⁸¹ Use of adverse stereotypes has been increasingly recognised as a form of discrimination against women that contributes to gender-based violence.²⁸² The VAWD similarly places an obligation on Member States to promote changes in behavioural patterns rooted in unequal power relations between men and women, based on stereotyped roles, especially in the context of sexual relationships, sex, and consent.²⁸³ Preventative measures must be adopted "to challenge harmful gender stereotypes, to promote gender equality, mutual respect and the right to personal integrity, and to encourage all persons, especially men and boys, to act as positive role models to support corresponding behaviour changes across society as a whole".²⁸⁴ The IC also requires states to take measures to encourage all members of society, especially men and boys, to contribute actively to preventing all forms of violence.²⁸⁵ Engaging men in preventing gender-based violence has become an increasingly institutionalised component of gender equality work globally. Men's effective engagement may benefit from considering an intersectional understanding of how they may experience marginalisation based on race, class, sexuality, and other social locators.²⁸⁶ However, the disproportionate prevalence and impact of gender-based

²⁷⁸ The EU acknowledged the failure to provide sustainable funding for shelters in its most recent Kosovo Report (European Commission, [Kosovo 2019 Report](#), 2019, p. 28).

²⁷⁹ Krol, et al., [Mapping support services for victims of violence against women in Kosovo](#), p. 82; KWN forthcoming, 2025.

²⁸⁰ Although CEDAW does not explicitly prohibit violence against women, it provides "a gender specific framework on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women that encompasses violence against women", which enables the CEDAW Committee to interpret violence against women as a form of discrimination against women and apply it in its work (Šimonović, D., "Global and Regional Standards on Violence Against Women: The Evolution and Synergy of the CEDAW and Istanbul Conventions", *Human Rights Quarterly*, 36, 2014, 590).

²⁸¹ Article 12.

²⁸² Cook, R. and Cusack, S., *Gender Stereotyping Transnational Legal Perspectives*, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010.

²⁸³ VAWD, Article 35(1).

²⁸⁴ VAWD, Article 34(5).

²⁸⁵ Article 12.4.

²⁸⁶ Casey, E., Leek, E., Tolman, R., Allen, C., and Carlson, J., "Getting men in the room: perceptions of effective strategies to initiate men's involvement in gender-based violence prevention in a global sample", *Culture, Health and Sexuality*, 19(9), 2017, 979-995, p. 993.

violence on women and addressing gender inequities must be treated as priorities.²⁸⁷ Engaging men and boys in the prevention of violence against women should be based on feminist principles and led by women's rights organisations to drive efforts forward.

The IC requires the establishment of programmes that aim at teaching perpetrators of domestic violence to “adopt non-violent behaviour in interpersonal relationships with a view to preventing further violence and changing violent behavioural patterns.”²⁸⁸ Treatment programmes must aim at preventing perpetrators, particularly sex offenders, from re-offending. However, in taking these measures, states must ensure that the “safety of, support for and the human rights of victims are of primary concern and that, where appropriate, these programmes are set up and implemented in close co-ordination with specialist support services for victims.” The VAWD contains a similar obligation but adds that programmes must be made available to persons who have committed any offence of violence against women and/or “who are assessed as being at risk of committing such offences”. This includes persons who feel the need to participate because they fear they might commit violence against women.²⁸⁹ Based on the LGBV, administrative instructions must be introduced to regulate psycho-social and medical treatment for perpetrators with substance dependence, similar to measures previously in place under the LPDV.

Awareness-raising, Education, and Training Professionals

The IC and the VAWD include awareness-raising, education, and training professionals under respective prevention chapters.²⁹⁰ The VD similarly stresses several these points.²⁹¹ Awareness-raising should include regular campaigns to address various forms of violence, women's human rights, gender equality, women's right to live free from violence, “zero tolerance” responses, and other initiatives.²⁹² Specific campaigns should target improving knowledge of laws that address violence against women and remedies. In Kosovo, awareness-raising measures should be coordinated by AGE and engage diverse actors.²⁹³ The NSPVAW emphasises the importance of conducting awareness-raising campaigns on a range of topics beyond gender-based violence, including issues such as property rights and the prevention of early marriage. These campaigns mainly fall under the responsibilities of AGE, the Directorates of Education, the Kosovo Police, and CSOs. Most campaigns are planned to take place during the annual 16 Days of Activism against Violence against Women.

According to the IC, education should include curricula at “all levels” on “equality between women and men, non-stereotyped gender roles, mutual respect, non-violent conflict resolution in interpersonal relationships, gender-based violence against women and the right to personal integrity”. “All levels” includes informal educational facilities, sports, culture, and the media. Education should be gender-sensitive and include information on laws that promote women's rights and address violence against women.²⁹⁴ The VAWD requires the use of language and teaching materials that are child-friendly, where appropriate, and accessible to

²⁸⁷ Ibidem. Concerns exist that men's involvement reproduces patterns of men's power and privilege and threatens women's leadership of the movement (see: MenEngage for UNW and UNFPA, “Men, Masculinities and Changing Power: A discussion paper on engaging men in gender equality from Beijing 1995 to 2015”, p. 43).

²⁸⁸ IC, Article 16.

²⁸⁹ VAWD, Article 37(2).

²⁹⁰ Articles 13-15.

²⁹¹ Article 26.

²⁹² Truchero Cuevas, J. and Khrystova, G., “Good International Practices and Standards on Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence”, CoE, 2015, p. 12.

²⁹³ Law on Gender Equality, Article 8.1.10.

²⁹⁴ Truchero Cuevas, J. and Khrystova, G., p. 12.

people with disabilities.²⁹⁵ Education material must be “adapted to the evolving capacity of the persons to whom it is addressed.”²⁹⁶ A good practice is introducing a legal requirement for education authorities to conduct “gender audits” of school materials, ensuring the removal of sexist and discriminatory stereotypes.²⁹⁷ In Kosovo, this measure is included in the Law on Gender Equality and a methodological guide on “Preventing Gender Stereotypes and Promoting Gender Equality in School Textbooks and Materials” has been published by AGE.²⁹⁸ However, the Program for Gender Equality stated that little progress was made with gender audits of textbooks and curricula.²⁹⁹ In accordance with the legal obligation set out by the Law on Gender Equality to integrate the gender perspective into study programs, the Program for GE had aimed for at least 15 higher education programs to incorporate this perspective into their curricula. According to data provided by the University of Prishtina (UP), during the 2023/24 academic year a total of 16 courses with a gender perspective were offered across 4 faculties.³⁰⁰ Improving this is a strategic objective of the Program. The LGBV requires the Ministry of Education to include topics in pre-university curricula that promote gender equality, non-violent conflict resolution, respect for diversity, knowledge on gender identity, all forms of gender-based violence, and comprehensive sex education including mutual respect and the right to personal integrity.³⁰¹ The Ministry must organise “basic and professional training” for educational staff regarding these topics.³⁰² The LGBV also requires institutions of higher education to include these topics in their curricula.³⁰³

The IC requires training for professionals dealing with victims or perpetrators of violence, on prevention and detection of violence, equality between women and men, the needs and rights of victims and of marginalised women, risk assessments, gender dynamics, and how to prevent secondary victimisation. This should include coordinated multi-agency cooperation for comprehensive and proper handling of referrals. The VD and VAWD also require training.³⁰⁴ The VAWD specifies that training should be offered to police, court staff, judiciary, lawyers, healthcare professionals (including paediatricians, gynaecologists, obstetricians, midwives, and healthcare staff involved in psychological support), social service and educational staff, and persons with supervisory functions in the workplace.³⁰⁵

SOPs regulating the duties of professionals in addressing domestic violence in Kosovo only partially comply with IC requirements, as they fail to address adequately other forms of violence against women.³⁰⁶ Historically, AGE observed that inadequate training hampered appropriate implementation of SOPs on domestic violence.³⁰⁷ Ideally, specific protocols and

²⁹⁵ VAWD, Article 34(4).

²⁹⁶ VAWD, Article 35(3).

²⁹⁷ Adapted from Chapter I of the Spanish Organic Act on Integrated Protection Measures against Gender Violence, 2004.

²⁹⁸ Article 21. The language of this provision is aspirational and should be strengthened; AGE, “[Preventing Gender Stereotypes and Promoting Gender Equality in School Textbooks and Materials](#)”.

²⁹⁹ AGE, [Kosovo Program for Gender Equality 2020-2024](#), p. 32.

³⁰⁰ AGE, [Evaluation Report of the Program for Gender Equality 2020-2024](#).

³⁰¹ LGBV, Article 17.1.1.

³⁰² LGBV, Article 17.1.2.

³⁰³ LGBV, Article 17.2.

³⁰⁴ Article 25.

³⁰⁵ Whether the training is mandatory or encouraged, and the specifics of what the training should involve, is specified in Article 36 of the VAWD.

³⁰⁶ Duhaček, D., Branković, B., and Miražić, M. for the FEMM Committee, “Women’s Rights in Western Balkans”, 2019, p. 54.

³⁰⁷ AGE, “[Assessment of the level of implementation of the Standard Operating Procedures for Protection against Domestic Violence in Kosovo](#)”, 2019, p. 150.

guidelines should be introduced for professionals dealing with victims of all forms of violence detailed in the IC, and such measures should be bolstered by consistent, systematic specialised training.³⁰⁸ The VAWD requires guidelines and protocols be issued for healthcare and social service professionals on identifying and providing appropriate support to victims, including referral to relevant support services and avoiding secondary victimisation.³⁰⁹ These guidelines and protocols must indicate how to address the specific needs of victims “at an increased risk of such violence as a result of their experiencing discrimination based on a combination of sex and any other ground or grounds of discrimination.” They must be developed in a gender-, trauma- and child-sensitive manner in cooperation with specialist support service providers and must be reviewed and, where appropriate, updated to reflect changes in law and practice. Guidelines and protocols on identifying and providing appropriate support to victims are required for health-care providers performing first-hand medical care and must cover “the preservation and documentation of evidence and the further transmission of evidence to competent forensic centres.”

While respecting freedom of expression and independence, the IC encourages private sector and media participation in designing and implementing policies, guidelines, and self-regulatory standards to prevent violence against women.³¹⁰ Without undermining media freedom and pluralism, the VAWD requires states to encourage and support training of media organisations and other relevant bodies to combat gender stereotypes, sexist portrayals of women, and victim-blaming. The CoE has commented on the importance of the media in Kosovo in reporting on violence against women and domestic violence in a gender-sensitive, non-stereotypical manner.³¹¹ Media can shape public opinion, so increased awareness and more gender-sensitive approaches to reporting may lead to societal support in preventing and addressing violence against women.³¹² The OSCE in Kosovo has prepared a useful document to guide journalists in reporting on domestic violence cases.³¹³ The LGBV now requires media to “create and implement informative and educational programs to raise awareness among the general public in the media about all forms of gender-based violence”, and to “promote gender equality, the elimination of gender stereotypes and the elimination of sexist language in media programmes and products”.³¹⁴ The Independent Media Commission is required to monitor the fulfilment of these obligations.

While not specifically stipulated in the IC, the VAWD now contains preventative measures addressing cybercrime, such as developing digital literacy skills, including critical engagement with the “digital world” and critical thinking to enable people to identify and address cases of cyberviolence, as well as how to seek support and prevent it. The Directive includes measures to prevent rape and promote consent in sexual relationships. These include consent education materials to “promote the understanding that consent must be given voluntarily as a result of a person’s free will, mutual respect, and the right to sexual integrity and bodily autonomy.” The Directive requires this information be “widely disseminated with a view to informing the general public about existing measures of rape prevention, including the availability of the intervention programmes”.

³⁰⁸ Krol, et al., *Mapping support services for victims of violence against women in Kosovo*, p. 79.

³⁰⁹ Article 25(5) and (6) of the VAWD.

³¹⁰ Article 17.

³¹¹ CoE, “*Raising awareness on violence against women and domestic violence: working with media in Kosovo*”, 2019.

³¹² Ibidem.

³¹³ OSCE Kosovo, “*Reporting on Domestic Violence: Guidelines for journalists*”, 2018.

³¹⁴ LGBV, Article 26.

Data Collection

The IC obliges states to regularly collect gender-disaggregated statistical data and to support research on all forms of violence covered by the IC to study its root causes, effects, incidence, conviction rates, and the efficacy of implementation measures.³¹⁵ The VAWD obliges member states to “have a system in place for the collection, production and dissemination of statistics on violence against women or domestic violence”.³¹⁶ The data must meet minimum standards set out in the article, must be available at a central level, and must be disaggregated. Member states should endeavour to collect administrative data in accordance with the standards developed by EIGE. Statistics collected must be made available to the public in an easily accessible manner.

In Kosovo, the Law on Gender Equality obliges all public institutions to collect gender-disaggregated statistical data and submit it to the Kosovo Agency of Statistics (KAS).³¹⁷ Failure to do so is punishable with a fine.³¹⁸ The LGBV provides that MJ must create and maintain an electronic system for managing information on cases of violence against women, supervised and maintained by the National Coordinator.³¹⁹ MJ has established the Integrated Data System / National Database, which serves as a unified platform for the coordinated management of domestic violence cases. In 2024, three new modules were integrated into the system, increasing the number of participating institutions to nine. All institutions providing services in cases of domestic violence are obliged to register the data in the database within 24 hours. The database enables identification of gaps in case management, clear allocation of institutional responsibilities, and analysis of trends to inform prevention and policymaking efforts. It includes data on general case information, services provided to victims, and measures applied to perpetrators, with the ability to categorise information by key parameters such as gender, age, relationship to the perpetrator, disability status, type of assistance provided, and type of violence. While some institutions, including healthcare providers, are not yet fully integrated, the system is designed to expand further.

The justice system continues working towards making its separate Case Management Information System (CMIS) fully operational and has adopted a manual on its usage. The system should include electronic details of all cases and rulings processed by the justice system: police, prosecution, and courts. Justice institutions tend to enter this data frequently, but do not always enter the same data in the National Coordinator’s database, as the two systems lack interoperability. Eventually, a joint system could enable processing of institutional data to produce statistics for public use and to inform policymaking. This could facilitate the government’s communication with the EU regarding progress towards chapter 23 of the *acquis*, “judiciary and fundamental rights”. Although some court judgments are available online, finding relevant case law is extremely difficult as decisions are organised chronologically rather than thematically. Thus, it is difficult to gather information on specific court treatment of domestic violence cases. Data disaggregated by gender is still not easily accessible online.

A key shortcoming of these databases is that they focus on domestic violence cases and exclude other forms of gender-based violence. Concerns also exist regarding the efficient use of officials’ time in entering data in both databases. The fact that KWN struggled to secure information from relevant institutions to inform this report suggests that data management still

³¹⁵ Article 11.

³¹⁶ VAWD, Article 44.

³¹⁷ Article 5.1.8.

³¹⁸ Article 23.5.

³¹⁹ LGBV, Article 61.

does not function as intended. Most institutions are not fulfilling their legal obligation to submit data to the KAS in accordance with the Law on Gender Equality.

Conclusion

The previous edition of this report found that the legal and policy framework lacked a gendered understanding of violence against women and was often incorrectly restricted to domestic violence only. The adoption of the LGBV has aligned the Kosovo legal framework much more closely with the IC and has, importantly, broadened the focus from domestic violence to gender-based violence. The LGBV also has built on the LPDV, addressing prior gaps by clearly defining responsibilities of actors involved in coordinating the institutional response to gender-based violence. The adoption of the revised CPC has improved significantly the legal framework's harmonisation with the IC and VD in the context of procedural protections for victims in legal processes. While there remains room for improvement, this progress towards legislative compliance with the IC is notable. Implementation of the law remains a challenge and more adequate budget allocations are needed, particularly to support services.

While significant progress has been made towards alignment with the IC, the EU legal framework has evolved following the adoption of the VAWD. The VAWD adds detail to many areas of the IC, particularly on how protection measures and support services must operate and introduces a number of new offences relating to technology-facilitated crime. Further reform will be required to transpose these measures into the Kosovo's legal framework.

THE INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE TO GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN KOSOVO

This chapter examines the institutional response to gender-based violence in Kosovo, as per the legal framework. It identifies shortcomings that require addressing to fully implement the IC, VD, and VAWD. First, the chapter summarises overall findings. Second, it discusses inter-institutional coordination in addressing different forms of gender-based violence at national and local levels. The chapter then includes sections on each institution responsible for addressing gender-based violence. Each section discusses their knowledge, attitudes, and performance in addressing gender-based violence as per the legal framework.¹ The chapter draws from existing research, data, and KWN interviews and monitoring. While researchers employed triangulation to enhance the validity of findings, other levels of knowledge and different attitudes may exist, given the sampling method used. Nevertheless, recurring themes across respondents suggest trends in awareness and attitudes. When identified, authors have noted differences in findings.

Overall Findings

Based on evidence presented in later sections of the report, this section summarises overall findings related to institutions' general knowledge of the legal framework, attitudes towards gender-based violence, intersectional approach to treating gender-based violence, and financing for addressing it.

Knowledge and Attitudes on Gender-based Violence

Overall, institutional awareness of gender-based violence appears to have improved since KWN's last monitoring report in 2020. Identified contributing factors include increased reporting of cases, better cooperation among institutions, and more training opportunities. Meanwhile, some responses suggested that gaps in understanding and response persist.

Research participants from institutions tended to have general knowledge of key definitions outlined in the CCK, including sexual harassment, sexual assault, domestic violence, incitement to expose intimate body parts, FGM, rape, and stalking. However, the depth of understanding varied across different forms of gender-based violence. Most participants demonstrated a solid understanding of gender-based violence, identifying physical violence, psychological violence, and economic violence as key forms. However, sexual harassment, sexual assault, and domestic violence were less consistently understood. There was clear awareness that gender-based violence includes

“

Yes, gender-based violence means violence used against a female, exclusively only against her.

- Man, VA

¹ Notably, awareness of the EU VAWD was not assessed given that it was adopted in May 2024, and it was too soon for such an assessment; however, general knowledge related to it was examined.

violence toward a person of any gender. Yet, the incorrect perception that gender-based violence refers exclusively to violence against women persisted among some officials.

Officials tended to define rape and sexual assault accurately, referring to touching without consent. Stalking was widely comprehended. However, sexual harassment generally was understood as verbal harassment, and there was some confusion with sexual assault. Some officials still hold the belief that the way a woman dresses can contribute to sexual harassment. When asked directly if clothing is a factor in sexual harassment, some responses suggested the persisting opinion that dress can be a contributing factor. This ideology of victim-blaming could contribute to insufficient treatment of crimes.

“

If it's two young people of roughly the same age exchanging a few words, I don't see it as sexual harassment... [T]he female gender needs to be a little more careful about how they dress, I think, and I think there should be a little bit of dress etiquette, you understand?

- Man official, Directorate of Finance

Victim Blaming

The term “blaming the victim” was first coined by William Ryan as an ideology used to justify and excuse crimes perpetrated against black people in the United States.² Since then, the term has been expanded and used in discussions related to sexual violence, as women have been blamed for how they were dressed, where they went, or what they did, rather than blaming perpetrators for crimes committed. Suarez and Gadalla have argued that a culture of blaming the victim can contribute to sexual violence.³

Incitement to expose intimate body parts was perceived differently among different research participants. Forcing someone to undress, being blackmailed, and being pressured to reveal intimate details were identified as forms of incitement. Some responses suggested that the way women dress, such as by exposing intimate body parts, could be seen as a provocation, potentially leading to sexual assault or harassment. This further evidences the continued prevalence of victim-blaming, though the victim's dress should not be relevant to criminal charges.

“

I see it [dress] a bit as a provocation, which can bring things to [...] sexual assault or sexual harassment. I believe this has an impact, and it also depends on clothing or overdoing it by the opposite sex.

- Man official, Directorate for Communal Affairs

Across interviews, officials consistently and accurately understood domestic violence, correctly observing that it is the most prevalent form of gender-based violence in Kosovo.

² William Ryan, *Blaming the Victim*, New York: 1971.

³ “Stop Blaming the Victim: A MetaAnalysis on Rape Myths”, *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 25(11) 2010–2035, SAGE, 2010.

Knowledge has improved that sexual violence can occur within a marital relationship. They tended to understand physical violence, but other forms of violence within a domestic relationship such as psychological or economic violence were less consistently understood.

Meanwhile, knowledge about FGM was limited. Responses included claims that FGM does not happen in Kosovo and other remarks that indicated a lack of awareness about the practice.

Research participants detailed having attended various trainings on gender-based violence, including those organised by the OSCE, AJ, and various CSOs. Trainings were considered valuable and helpful. However, the fact that they were not mandatory was seen as a limitation, and there was a clear desire for more frequent and obligatory training opportunities.

Non-Discrimination and an Intersectional Approach to Addressing Gender-based Violence

The IC requires that states take measures to protect the rights of victims without discrimination on any ground, including sex, gender, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, state of health, disability, marital status, migrant or refugee status.⁴ An intersectional approach to service provision would consider the ways in which inequalities and/or vulnerabilities may hinder diverse women's access to services. For example, rural, disabled, and isolated women, and/or those who do not speak Albanian may face added challenges accessing services.

Research participants from CSOs working with diverse women had differing views about the institutional response to gender-based violence. For example, interviews suggest that women with disabilities often do not feel safe reporting abuse, reflecting a systemic failure in creating accessible and trustworthy pathways to justice. Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian women face institutional neglect with inadequate protection and follow-up, as well as a lack of family support that frequently forces them back into abusive environments. Meanwhile, lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, intersex, asexual, and other identifying persons (LGBTQIA+) face stigmatisation where violence by family members routinely is classified as domestic violence, without attention to sexual orientation or gender identity as underlying factors. This, combined with breaches of confidentiality and discriminatory treatment, has undermined LGBTQIA+ trust in institutions. Findings suggest that institutional approaches not only overlook these specific groups' needs, but may actively discourage them from seeking help, aiding in perpetuating violence.

Financing for Addressing Gender-based Violence

The IC requires appropriate allocation of financial and human resources for the adequate implementation of integrated policies, measures, and programmes, including those carried out by CSOs.⁵ In Kosovo, each budget organisation has the responsibility to budget appropriately for implementing its responsibilities.⁶ MFLT sets spending limits, provides instructions via budget circulars, and compiles the Kosovo budget before submitting it to parliament for debate and

⁴ Article 4.3.

⁵ Article 8.

⁶ The legal framework refers to each body responsible for budgeting, including ministries and municipalities, among others, as "budget organisations". According to the [Law No. 03/L-048 on Public Financial Management and Accountability](#), Article I, "Budget Organisations" are "any public authority or public undertaking that directly receives under an Appropriations Law an appropriation that is not a component of a larger aggregate appropriation provided to another public authority or public undertaking".

adoption. While municipalities and relevant ministries propose budget allocations, the MFLT finalises the Kosovo budget and can request that these budget organisations allocate sufficient budget for implementing their responsibilities, including for addressing gender-based violence.

A rapid analysis of Kosovo's budget laws for 2021-2024 identified very few specific budget lines related to addressing gender-based violence. The fact that Kosovo uses line item budgeting rather than programmatic or results-based budgeting makes it difficult to assess specific allocations towards addressing gender-based violence. Some budget lines contributed indirectly, such as through the regular expenditures of responsible institutions (e.g., police, prosecution, CSWs).

The NSPVAW planned a total budget of €4,932,195 for 2022, 2023, and 2024 from the state and an additional €1,631,535 from donors.⁷ While planned allocations were distributed fairly evenly across the NSPVAW pillars, the lowest share was designated for general and specialised support services for victims. As of October 2025, no official data has been made publicly available on the actual expenditures towards implementing the NSPVAW.

By Kosovo law, shelters licensed by the state should receive state funding.⁸ A specific budget line for shelters was established following years of intensive advocacy by shelters, KWN, AGE, and the Security Gender Group. In 2021 and 2022, MFLT supported shelters with €1,000,000 per year.⁹ Following further lobbying, the Government increased funding for shelters in 2023 to €1,500,000, and the same amount was allocated in 2024.¹⁰ Historically, delayed disbursement of funds contributed to shelter closures that placed women and children at risk.¹¹ While the situation has improved, the need to reapply for funding annually and to await disbursement contributes to administrative burden for institutions and shelters, as well as cash flow challenges for shelters, particularly at the beginning of each year. Interviews suggested that inconsistent funding related to awaiting such disbursements contributed to the closure of Kosovo's only shelter specialising in care for children that suffered gender-based violence: Hope and Homes for Children, which closed in 2023. This has severely undermined the institutional response to treating children who have suffered gender-based violence. Meanwhile, MJ does not have a standardised, institutionalised costing methodology applied regularly for the shelters, which can contribute to insufficient financing based on IC requirements.¹²

In budget laws for 2021-2024, municipalities do not have any specific budget lines related to gender-based violence. There is a budget line titled "Residential Services", which municipalities use for providing social housing. However, it is for various types of recipients and does not specify allocations for gender-based violence survivors. A rapid analysis of municipal budget allocations for CSWs suggests that they have not increased expenditures to hire at least

⁷ MJ, [National Strategy for Protection from Domestic Violence and Violence Against Women 2022–2026](#), 2022.

⁸ Law No. [08/L-185 on Prevention and Protection from Domestic Violence. Violence against Women and Gender Based Violence](#), Article 24.

⁹ KWN, [The Law on Budget Appropriations of the Budget of the Republic of Kosovo 2023 from a Gender Perspective](#), 2023.

¹⁰ KWN, [Towards Citizens' Budgets: A Gender Review of the Kosovo 2024 Budget](#), 2024. For further information, see KWN, ["Advocacy Leads Kosovo's New Government to Establish Budget Line for Shelters"](#), 28 May 2020. AGE, [The Final Evaluation Report of the Kosovo Program for Gender Equality 2020-2024](#), 2024. See also, KOMF, [Open Letter to the Prime Minister, the Minister of Finance, Labor and Transfers and the Minister of Justice](#), 2024.

¹¹ See KWN, ["Ministry to Release Long-Awaited Assembly-Approved Funds for Shelters"](#), 1 March 2019.

¹² AGE undertook a costing exercise in 2019 ([Kosovo Shelter Operational Budgeting & Design Guidelines](#)), but it has not been used regularly for assessing costs. KWN has established a comprehensive methodology based on best international practices that is being tested in 2025 and could be adopted, potentially adapted, and used by MJ, or responsible Ministry in the future (forthcoming).

two additional social workers specialised in treating gender-based violence as foreseen by the State Protocol for the Treatment of Sexual Violence Cases.

An interesting example is the Municipality of Pristina, which provides all victims of domestic violence who have a protection order with €500 per month in financial assistance for rent and other essential expenses from the budget of the Municipality of Pristina, in accordance with criteria set by the Directorate for Social Welfare. Meanwhile, some albeit not all municipalities have developed local strategies and action plans towards gender equality, which often include efforts towards addressing gender-based violence. Some indicate intended budget allocations, which may provide insight in future years if clearly monitored regarding actual expenditures. Several of these plans have been developed with international support, and the extent they will be locally owned, financed, and implemented remains to be seen.

In December 2023, the Government introduced an employment support measure for survivors of domestic violence, aiming to promote their economic independence. The initiative subsidises 70% of the gross salary (up to €300) for six months for survivors who gain employment.¹³ Survivors apply by calling a toll-free number at MJ, after which they are referred to register as job seekers at municipal EOs. The Ministry verifies their survivor status and coordinates with the Agency for Employment to link them with potential employers. As of 2025, 14 women had benefited from this measure. The requirement to call MJ may hinder some victims from using the program; such services could be streamlined through CSW case managers who coordinate their cases and may be better equipped to provide support at a local level.

Overall, the state has not set aside adequate funds to implement its commitments to protecting diverse persons who have suffered gender-based violence as per the IC.¹⁴

Inter-institutional Coordination

This section discusses inter-institutional coordination. As per the IC, states must designate official bodies responsible for coordination, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of policies and measures to prevent and address all forms of gender-based violence.¹⁵ Kosovo has established coordination bodies at the national level, as well as in some municipalities, focused primarily on domestic violence and human trafficking.¹⁶ The following subsections discuss various coordination bodies, including: the Inter-ministerial Coordination Group; the National Coordinator; the Agency for Gender Equality (AGE); and municipal coordination mechanisms.

Inter-Ministerial Coordination Group against Domestic Violence

In 2012, the Government established the Inter-Ministerial Coordination Group against Domestic Violence through Decision No. 04/83.¹⁷ The Group is led by the National Coordinator against Domestic Violence (NCDV) within the MJ and co-chaired by AGE. Its official members include the MJ, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Health (MH), MESTI,

¹³ Kallxo.com, [Lansohet masa për punësimin e viktimave të dhunës në familje](#) [Measures launched for the employment of victims of domestic violence], 7 December 2023.

¹⁴ For further information, see KWN's forthcoming research costing specialised services.

¹⁵ Article 10.

¹⁶ Coordination bodies for addressing trafficking were beyond the scope of this research and thus are not examined here. Additionally, cooperation in recognising and supporting survivors of war-time sexual violence exists, but was beyond the focus of this report.

¹⁷ MJ, [National Strategy for Protection from Domestic Violence and Violence Against Women 2022–2026](#), 2022, pp. 23-24.

MFLT, MCYS, KP, KAS, the State Prosecutor's Office, KJC, Kosovo Judicial Institute, and Shelter Coalition. KWN and international partners participate as observers and experts.

While the Group met regularly so long as an official was in the position of the NCDV, during government changes the Group met less often. The Group discussed the implementation of the NSPVAW, high profile cases requiring a joint approach, challenges with data collection from various institutions, and coordinating actions related to the 16 Days against Violence against Women. Judges and prosecutors rarely have participated in the meetings, presenting challenges in efficient coordination. Despite the challenges faced, generally the regularity and performance of the Group has improved over time, observation suggests.

National Coordinator

Historically, the Deputy Minister of Justice served as the NCDV, responsible for overseeing implementation of the national strategy, coordinating institutions, managing the domestic violence database, and ensuring accountability.¹⁸ Following the adoption of the new LGV in 2023, the Minister of Justice has assumed these responsibilities.¹⁹

The NCDV has worked to advance policies towards addressing gender-based violence at the state level. This has contributed to improved coordination and documentation of efforts. Challenges have remained, such as ensuring accountability of other institutions in implementing their responsibilities for addressing gender-based violence. In accordance with legal responsibilities, the NCDV regularly monitored progress on the NSPVAW. Meanwhile, given the NCDV's coordination role, an indicator of the quality of NCDV's performance is the extent to which national strategies have been implemented. Reportedly, no archived record of the implementation of the previous strategy (the NSPDV) up to 2022 exists, so it is difficult to assess implementation amid changes in NCDVs and a lack of institutional memory.²⁰ Meanwhile, measurable progress has been made implementing the current strategy,²¹ as illustrated in the following table. Most improvements were in advancing policies and strengthening institutions. Challenges remain in providing consistent support services.

Objective	2022 Results ²²	2023 Results ²³
1. Prevention and Identification of Violence	10% fully implemented, 26% partially 64% not implemented	49% fully implemented 37% partially 13% not implemented
2. Advancement and Harmonization of Public Policies	45% fully implemented 38% partially 17% not implemented	73% fully implemented 20% partially 6% not implemented
3. Institutional Strengthening for Protection and Victim Treatment	14% fully implemented 51% partially 34% not implemented	53% fully implemented 38% partially 8.8% not implemented
4. Provision of General and Specialized Services	0% fully implemented 59% partially 41% not implemented	25% fully implemented 49% partially 25% not implemented

¹⁸ MJ, [National Strategy for Protection from Domestic Violence and Violence Against Women 2022–2026](#), p. 24.

¹⁹ Official Gazette of the Republic of Kosovo, [Law on Prevention and Protection from Domestic Violence, Violence against Women and Gender-based Violence](#), 2023, Article 13.

²⁰ KWN interview.

²¹ EC, [Kosovo 2024 Report](#), 2024, p. 36.

²² Ministry of Justice, [Annual Report on the Implementation of the National Strategy for Protection from Domestic Violence and Violence Against Women 2022–2026](#), 2023.

²³ Ministry of Justice, [Annual Report on the Implementation of the National Strategy for Protection from Domestic Violence and Violence Against Women 2022–2026](#), 2024.

Agency for Gender Equality

AGE was established in 2005 under the Law on Gender Equality and operates within the OPM.²⁴ It promotes gender equality, monitors the implementation of related laws, and supports Gender Equality Officers in municipalities and ministries. AGE also works closely with women's rights organisations and shelters on legal reforms and awareness campaigns. Under the LPDV, AGE held responsibilities as the deputy NCDV. AGE plays a key normative and coordinating role; it drafted the first law on domestic violence, the first and subsequent strategies, SOPs, and by-laws; it focuses on capacity building, prevention, and awareness campaigns undertaken together with CSOs. AGE regularly reported in Inter-Ministerial Coordination Group on its work, including drafting the new SOPs.

Under the NSPVAW, AGE is responsible for strengthening Municipal Coordination Mechanism (MCM) members' capacities through training on supporting cases of violence against women with a coordinated multi-sectoral approach.²⁵

Municipalities and Municipal Coordination Mechanisms

Under decentralisation, municipalities have a key role in coordinating the inter-institutional response to gender-based violence.²⁶ They are responsible for establishing action plans for addressing gender-based violence at the municipal level in accordance with the NSPVAW, as well as managing services in health, education, training, employment, and social welfare, primarily funded through transfers from Kosovo's general budget. Municipalities are tasked with forming regional and inter-municipal partnerships, in collaboration with MIA and MFLT, to ensure the identification, referral, shelter, rehabilitation, and empowerment of victims.²⁷ Municipalities also bear responsibility for violence prevention and community awareness, including through local campaigns, educational initiatives, and programmes addressing harmful gender norms. Additionally, they are tasked with collecting and reporting gender-disaggregated data locally. Municipalities also must build the capacities of local service providers, particularly health, social welfare, and education personnel.²⁸

The LGBV and the NSPVAW render municipalities as pivotal actors in the local implementation of protection, prevention, and response mechanisms.²⁹ Municipalities have a multi-dimensional role encompassing coordination, service delivery, prevention, monitoring, and resource allocation. Municipalities are mandated to establish and lead Municipal Coordination Mechanisms for Protection against Domestic Violence, Violence against Women, and Gender-based Violence (MCMs) that facilitate intersectoral cooperation among stakeholders.³⁰ Through these mechanisms, municipalities are expected to ensure a coherent and victim-centred response to cases of violence, including effective referrals, monitoring protection orders, and service provision oversight. Moreover, municipal authorities are responsible for ensuring access to essential services such as psychosocial counselling, legal aid, shelter accommodation, and emergency assistance, while supporting CSWs in conducting risk assessments and developing safety and rehabilitation plans for survivors. MCMs should meet

²⁴ MJ, [National Strategy for Protection from Domestic Violence and Violence Against Women 2022–2026](#), p. 24.

²⁵ MJ, [National Strategy for Protection from Domestic Violence and Violence Against Women 2022–2026](#), 3.2.4, pp. 89-90.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 24.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ [Standard Operating Procedures for Protection from Domestic Violence in Kosovo](#).

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Republic of Kosovo, [Regulation \(GRK\) – No. 01/2025 for the Local Coordinating Mechanism for Protection Against Domestic Violence, Violence Against Women, and Gender-based Violence](#).

regularly to discuss specific cases and how to support individuals' rehabilitation and reintegration.

Generally, Gender Equality Officers have taken the responsibility for coordinating MCMs, among their other roles, though this was not part of their official job descriptions. Thus, insufficient time and resources often has hindered their ability and that of mechanisms to manage cases in accordance with the IC. Historically, there was no clear legal basis guiding the operations of MCMs, which contributed to a lack of clarity regarding institutional responsibilities. The LGBV has clarified responsibilities, but implementation of these requires more time. As of May 2024, all 38 municipalities in Kosovo had established MCMs.³¹ However, their functionality varied. Interviews suggested that the Gjakova MCM stands out in that it has been active since 2012. The Peja MCM also shows strong coordination with regular meetings involving multiple other municipalities. In contrast, in Mitrovica the mechanism was not functioning until revived by civil society efforts, and in Ferizaj, meetings are infrequent and poorly attended.

MCM members recurrently reported that judges, prosecutors, and VAs typically attend meetings only when a major gender-based violence case is involved. Social workers noted that VAs often do not participate in meetings even when case discussions are being held, citing a lack of vehicles, the limited number of VAs, and conflicting court hearings. The failure of several key institutions to attend meetings hinders comprehensive case management. Observation suggests that when women's rights organisations have been engaged, particularly shelter representatives, MCMs have been more active.

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We can't say it functions properly...
They say they don't have time.

- Shelter representative

MCMs do not always meet regularly and some members do not participate actively. Other challenges include victim-centred case management inclusive of thorough risk assessments, interinstitutional collaboration particularly with justice institutions, reintegration of victims and ensuring adequate budget allocations to support appropriate case management. Further, historically they have focused on domestic violence cases and their capacities for assisting other cases of gender-based violence require further strengthening, particularly sexual and digital violence.

Evidence indicates that municipal implementation remains inconsistent and fragmented across Kosovo. While some municipalities have established functional MCMs and budgetary allocations for gender-based violence interventions, others continue to rely heavily on donor supported or NGO-led initiatives. The lack of sustainable municipal funding, irregular operation of MCMs, and limited inter-institutional communication undermine the overall coherence and sustainability of local responses. Further, insufficient training of municipal personnel and weak monitoring systems impede the systematic enforcement of protection measures and hinder survivor access to comprehensive support services.

Consequently, while the normative and strategic frameworks articulate a robust and decentralised approach to addressing gender-based violence, the translation of these mandates into practice at the municipal level remains limited. Uneven institutional capacity, inadequate resource allocation, and weak accountability mechanisms at the local level continue to constrain the effectiveness of Kosovo's overall response system, highlighting the need for enhanced

³¹ OSCE, [OSCE completes the establishment of Municipal Coordination Mechanisms against Domestic Violence in Kosovo](#), 2024.

institutional coordination, capacity strengthening, and the establishment of sustainable financing models to ensure consistent and rights-based protection for survivors across all municipalities.

Kosovo Police

This section examines the role and performance of the Kosovo Police (KP) in addressing gender-based violence, drawing from KWN's observations and interviews with various institutions, seven police officers from different regions, and the Police Inspectorate. Overall, MIA must ensure that KP are trained and equipped to support all victims of gender-based violence. KP are responsible for investigating gender-based violence-related crimes, responding to domestic violence cases, assessing victim risk, and enforcing protection orders. KP has a legal obligation to protect victims and inform them of their rights, including access to psychological assistance, legal support, and safety planning.³² KP has established Domestic Violence Investigation Units (DVIUs) with trained male and female officers dedicated to investigating domestic violence cases.³³

KP also has a Cybercrime Investigation Unit, but it has not been engaged much in treating technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV). Given the accumulated expertise of DVIUs in treating domestic violence, perhaps various forms of gender-based violence would be best treated by these units in line with the IC's broader definitions of violence, so that they can utilise existing knowledge on gender relations in such cases. Opportunities also exist for collaboration between these units in investigations.

The NSPVAW foresaw creating the Directorate for Prevention and Investigation of Domestic Violence in KP,³⁴ which was established in 2023. The Directorate consists of four sectors: the Unit for Control and Quality of Case Investigation; the Investigation Unit (previously focused solely on prevention); the Unit for Prevention of Domestic Violence and Child Maltreatment; and the Unit for Prevention of Sexual Violence. At the municipal level, every KP station includes a DVIU. These structural changes were introduced in response to the high number of gender-based violence cases reported to police. They illustrate the institution's increased commitment to addressing gender-based violence seriously and effectively.

As foreseen by the NSPVAW, several municipal police stations have established "Friendly Rooms", which aim to create a safe, supportive environment for victims and their children while they provide statements. Currently, there are 28 such rooms across municipalities³⁵. In locations where dedicated rooms are not available, KP has adapted nearby spaces to serve a similar function until such facilities are established. Meanwhile, KWN has observed instances in which KP did not use these rooms, including when children were present. In some situations, interviews were conducted in rooms that were ill-suited for handling such serious, emotionally sensitive cases in spaces that lacked the necessary privacy and supportive environment for victims.

The NSPVAW mentions the need for KP to establish an "Emergency Fund (in the form of petty cash)" to cover urgent needs of victims while they are at police stations. Based on KWN's observations, this fund has not yet been established. Police officers often cover these

³² Official Gazette of the Republic of Kosovo, [Law on Prevention and Protection from Domestic Violence. Violence against Women and Gender-based Violence](#), 2023.

³³ Amnesty International, [From Paper to Practice: Kosovo Must Keep Its Commitments to Domestic Violence Survivors](#), 2023.

³⁴ Republic of Kosovo, Government, MJ, [NSPVAW](#), p. 47.

³⁵ Ibid, activity IV I.I. 5, pg. 103.

expenses themselves when victims require basic items such as milk, water, or food, including in cases where children are involved.

The NSPVAW also foresees KP engagement in awareness raising campaigns, which they have conducted annually, especially during the 16 Days of Activism against Violence against Women. The NSPVAW prevention pillar foresees that KJC, Kosovo Prosecutorial Council (KPC), JA, KP, CSOs, and media ensure “Investigation with priority of possible cases of attacks on journalists, domestic violence and hate crime, hate speech and discrimination, as well as cases that violate the rights of persons of the LGBTI community with priority”. Although KP stated that such cases are considered a priority, KWN monitoring identified shortcomings in the proper and timely handling of these cases. For instance, a LGBTQIA+ activist reported:

We have many cases within the community related to hate speech, but the justice system almost never classifies them as such. Likewise, if you report a case of domestic violence, where your father, mother or someone else has beaten you because you are LGBT, the case is not classified as motivated by your orientation or identity.³⁶

While KP can document that violence involved extenuating circumstances, including based on sexual identity or orientation, monitoring suggests that this rarely occurs. Rather, KP tend to only document the crime, such as harassment, obscuring gender-related aspects of the crime. LGBTQIA+ individuals reported reluctance seeking help due to fears of discrimination and breaches of confidentiality.

Similarly, in another case, men created a group on the social media platform “Telegram” called ALBKINGS. They targeted female journalists and other well-known women, using their profiles and images without their consent for harassment and sexual abuse. KP treated the case solely as a cybercrime, without recognising or addressing the gendered nature of the violence.

The Kosovo Program for Gender Equality (2020-2024) foresaw increasing women’s representation in KP.³⁷ Evidence suggests that women’s presence can increase trust in this institution, which can contribute to increased reporting and thus better access to services.³⁸ While KP has sought to offer more flexible working hours and stations closer to home for women, challenges persist to increasing women’s participation in KP amid socialised gender roles in Kosovo society and general struggles families face accessing affordable childcare. Kosovo Serb women face added barriers due to insecurity, political concerns that they may be perceived to have betrayed their ethnic group, and/or fear of receiving threats.³⁹ Women’s underrepresentation in KP generally can contribute to under-reporting of gender-based violence amid a lack of trust in the institution, particularly in northern Kosovo amid the aforementioned added challenges.

³⁶ KWN interview, 2024.

³⁷ OPM, AGE, [Kosovo Program for Gender Equality 2020-2024](#), 2020.

³⁸ KWN, [A Seat at the Table: Women’s contributions to and expectations from peacebuilding processes in Kosovo](#), 2021, p. 69.

³⁹ Balkan Insight, [“Political Tensions Test Unity of Kosovo’s Police Force”](#), 2025, para. 24. KWN, [Peace and Security in Kosovo: A Gender Analysis](#), 2025, p. 19.

While progress was observed in KP's performance since KWN's last monitoring exercise, several issues persist. Some officers were familiar with the NSPVAW, but not all demonstrated deep knowledge. Officers tended to misunderstand gender-based violence or equate it with domestic violence. Key legal terms such as harassment, sexual harassment, and sexual assault were misinterpreted. Police officers were unfamiliar with FGM, often confusing it with domestic violence instead of recognising it as a distinct criminal offense. Officers tended to justify and excuse sexual harassment, particularly if it had happened for the first time. They did not understand the dynamics of power roles. For example, due to power dynamics, professors cannot compliment students; doing so constitutes a criminal offense. Further, police minimised victims' experience and tended to side with perpetrators. Police also tended to justify perpetrators' actions when they followed victims or installed technological devices to monitor their movements. They described these actions as non-violent behaviours. KP also often downplayed survivors' experiences, especially in the absence of visible physical injuries. This suggests a lack of understanding of gendered power dynamics, psychological abuse, and control.

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Sexual harassment must be repetitive, not when someone says, 'You look beautiful'. The professor was punished just for giving compliments.

- Man officer, KP

Although police stated that they follow protocols designed to ensure a victim-centred approach and maintain confidentiality, improvements are needed. For example, in a waiting area filled with people reporting various cases, a KP investigator loudly called from the second floor: “whoever is here for domestic violence, please come upstairs.”⁴⁰ This made the victim feel

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Cases are coming out from Police. [W]e even have cases where they are made public before even reaching the CSW.

- Man, CSW

unsafe, concerned that her identity could be exposed. Moreover, media often obtain sensitive case information from police, compromising victims' identities and confidentiality. Concerns existed among research participants about sensitive information occasionally leaking from KP, damaging victims' trust in institutions and placing victims at risk.

Despite SOPs guiding their work, KP officers lacked a standardised approach to treating cases across different regions. Further, KP faced a shortage of human and technical resources. When victims report cases to KP, they may be interviewed by uneducated, untrained officers, leading to incomplete statements, improper guidance, and potential re-traumatisation.⁴¹ Some officers reportedly discouraged victims from using shelters. Other identified issues included weak technology to facilitate recording interviews and insufficient funding. Delayed provision of forensic reports to the prosecution also reportedly has affected the progress of cases.⁴² Police also highlighted challenges in implementing the law due to the “mentality” in Kosovo. A still

⁴⁰ Case assisted by KWN, 2023

⁴¹ KWN interview with CSW representative, 2024.

⁴² KWN interviews with prosecutors, 2024.

prevalent patriarchal mindset justifies violence and pushes victims to continue living in abusive environments, they said. If they do not come forward, it is difficult to treat cases.

Inadequate mechanisms for monitoring protection orders and insufficient state support can force many survivors to either stay with their abusers or return to violent situations due to financial dependency. While progress has been made in the timely issuance of protection orders, their enforcement remains inconsistent, leaving survivors at risk. The 2015 Law on Electronic Supervision allows for electronic monitoring of individuals with restricted movement.⁴³ However, MIA only launched the electronic-

bracelet system in December 2024. The delayed introduction of this system has hindered KP's effective monitoring of protection orders. This contributed to a 2023 case of femicide; despite having an active protection order, a victim was murdered in a gynaecology clinic where she was about to give birth. She and her unborn child lost their lives, and the perpetrator subsequently killed himself.⁴⁴ Use of electronic bracelets and effective monitoring may have prevented this.

Issues also exist with enforcing various aspects of protection orders. Even when protection orders prohibit contact and establish alimony obligations for children and/or spouses, survivors frequently must file enforcement motions with courts to receive payments. Perpetrators often ignore court decisions and police provide limited follow-up to ensure enforcement of alimony. This can make it difficult for survivors to navigate economic hardships towards autonomy.

A recurring concern raised by interview participants was that some police officers working in DVIUs have remained in the same position for a long time, which may result in decreased motivation and reduced seriousness in handling domestic violence cases. "In police departments, there are officers who handle cases of domestic violence, but I have noticed that some officers are tired," a male prosecutor observed. "They say they are exhausted from this work." This may signal potential burnout. KP officers do not have access to supervision and other psychological support services that perhaps could prevent this.

KP and specifically DVIUs have received training on domestic violence. Meanwhile, they emphasised the need for additional and more specific sessions. None of the officers interviewed had received training on identifying signs of sexual abuse in intimate relationships. Police Academy curricula still need to be harmonised with the IC.⁴⁵ Training on sexual assault and harassment was only briefly included in broader sessions on domestic violence and insufficiently treated separately, outside domestic relations. Nor has there been sufficient training on TFGBV.

Generally, KP has standardised data management practices. KP is one of the most efficient institutions in providing data for the National Database on Domestic Violence.⁴⁶ However, the database currently only includes domestic violence cases, contributing to challenges in tracking data on other forms of gender-based violence.

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The law is good, but implementation is difficult. It's not enough to simply adopt European standards, our mentality plays a role.

- Man, KP

⁴³ Republic of Kosovo, [Law on Electronic Supervision of Persons whose Movement is Limited by the Decision of the Court](#).

⁴⁴ *Gazeta Insajderi*, "[Hamide Magashi had a protection order until 13 March 2023](#)", 1 December 2022.

⁴⁵ KWN interview with official.

⁴⁶ Stated during Interministerial Group on Prevention of Domestic Violence and Violence against Women, observed by KWN.

Police Inspectorate

The Law on the Police Inspectorate of Kosovo (PIK) established PIK as an independent oversight body charged with inspecting, investigating, and reviewing police actions and processes, as well as with investigating complaints or allegations of police misconduct.⁴⁷ PIK are responsible for receiving and processing complaints about police handling of gender-based violence cases; inspecting police units and procedures for handling violence; investigating alleged misconduct or failure to apply procedures; recommending disciplinary, administrative, or criminal referrals when police fail to act appropriately; and publishing findings and recommendations to improve practice and accountability.

Generally, PIK officials demonstrate awareness of all forms of gender-based violence, including TFGBV, recognising the need to strengthen the legal framework accordingly. PIK has reviewed KP treatment of gender-based violence cases. In 2024, it launched a more detailed analysis, followed by recommendations to KP.⁴⁸

However, opportunities exist for improvements. In one case, when KWN addressed a KP officer's failure to obtain the victim's signature on a police statement in a domestic violence incident to PIK, PIK did not take any action. Instead, PIK forwarded the case to KP for investigation as police misconduct and for potential disciplinary action. This suggests unclarity regarding PIK's remit versus that of KP. It is sometimes difficult to discern whether a case should be handled strictly within a police station or be referred for PIK oversight. Such ambiguity may undermine public trust in PIK's effectiveness and deter reporting of cases requiring PIK's attention.

The Institute of Forensic Medicine

Operating under MJ, IFM provides forensic services including conducting autopsies and examining victims of physical and sexual violence.⁴⁹ IFM reports can be critical to informing judicial proceedings as they can provide evidence as to whether gender-based violence has occurred. In the last three years, IFM has examined 120 to 130 cases annually, including approximately 100 involving sexual violence. Approximately 85% have been girls, and more than 70% have been under age 16, primarily from Pristina.

Between 2020 and 2023, IFM received numerous reports of domestic violence. However, few victims were examined due to staff shortages and limited availability of transportation, particularly in remote areas. In 72% of cases, the IFM did not take samples because persons arrived too late for samples to be useful.⁵⁰ According to an IFM doctor, "Medical reports are often incomplete... I sometimes have to write that no injuries were found, though I'm not sure if a full examination was done".⁵¹ Cases have tended to rely on incomplete documentation from other institutions.

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A scratch or bruise may seem minor, but it's still physical evidence of contact and harm.

- IFM doctor

⁴⁷ Republic of Kosovo, [Law on Police Inspectorate of Kosovo](#), 2010.

⁴⁸ Government of Kosovo, MIA, PIK, [Inspection Report](#), 31.10. 2024.

⁴⁹ MJ, [Institute for Forensic Medicine](#).

⁵⁰ CoE, [Assessment of the alignment of Kosovo's laws, policies and other measures with the standards of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence \(Istanbul Convention\)](#), 2022, p. 51.

⁵¹ KWN interview with IFM doctor, 2024.

Although critical to forensic evaluations, minor injuries often have been missed. “Cases get dismissed because there are no physical injuries... but the emotional damage from fear and abuse can last a lifetime”, an IFM doctor observed.⁵² Yet, institutions reportedly have regularly overlooked psychological damage in sexual and domestic violence cases. Not fully documenting psychological impacts can contribute to unfair legal outcomes and sentencing. Thus, IFM recommended that its trained professionals handle all medical examinations, noting that other institutions often lack the required expertise.

In cases of sexual assault, the IFM conducts full exams, collects evidence, and staff report better coordination with KP and faster response times. They follow legal protocols, secure informed consent, and send evidence to the Kosovo Forensic Agency. Reports are shared with prosecutors, and staff testify in court, explaining medical findings. For example, they have provided clarifications during trials that an intact hymen does not rule out sexual violence.

In 2023, CoE criticised the lack of a comprehensive, victim-centred approach in IFM’s forensic examinations of sexual violence cases.⁵³ Trauma-informed care, psychological support, and services for victims who choose not to file a formal complaint remain absent, violating IC Article 25.⁵⁴ The CoE report also highlighted issues with the attitudes and training of doctors collecting evidence, including victim-blaming behaviours. With only one female doctor on staff, options for gender-responsive care are limited.

Prosecution

The Office of the State Prosecutor plays a central role in responding to gender-based violence. Prosecutors are responsible for reviewing evidence, initiating proceedings, and ensuring the proper legal qualification of criminal offenses. They supervise DVIUs’ investigations, ensure evidence is collected correctly, and may initiate *ex officio* (automatic) proceedings, particularly in cases involving protection order violations. According to the CCK, prosecutors select the appropriate charges based on available evidence and are expected to prioritise gender-based violence cases. Prosecutors must review cases for indicators of immediate danger, such as prior threats, breaches of restraining orders, access to weapons, escalation of violence, strangulation, risks to children, and coercive or controlling behaviour. When such indicators exist, prosecutors should promptly seek emergency protective measures, including detention or temporary removal of the perpetrator, protection orders, and no-contact requirements. In cases of gender-based violence, especially domestic violence, when civil proceedings are initiated, prosecutors should also ensure that criminal proceedings begin without delay when legal grounds exist. Prosecutors are legally obliged to undergo specialised training on gender-based violence, including domestic violence.

Generally, prosecutors demonstrated awareness of their legal responsibilities in handling gender-based violence cases.⁵⁵ However, some prosecutors confused sexual harassment with sexual assault and did not fully understand that gender-based violence also can affect men. Others were unclear about specific crimes such as FGM. Although prosecutors reported having knowledge of SOPs and the State Protocol for the Treatment of Cases of Sexual Violence, they had not participated in relevant training. They knew the importance of confidentiality but noted that media leaks often compromise this, creating additional challenges for their investigations.

⁵² KWN interview with IFM doctor, 2024.

⁵³ CoE, [Kosovo Assessment Report on the Implementation of the Istanbul Convention](#), 2023, pp. 8-9

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ This section draws from interviews with five prosecutors from various regions in 2024, interviews with other institutions, and KWN observation.

Prosecutors said that poor institutional infrastructure, including limited office space, a lack of private rooms for interviewing victim, and insufficient access to psychologists and support staff, hinders their work. A woman prosecutor emphasised that mental illness among perpetrators presented a major challenge:

Mostly, we are dealing with individuals who have mental disorders. This is the biggest problem here. We are trying to manage this by using detention, so they are not released. All the cases we have that end in fatalities result from individuals being addicted to drugs, alcohol, or having mental health issues.

Attributing the actions of male perpetrators to mental illness or substance abuse alone, while ignoring gender-based power relations, patriarchy, and other contributing factors, may undermine ensuring effective justice for gender-based violence. Moreover, the prosecutor's statement is problematic because it illustrates insufficient cooperation among responsible institutions in handling such cases. CCK Article 18 regulates this issue, explicitly requiring that a "person is criminally liable but the court shall take these conditions into consideration when deciding the duration and the type of sanction or measure of mandatory treatment it imposes."

In practice, prosecutors' responsibilities are not applied consistently. Prosecutors often neglect to conduct risk assessments. Moreover, multiple stakeholders reported that prosecutors sometimes fail to initiate criminal proceedings even when evidence of criminal conduct exists. While prosecutors knew that criminal prosecution must continue *ex officio* even if victims withdraw their statements, some lacked sensitivity as to *why* victims may want to end legal proceedings or be reluctant to report violence, such as fear, stigma, or ongoing coercion.

While prosecutors tended to state that they understand the importance of victims reporting cases, some prosecutors have encouraged victims not to report cases. For example, an injured party told KWN that during the interview, the prosecutor said: "Why are you reporting it? Don't rush because no one will take you seriously when they understand what has happened to you." This constitutes a violation of the Prosecutor's Code of Ethics,⁵⁶ which requires the prosecutor to respect the legal rights of all parties and refrain from comments that could negatively affect the integrity of the institution. These words not only undermine the integrity of the prosecutor and the justice system but can deeply harm victims, erode their trust in institutions, contribute to under-reporting,⁵⁷ and undermine justice, enabling recidivism.

Example of a Prosecutor's Insufficient Victim-centred Approach

During a court hearing in the Juvenile Department in Pristina, involving charges of "Violation of Family Obligations" and "Sexual Abuse of Persons Under the Age of 16", the KWN observer noted that the prosecutor appeared distracted and disengaged, failing to respond at critical moments or to statements by the injured party. Further, during the session, the female prosecutor made comments towards the victim's mother, who also had suffered domestic violence, such as: "Marriage is a compromise, my sweetheart"; "Often my husband tells me: 'I will break your teeth. I will kill you'." These statements reflect the prosecutor's troubling normalisation of violence within family dynamics and justification of such behaviour. This can affect the wellbeing of the victim and negatively impact access to justice.

⁵⁶ Republic of Kosovo, [Prosecutor's Code of Ethics](#), Point 5 - Professionalism of the Code.

⁵⁷ Group for Legal and Political Studies (GLPS), "[Towards and Beyond 'No Means No': A Call for Reform in Kosovo's Approach to Rape Cases](#)", 2024.

Some judges stated that prosecutors do not prepare indictments well and investigations are not thorough enough. Descriptions in indictments reportedly are often confusing, combining physical, psychological, and economic violence without clarifying the offense. “Prosecutors rely too much on the victim’s statement and fail to collect additional evidence,” a penal judge observed. A thorough investigative procedure is essential to establish the defendant’s guilt. Cases that rely solely on the victim’s testimony are highly vulnerable, as the victim may withdraw their statement during proceedings, leaving the indictment without a solid evidentiary basis. Prosecutors must proactively gather additional evidence to ensure the case does not depend solely on the victim’s account and that justice can be served for the crime committed.

Issues also exist with legal misclassification. For example, in 2019, defendant A.A. was charged with sexual harassment under CCK Article 183. The indictment described how A.A. repeatedly touched the victim’s intimate areas and once forcibly restrained, kissed, and laid her on the bed while she was alone and unprotected. These actions align more with sexual assault (CCK Article 229). Further, paragraph 3.9 of Article 229 foresees harsher sentences when the perpetrator has a family relationship with the victim. Despite this, the prosecutor filed charges under a lesser offense, minimising the severity of the crime and reducing potential legal consequences. Additionally, while monitoring court hearings in 2023-2024, KWN observed seven instances in which proceedings were postponed due to the unjustified absence of state prosecutors.

Kosovo Prosecutorial Council

KPC is the governing body for the prosecutorial system.⁵⁸ It is responsible for recruitment, appointment, promotion, transfer, training, evaluation, and disciplinary accountability of prosecutors. Its mandate includes ensuring the system is professional, independent, and impartial, as well as reflects gender equality and a multiethnic composition. Related to gender-based violence, KPC must ensure training and capacity building of prosecutors in treating gender-based violence. Since the KPC has authority over discipline, a prosecutor who fails persistently to fulfil obligations (e.g., initiating prosecution when required, protecting victims) could be subject to disciplinary review by the KPC.

KPC’s published reports show few instances of disciplinary measures taken related to gender-based violence cases. The Kosovo Law Institute found that of 11 disciplinary measures imposed by KPC in 2023-2024 related to various cases, nine (81.8%) were public or non-public written warnings.⁵⁹ They also found that KPC “imposed only a one-year, 30% salary reduction on prosecutor Hava Krasniqi”, despite findings that she failed to assess risk and take urgent legal actions in a domestic-violence case. This example illustrates that even when disciplinary measures are taken, they do not adequately reflect the seriousness of the misconduct, the severe impact that these failures have on victims of gender-based violence, or the messages delivered to the society.

Victim Advocates

The Victims Advocacy and Assistance Office (VAAO) operates under the Office of the State Prosecutor. It was established to support victims of gender-based violence, as detailed in the LGBV.⁶⁰ Victim Advocates (VAs) should assist victims in understanding their rights, apply for protection orders, perform risk assessments, represent victims during court proceedings, and

⁵⁸ Assembly of Kosovo, [Law on Kosovo Prosecutorial Council](#).

⁵⁹ Kosovo Law Institute, [What does corporatism and impunity look like in the prosecutorial system?](#), 2024.

⁶⁰ LGBV, Article 16.

operate a 24-hour toll-free helpline for immediate support and referrals. They also are responsible for filing requests with the Victim Compensation Fund.⁶¹

Most VAs were familiar with the legal framework, such as the LGBV, SOPs, and the Protocol for Sexual Violence.⁶² However, they frequently used the terms “gender-based violence” and “domestic violence” interchangeably, revealing confusion with legal distinctions. Some VAs have downplayed instances of sexual violence within intimate relationships, with one reportedly stating: “It’s normal. It’s her husband.” Despite years of training, VAs emphasised the need for further capacity-building, citing patriarchal mentality as a persistent barrier. For example, a male VA stated, “The challenge here is that in many cases of sexual violence, victims may not present the truth... then, during forensic exams, other issues may come up.” This quote suggests that not all VAs may take victims’ statements seriously, leaving room for doubt. This can make victims feel judged rather than believed. Mistrust can contribute to difficulties with forensic examinations and case management, as the focus shifts from protecting the victim to searching for “inconsistencies” in her/his testimony. Distrust can prevent victims from speaking openly and/or discourage them from seeking help, contributing to recidivism.

VAs reported being understaffed in most municipalities, overwhelmed by workloads, lacking transportation to attend court, and having limited office space. In some cases, victims had to recount abuse in the presence of other victims due to shared office arrangements, undermining confidentiality. Due to limited human resources, despite legal obligations, VAs have not been consistently present at police stations when victims give statements. This can contribute to re-victimisation as victims may have to repeat their stories to various justice institutions. Limited human resources also may contribute to VAs failing to sufficiently inform victims of their rights or of court processes, as well as delays in ensuring protection for victims. For example, in a 2024 case, a woman who had requested a protection order was never contacted by the VA. A month later, when she visited the office, the VA said, “Oh, luckily nothing happened to you because I completely forgot”. This negligence violates the LGBV,⁶³ which mandates that VAs support victims in submitting protection order requests and collecting necessary documentation. Such inaction endangered the victim’s safety.

Limited human resources also have meant that VAs have failed to appear in court hearings, despite requirements to do so in the LGBV. Shockingly, across 76 court hearings that KWN monitored in the General Department, criminal division of Pristina, only one involved the presence of a VA. Similarly, the Kosovo Law Institute’s monitoring of 50 cases found that only 38% of cases had any representation and only 26% were represented by VAs.⁶⁴ Limited time may impact the performance of VAs in requesting and submitting evidence in court. In another case monitored by KWN in Pristina in the General Department of the Civil Division in March 2023, a VA failed to present evidence supporting the victim’s claims of physical and psychological abuse. The victim had not been informed of her rights or legal procedures before the hearing. The victim later stated that she avoided presenting photographic evidence for fear of retaliation from her ex-husband’s family. Such evidence could have supported her claims and contributed to her security. KWN’s monitoring, illustrated by these examples, suggests serious non-compliance with SOPs, which require VAs to inform victims about legal assistance, accompany

⁶¹ AGE, SOPs, 2013; NSPVAW 2022-2025, Assembly of Kosovo, [Law on Crime Victim Compensation](#); NSPVAW 2022-2025.

⁶² This section is based on KWN interviews with six VAs across various regions in 2024, interviews with other officials, and KWN observations.

⁶³ Assembly of Kosovo, [LGBV](#), Article 16, points 1.3 and 1.4 (p. 99).

⁶⁴ Kosovo Law Institute, [Compensation for the Victims of Domestic Violence](#), Prishtina: 2023.

them in court, and, when needed, represent them in proceedings if no other legal representative is available.

Case: Withdrawal of Request for Protection Order

During a hearing in March 2022, the protected party withdrew her request for a PO, despite having experienced physical violence from her partner, stating: “This happened only once during our marriage, so I want to forgive him.” The responsible party admitted to having hit his wife, justifying his actions by stating that “he hadn’t rested” and that “the noise” had disturbed him. He further remarked: “You can ask my wife if I have ever been violent again”. The VA supported the protected party’s withdrawal of her request, which is concerning in the context of admitted violence, reflecting inadequate institutional support. Withdrawing a request for a PO can leave victims at risk of repeat abuse and undermine the preventative aims of such measures. In this case, the VA should have advised the victim, separately and individually, to carefully consider this decision, her level of risk, and the various institutional support mechanisms available to her.

VAs must support victims in filing compensation claims. While delays existed in the past, in recent years, this process has improved. More complaints are being addressed to the MJ’s Compensation Commission.

Some VAs have remained in the same position for more than 20 years without adequate supervision, psychological support, or professional development opportunities. This prolonged exposure to trauma-related work without institutional support has contributed to burnout, emotional distress, and declining wellbeing. A VA from Pristina said, “Before, I used to remember things, to be calm. Now I have developed negative habits; I can’t remember things, I am angry with colleagues, with family, with friends — and all of this is a consequence of the work that I do.” Such conditions can negatively affect service quality and increase risks for secondary trauma for VAs. Psychological support for VAs remains inexistent.

Legal Aid

In 2022, Kosovo amended the Law on Free Legal Aid, expanding automatic access for certain vulnerable groups.⁶⁵ This includes victims of gender-based violence, including of wartime rape, and dependent witnesses. Applicants from these categories are no longer required to meet financial and juridical criteria to qualify for free legal aid. Legal Aid Officers (LAOs) are mandated to inform victims of their rights, provide legal advice, prepare documentation, and represent them in criminal, civil, and administrative proceedings. While LAOs can file claims independently, they may need to coordinate with other institutions on matters like divorce, child custody, and alimony, particularly in instances when the court issues additional requests.

⁶⁵ Official Gazette of Republic of Kosovo, [Law No. 08/L-035 on Amending and Supplementing the Law No. 04/L-017 on Free Legal Aid](#), 2022.

LAOs tended to know amendments to the Law on Free Legal Aid and that domestic violence, sexual harassment, stalking, FGM are crimes.⁶⁶ However, they had limited knowledge of the NSPVAW and SOPs, though many of their responsibilities relate to these frameworks. While they possessed knowledge about domestic violence, they tended to lack understanding about other forms of gender-based violence. For example, stalking was incorrectly described by a LAO as a situation in which an individual is pursued by law enforcement. Some officers declined to answer questions related to gender-based violence due to uncertainty. Training for LAOs remains ongoing and mandatory for domestic violence cases.⁶⁷ However, officers were unsure whether training had addressed other types of gender-based violence like sexual harassment or how to identify signs of abuse. Some LAOs questioned the legitimacy of gender-based violence reports, claiming, “There are more reports than actual violence.” This, among other statements made by LAOs, illustrates a disturbing lack of trust in victims. Further LAOs recurrently tended to blame victims for violence. This not only minimises the harm victims have experienced but also contributes to feelings of guilt and self-blame. Consequently, such attitudes can foster an environment of mistrust and doubt that can discourage victims from reporting violence. A lack of understanding of the gendered nature of violence can lead to inadequate support.

Most legal aid has been provided in civil cases, especially divorce, custody, and alimony. Meanwhile, criminal cases are managed by prosecutors and VAs. A male LAO explained:

Criminal procedures are handled by prosecutors who represent the victim’s interests in court, along with victim advocates. Since there are already two institutions representing the victim, our involvement as a third party is unnecessary. In my view, these institutions provide adequate and dignified representation, making additional intervention redundant.

LAOs can appoint a lawyer to represent the interests of the party. However, due to resource restrictions, the LAO may decide not to appoint a lawyer if it considers that the victim has other representation.⁶⁸ Moreover, gaps may exist in coordinating victim support, particularly ensuring continuity in assistance between civil and criminal proceedings, where victims often face overlapping legal, psychological, and socioeconomic challenges. Coordination among legal representatives in cases involving both criminal and civil cases is essential.

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Women must preserve the institution of the family because it is going astray. It is being degraded. Wise women overcome things. I’m not saying don’t report it if there is excessive violence, but for minor issues, don’t destroy the institution of the family because it is very important.

- Woman LAO

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She gave him space [for sexual harassment], so he could say those words.

- Woman LAO

⁶⁶ This section is based on KWN interviews with six LAOs across Kosovo in 2024.

⁶⁷ They reported attending training by various actors including CSOs, GIZ, USAID, AJ, OSCE, and CoE.

⁶⁸ Comment on draft report by peer reviewer engaged in monitoring cases.

LAOs face logistical challenges, such as arranging transportation to shelters to document victims' statements. They also face shortages in human resources. For instance, an officer may need to watch a victim's children while another LAO listens to the victim's statement.

Courts

Seven basic courts geographically distributed across Kosovo serve as courts of first instance.⁶⁹ They should prioritise cases of gender-based violence, addressing them through civil or criminal proceedings depending on the case.⁷⁰ Civil courts are responsible for issuing POs, EPOs, and resolving related family law issues like divorce, custody, alimony, and property disputes, which are often intertwined with gender-based violence. In criminal cases, courts deliberate over crimes, including PO violations.⁷¹ Courts must treat all parties with dignity and impartiality, ensure protection for those involved, and consider aggravating factors when determining sentences. They are also required to inform parties of their rights and the consequences of non-compliance.⁷² This section first examines judges' knowledge, attitudes, and performance, focusing on their implementation of the IC. Then, subsections discuss criminal and civil courts, considering their distinct roles. The section draws from KWN's interviews with 13 judges, as well as representatives of other institutions, observation of 292 hearings in basic courts, and other research.⁷³

Knowledge and Attitudes toward Gender-based Violence

Judges generally knew the importance of ensuring confidentiality. Some judges said that they had read SOPs but not applied them. Others were fully aware of SOPs and their duties. Civil and penal judges generally were aware of gender-based violence offenses in the CCK. However, inconsistencies were observed in their understanding of more nuanced offenses. Some judges struggled to define "Incitement to expose intimate body parts". For example, a civil judge vaguely referred to the involvement of minors or vulnerable persons. Definitions of FGM also varied. Judges' responses suggested that this offense may not be fully understood. Understanding of sexual harassment also varied. One civil judge stated, "I don't have an exact definition of what it means. However, surely it is sexual violence, I think. I don't know if it is defined like that according to the Code." Sexual assault was generally defined as non-consensual contact, but some judges offered vague, inaccurate definitions like "an action without the other party knowing". While civil judges are not legally obliged to have such knowledge, they should be cautious when reviewing cases; if they see signs of a potential crime, they should check the CCK and ensure referral for prosecution where relevant.

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Although the law [LGBV] has changed, civil and penal judges were not specifically trained on the new provisions.

- Civil court judge

⁶⁹ Assembly of Kosovo, [Law No. 06/L-054 on Courts in the Republic of Kosovo](#), 2018.

⁷⁰ MJ, [NSPVAW](#), 2022, p. 28.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid,

⁷³ From January 2021 to December 2024, KWN monitored 257 gender-based violence cases in Pristina, 30 in Ferizaj, 2 in Mitrovica, 2 in Peja, and 1 in Gjilan. More cases were monitored in Pristina because more cases are reported in Pristina, but also due to available human resources and convenience in accessibility. Only high profile cases or those seeking assistance from KWN were monitored in other locations.

Judges' knowledge related to domestic violence was more consistent; they correctly referenced physical, psychological, economic, and sexual violence. Yet, exceptions existed. When asked if it is acceptable for a suspicious husband to follow his wife, a penal judge agreed. The same judge stated that controlling a wife's technological devices does not constitute domestic violence, though it does. While the judge acknowledged that this behaviour is inappropriate, he admitted that he would do the same. When asked how victims should respond to domestic violence, all judges emphasised the importance of reporting violence immediately, including when children are involved.

Knowledge about the State Protocol for the Treatment of Sexual Violence Cases varied, with judges being fully, partially, or unaware of it. Some judges, particularly in civil courts, were unaware that the Protocol existed while others were unsure how to implement it. Similarly, regarding the Curriculum for the Treatment of Perpetrators of Violence, some judges admitted they did not request rehabilitation measures, as such measures are still being piloted. Overall, findings suggest uneven knowledge and thus implementation of the legal framework.

Judges reported participating in training related to domestic violence provided by CoE, AJ, and OSCE. However, a judge noted that AJ offers a "very small number of domestic violence topics". Judges emphasised the need for more, specialised training, particularly on sexual harassment, which has not been covered.

Judicial Response in Civil Courts

Judges observed that systemic barriers, such as economic dependence, often lead victims to withdraw their requests for protection orders. Some judges cautioned victims against withdrawing their requests, which can place victims at risk. Meanwhile, others condoned and even encouraged reconciliation. For example, in Pristina, a spouse and two children sought a PO. Outside the official court record, the judge informed the parties (the protected person and the respondent) that they might reconcile over time, stating: "There is violence, and then there is *violence*. Violence differs from case to case, and there is no need to rush into making hasty decisions. The law provides that you can reconcile if there is room for it." A judge's position of power and influence can persuade a victim to withdraw her request for a PO. This undermines the law's intent to provide immediate protection from domestic violence and can place the victim at risk of recidivism and even death.

Reportedly, sometimes protection orders are not provided because CSWs and VAs did not prepare sufficient documentation to inform court proceedings. "We often receive only a statement, with no proof attached... and we can't issue a PO based only on one party's statement," a civil judge said. It is essential that actors assisting victims in preparing documentation ensure that relevant information and evidence is submitted. Inadequate preparation can delay legal protection and expose victims to continued or escalated violence. Meanwhile, the judge's statement is not victim-centred, as it places the burden of proof on victims. This

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I have cases when I issued a protection order and after a week the victim comes and requests its removal because they have reconciled.

- Civil court judge

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Usually, CSW reports are incomplete, and requests for protection orders prepared by Victim Advocates are lacking.

- Civil court judge

is not in line with the IC, which emphasises that authorities must prioritise victims' immediate safety and provide protection based on a risk assessment, without imposing excessive evidentiary or procedural requirements.

Research participants recurrently highlighted shortcomings in enforcement. For example, a research participant observed the failure of abusers to meet alimony obligations, stating that such failures further undermine victims' access to justice and reinforce the cycle of dependency on perpetrators and vulnerability. Courts need to enforce alimony obligations when they are unmet. Research participants also reported that many perpetrators simply wait for protection orders to expire before resuming abuse. In such cases, civil court judges have stated that "there's no reason to extend the order; emotional abuse isn't enough". This reveals a systemic weakness with protection orders; once legal obligations end, oversight stops, exposing victims to renewed abuse. Refusing to extend protection orders simply because no new physical violence has occurred indicates court failure to comprehensively assess ongoing risk to victims, which does not necessarily disappear after six months or one year. Insufficient follow-up to enforce existing PO requirements like alimony and/or to extend protection orders undermines efforts to deter violence and recidivism.

Judicial Response in Criminal Courts

Penal judges handle criminal offences related to gender-based violence. During interviews, judges tended to emphasise the urgency of addressing domestic violence but differed in their interpretations and approach. Judges identified several challenges in implementing the CCK, particularly in domestic violence cases, including legal, procedural, and cultural challenges. The following subsections address some of the key issues identified with the judicial response to gender-based violence in criminal proceedings.

Minimisation of Violence, Cultural Arguments, and Victim-blaming

During interviews, some judges cautioned against over-reliance on criminal measures: "Criminal procedure should not be the first tool." This suggests that judges may not apply criminal charges even though violent crimes have occurred. As another judge stated: "Some cases are exaggerated, like pulling hair being called domestic violence. We must adapt our laws to our culture, not just follow Denmark or Sweden". Such violence is a crime and can be accompanied with other forms of violence like psychological violence and control and may be precursors to further violence. Judges' minimisation of such crimes thus may allow for recidivism. Thus, such cultural arguments should be irrelevant and not applied by judges when ruling on domestic violence cases; the CCK must be followed.

The same judge expressed a belief that the concept of freedom is often misunderstood, particularly by young women, which can lead to risky situations. The judge suggested that women voluntarily enter environments that put them at risk, like hotel rooms. The judge stated that women should "measure well" risks affiliated with their actions. Such statements illustrate victim-blaming, whereby the judge shifts the responsibility of violence onto women, rather than holding accountable the perpetrator of the violence.

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You don't go [in the hotel] to watch television. Nor do you go to play cards. Nor to talk about NASA.⁷⁴

- Penal court judge

⁷⁴ National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

Victim-blaming undermines survivors' rights and perpetuates harmful stereotypes that may prevent other victims from seeking justice.

Evidence also suggests that judges may erroneously consider culture when ruling in cases involving ethnic minority groups. For example, some cases have involved early marriage, particularly among Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians. A judge mentioned a case where the alleged perpetrator was accused of rape, but sexual intercourse had not occurred. The judge commented: "Culturally, they marry young... but legally, even a kiss can lead to a five-year sentence. The law doesn't always align with the lived reality". This statement suggests that the judge does not grasp the importance of ending violence against women, regardless of cultural practices, as required by CEDAW and the IC. The CCK establishes that coercion, sexual exploitation, and extramarital cohabitation with minors are illegal.⁷⁵ Judges who provide such cultural justifications may provide lesser sentences that ignore the unequal power relations affecting girls who marry young, and potentially against their will. This can enable perpetuation of inequalities and violence against girls and women.

Insufficient Evidence Due to Withdrawn Testimonies

The CPC grants a defendant's spouse or extra-marital partner the right to refuse to testify, except in cases where the offense is punishable by five or more years of imprisonment, and they are the injured party.⁷⁶ A judge noted that this provision poses a significant challenge, as family members can withdraw from testifying in cases with penalties under five years, often leaving prosecutors without sufficient evidence to proceed: "They have exploited this right, and the prosecutor has been left without evidence, [...] we cannot conclude the case of domestic violence."

Similar challenges were observed related to serious offenses, such as sexual harassment, where victims' hesitancy to testify could contribute to insufficient evidence. In one case, the victim withdrew from participating in the criminal prosecution, stating: "I want this to be over because my brother and these people have reached an agreement." Meanwhile, her behaviour indicated that she was afraid and did not fully understand the consequences of her decision and potential of further risk. In such situations, institutions must thoroughly assess whether the victim is able to represent her interests and ensure the full protection of her rights per the applicable legislation. An insufficiently sensitive approach to these cases risks reinforcing the dynamics of violence. Justice institutions must treat seriously situations of withdrawn testimonies, ensuring victims receive adequate counselling, protection, and support, while also addressing the offender's violent tendencies through appropriate sentencing or rehabilitation programs. Indeed, in criminal proceedings the case must continue *ex officio* regardless of the victim's withdrawal. However, this also becomes incredibly difficult if evidence is withdrawn.

Delays Due to Absences

While monitoring court hearings in 2023-2024, KWN observed 23 instances in which proceedings were postponed due to the absence of involved parties. For example, in a rape

⁷⁵ CCK, Article 240, paragraph 1: "An adult who cohabits in an extramarital relationship with a person aged 14–16 years shall be punished by imprisonment of five (5) to twenty (20) years." The CCK does not explicitly regulate early marriage as a separate crime, but criminalises related conduct, such as forced marriage (Article 239) and extramarital cohabitation with minors (Article 240). The Law focuses on protecting minors from coercion, sexual exploitation, and abuse, rather than regulating the act of marriage itself. The Law on Family prohibits marriage under 18 but allows exceptional court authorisation for 16-17-year-olds. The CCK applies only when there is force, coercion, or illegal cohabitation. In practice, this distinction can create challenges.

⁷⁶ Official Gazette of the Republic of Kosovo, [Criminal Procedure Code of Kosovo](#), 2022, Article 124 (1.1).

case within a Juvenile Department, a witness was summoned twice but failed to appear, leading to two postponements of the hearing. The absence of defendants and witnesses in hearings contributes to delays in proceedings and postpones justice for victims. According to CPC Article 305: “If a properly summoned witness fails to appear in court without justification, the presiding judge or the trial panel chairperson shall impose a fine of up to [€250] for each absence.” Additionally, “the presiding judge or the trial panel chairperson shall order the witness to be forcibly brought to court, with the costs of the procedure charged to the witness.” Judges thus have the responsibility and authority to ensure that witnesses appear in court and provide their testimony, though this has not been applied consistently in practice.

In some cases, the presiding judge informally notified the prosecutor that the parties had not received the summons or that conditions were not met to hold the hearing. As a result, the prosecutor did not appear in court for the postponement, yet the judge falsely recorded her/his presence. This represents a serious violation, as the presence of the prosecutor is essential for conducting court hearings.⁷⁷ In such cases, “If the state prosecutor fails to appear at a scheduled trial hearing based on an indictment filed by the state prosecutor, the trial hearing shall be postponed, and the presiding judge or the trial panel chairperson shall notify the chief prosecutor.”⁷⁸ However, in only one such case did KWN observe that the chief prosecutor was notified by the court.

Reconciliation and Mediation

Although mediation is not legally allowed in domestic violence cases and most judges said they do not use it, some judges admitted that it is still practiced. One judge stated, “In most cases yes, [it is used] as far as we see in the session”. Another judge advocated for reconciliation and second chances, suggesting that mediation could be beneficial, even for serious offenders, because criminal behaviour is often a product of circumstances rather than innate tendencies: “I am always for reconciliation, I consider that everyone should be given a chance, even the greatest criminal should be given a chance”. Pressuring victims to reconcile rather than pursuing legal protection can undermine access to justice for victims and place them at risk of recidivism. Attempts by institutions to reconcile parties contradict LGBV Article 55, which explicitly prohibits mediation and reconciliation in such cases.

Lenient Sentencing

In 2023, a systematic review of 218 court decisions revealed that only 11% of perpetrators received prison sentences; most received suspended sentences or fines, indicating a lack of proportional punishment for violent crimes.⁷⁹ Further, 74% of perpetrators were sentenced to conditional imprisonment, 45% were sentenced to fines and 20% received conditional fines. KWN’s analysis of 10 verdicts published on KJC’s website found that 60% involved suspended sentences. Further, in 2024, KWN monitored five verdict announcements in court hearings that all resulted in suspended sentences. A suspended sentence is an alternative punishment, according to which the convicted person is assigned a sentence, but it will not be enforced if they do not commit another criminal offence during a probation period.⁸⁰ Although

⁷⁷ CPC, Article 245, paragraph 1: “During the initial hearing, the presence of the state prosecutor, the defendant(s), and defence counsel is required.”

⁷⁸ Ibid., Article 301.

⁷⁹ Amnesty International, *From Paper to Practice – Kosovo must keep its commitments to domestic violence survivors*, 2023.

⁸⁰ CCK, articles 47 and 48.

the CCK permits suspended sentences for domestic violence offenses, such sentencing should not be applied automatically without considering specific circumstances. The CCK states that when deciding on a suspended sentence, the court must evaluate key factors such as the purpose of the sentence, the perpetrator's previous behaviour, their conduct after committing the crime, the degree of criminal responsibility, and other circumstances surrounding the offence.⁸¹ The tendency to impose suspended sentences suggests a lenient approach toward violent offenses, diminishing appropriate punishment and disregarding the significant impact of domestic violence on victims and society.

Case: Suspended Sentence

In a case involving harassment of the accused's ex-wife, the court issued a suspended sentence in June 2024, conditional on the accused not committing the same offense within a one-year probation period. In KWN's view, the judge did not consider adequately the accused's previous history of domestic violence against the victim, despite the victim raising this issue during the hearing. According to the court's reasoning, there was no access to the Gjilan Court records to evidence prior domestic violence, so this information provided by the victim was not recorded in the minutes and, consequently, not considered as an aggravating factor in the final decision. Such disregard for prior abuse contributes to low sentencing and risks placing the victim at risk of recidivism.

Related, judicial proceedings frequently fail to consider gender-based power dynamics that should be considered as extenuating circumstances, contributing to higher sentencing.⁸² KWN monitoring confirmed that sentences for domestic violence are often unduly lenient and do not reflect the seriousness of criminal offences, thus violating the principle of proportionality of sanctions in the CCK. Aggravating and mitigating circumstances are not always properly assessed. In some cases, factors are incorrectly treated as mitigating, such as the perpetrator being "the father of X children", whereas committing the offence in the presence of children should, in fact, be considered an aggravating circumstance.⁸³ This demonstrates inconsistency in the proper evaluation of aggravating and mitigating factors.

In 2024, KWN monitored two femicide cases in which courts sentenced perpetrators with severe legal punishments. During the retrial, Dardan Krivača was sentenced to life imprisonment for the murder of Marigona Osmani, and Arbër Sejdiu was sentenced to 15 years for aiding in the crime. Similarly, in the case of Gjyljeta Ukella, the accused, Edmond Lajçi, pleaded guilty in the initial hearing and was sentenced to life imprisonment. While these

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With a fine of €150, you are legitimising domestic violence... Our laws are strong. [I]f institutions implemented them properly, cases [of violence] would drop quickly.

- Man, VA

⁸¹ CCK Article 496 and Article 49, paragraph 4.

⁸² Kosovo Law Institute, *The Istanbul Convention in the Verdicts of Courts in Kosovo*, 2022. The report also found that courts publicly disclosed victims' identities in over 13% of cases, violating privacy rights.

⁸³ Comment on draft report by peer reviewer engaged in monitoring cases.

sentences were appropriate, a concerning aspect of these cases is that both perpetrators already were known to law enforcement for previous instances of violence and criminal behaviour but had received inadequate sentences in the past. These cases evidence how leniency increases the risk of repeat offenses, leaves victims vulnerable to further harm and undermines public trust in the justice system.

Case: Low Sentencing for Domestic Violence

In September 2022, the Basic Prosecution in Pristina filed an indictment against a defendant for the criminal offense of "Serious Bodily Injury".⁸⁴ According to the indictment, on 17 August 2022, at around 21:30, in the parking lot of the victim's apartment, the defendant physically assaulted the victim, with whom he had previously cohabited for seven years before separating seven months earlier. He grabbed her hair from behind, forcefully pulled her out of the car, and then struck her in various parts of her body, causing serious bodily injuries, including a broken nose, a split upper lip, and injuries to her eye, left cheek, and both hands. As a result of the assault, the victim lost consciousness.

The court found the defendant guilty and sentenced him to eight months in prison. However, according to the CCK, this criminal offense carries a sentence ranging from one to five years imprisonment. The court considered the defendant's guilty plea a mitigating factor and imposed a sentence below the legal minimum. Such lenient sentencing can contribute to recidivism and set a precedent that fails to discourage others from committing such crimes.

Under the LGBV, "vulnerable victims" include women, children, LGBTQIA+ individuals, persons with physical or mental disabilities, pregnant women, elderly persons, and anyone whose family or dependency relationship with the perpetrator makes them particularly susceptible to victimisation, intimidation, or repeated retaliation. In practice, KVN monitoring suggests that courts often emphasise the family relationship over other aspects of vulnerability, including gender. As a result, even when a victim is legally recognised as vulnerable, judicial decisions may focus primarily on the familial context of the offence, leading to standard sentencing without applying aggravating circumstances related to gender or vulnerabilities. Thus, family relationships frequently overshadow broader vulnerabilities of victims in court proceedings and judicial decision-making, placing victims at risk of recidivism.

Offender Rehabilitation and Institutional Responses

This section examines the roles of the Kosovo Correctional Services (KCS) and the Kosovo Probation Service (KPS) in addressing gender-based violence through offender rehabilitation and supervision.

⁸⁴ Under CCK, Article 186, paragraph 4, point 4.1, in relation to paragraph 1, point 1.3.

Kosovo Correctional Services

KCS is responsible for planning, implementing, and supervising programs aimed at the social reintegration of prisoners while incarcerated.⁸⁵ To fulfil this mission, KCS offers a variety of rehabilitation programs to address violent behaviour, including anger management training, conversations for change, domestic violence prevention programs, and addiction treatment.⁸⁶

KCS representatives were familiar with gender-based violence but did not clearly understand sexual assault and violations of sexual integrity.⁸⁷ They knew their legal duties, including to implement the Curriculum for Domestic Violence Offenders, adopted in 2022. Five social officers were certified to run a six-month domestic violence training program across correctional centres, under the National Strategy (2022-2026) with support from CoE and the EU Kosovo Justice Sector Program.

Meanwhile, research by KCS found that convicted domestic violence offenders show little interest in rehabilitation programs, often due to shame, pride, or fear of peer judgment.⁸⁸ While they participate in other programs, engaging them in domestic violence rehabilitation has remained challenging. Currently, participation is voluntary, but the Service is seeking changes, officials said: “We are now in the phase of trying to amend the law, specifically to make rehabilitation programs obligatory for perpetrators of domestic violence.”

In 2024, KCS signed seven agreements with service providers, including NGOs,⁸⁹ to provide programs such as anger management, motivational interviewing, certified rehabilitation, vocational training, and education to support reintegration.

Kosovo Probation Service

KPS is responsible for organising, implementing, and overseeing alternative sentences and measures, such as probation and mandatory rehabilitation.⁹⁰ It supervises individuals released on parole, among other duties. The service ensures compliance with court-imposed conditions by overseeing offenders’ behaviour, providing rehabilitation programs, and enforcing mandatory treatment for addiction.⁹¹

MJ approved the National Program for Perpetrators of Violence against Women in 2023. It follows the Duluth power-and-control model and spans six months, consisting of 24 two-hour group sessions.⁹²

In addition, the Curriculum for Training Professionals Who Provide Programs for Perpetrators

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Not every incident is serious violence, say, a slap. In my view, people today sometimes exaggerate. It’s better to first talk with your partner, then the wider family, rather than immediately leaving or reporting to the authorities because you may still end up living with that person after they’re punished.

- Man, KPS

⁸⁵ Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo, [Law on the Kosovo Correctional Service](#), Article 8.

⁸⁶ KCS, [Annual Report of Activities](#), 2023.

⁸⁷ KWN interviews, 2024.

⁸⁸ Research discussed during interview with KCS official, 2024.

⁸⁹ These included with NGOs Centre for Counselling, Social Services, and Research (SIT), Monumenta, Mural Fest, Islamic Relief, and Universum College O.P, Education+, and La Belle Beauty School Academy L.L.C *(KCS, [Annual Work Report](#), 2024).

⁹⁰ Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo, [Law on the Probation Service of Kosovo](#), Article 3.

⁹¹ Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo, Law on Penal Code, Article 59.

⁹² MJ, [Brochure on the National Program for Perpetrators of Violence Against Women](#), 2023.

of Domestic Violence in the Republic of Kosovo was launched, incorporating examples from international practices, detailing the structure and duration of programs in Kosovo, and offering ten training modules.⁹³ Although the curriculum provides useful guidance, it does not include standardised tools for assessing program effectiveness; instead, it offers general measurement guidelines based on two models.⁹⁴

To date, only 12 men have participated in the program, making it difficult to evaluate its impact on reducing recidivism due to the small sample size.⁹⁵ KPS is legally responsible for monitoring the implementation of this program. Meanwhile, two additional initiatives are being implemented by the Gjakova shelter and the Center for Counselling, Social Services, and Research (SIT), both of which work with perpetrators of violence.⁹⁶

KWN found that KPS officers were unfamiliar with the Curriculum for the Treatment of Domestic Violence Perpetrators.⁹⁷ While they generally understood gender-based violence, inconsistencies existed in their interpretations. For example, one director did not consider verbal abuse, restricting a family member's work, or threats as forms of gender-based violence, and viewed non-consensual sex as a violation of personal integrity rather than as violence. One suggested that a slap should be tolerated rather than reported and that a woman experiencing domestic violence should leave the home while the perpetrator should remain. "Where else should the husband go? It's normal he stays in the house," he said. Thus, officials' responses suggest a selective understanding of gender-based violence, with emotional or psychological abuse often minimised. This may mean that they could overlook violence perpetrated by individuals on parole, leaving room for recidivism.

KPS officers reported attending training on domestic violence. However, trainings were not mandatory, and they had not participated in training on other forms of gender-based violence. They noted that gender-based violence could be discussed as part of domestic violence training, but they emphasised the importance of additional sessions.

The KPS offers programs such as psychosocial support, anger management, motivational interviews, and discussions for change, available to both domestic violence offenders and others on probation. Participation in such programs is voluntary unless mandated by the Court, which may impose obligations like mandatory counselling. Probation officers ensure that Court-ordered obligations are strictly followed. They emphasised that their role is limited to monitoring compliance with court mandated measures: "If they refuse to participate, we cannot force them", they said.

Social Services

This section examines various social services provided to survivors of gender-based violence, including the work of the Division for Social and Family Services, CSWs and shelters.

The Division for Social and Family Services

On March 22, 2021, the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MLSW) was dissolved as part of the Government of Kosovo's reorganisation following the February 2021 elections. In

⁹³ MJ, [Curriculum for Training Professionals to Provide Programs for Perpetrators of Domestic Violence in the Republic of Kosovo, 2022](#).

⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 31.

⁹⁵ MJ, [Annual Implementation Report of the National Strategy for Protection from Domestic Violence and Violence against Women 2022-2026](#), 2024, Point I.4.8.

⁹⁶ Council of Europe, [Policy Brief: Implementing Perpetrator Programs in Kosovo](#), 2023, p. 2.

⁹⁷ This section draws from KWN interviews with five KPS officials across Kosovo in 2024.

2021, its functions were transferred to MFLT. Then, from January 2023, these responsibilities were divided among three ministries: MFLT assumed responsibilities for employment, the social protection scheme, and pensions; MJ took on competencies related to protection from domestic violence and victim protection; and MH assumed some services, such as for mental health. The Department for Social and Family Policies was placed under MJ and includes four divisions: the Division for Social and Family Services, the Division for the Protection of Children and Youth, the Inspection Division, and the Licensing and Training Division.⁹⁸ This Division for Social and Family Services develops policies and legislation, including standards for people with disabilities, the elderly, and victims of domestic violence.⁹⁹ It coordinates with municipal bodies, monitors social services, collaborates with CSOs and the private sector, and manages programs against domestic violence and human trafficking.

Officials expressed concern about the demotion of social services from a ministry to a department-level unit within MJ. They argued that this restructuring has reduced institutional visibility, budgetary autonomy, and policy focus once afforded to social welfare under MLSW. They called for reinstating a dedicated Ministry of Social Welfare, in line with international standards. The Kosovo Law Institute has found that in 85% of EU member states there is a dedicated ministry responsible for labour and social welfare, serving as an important pillar for guaranteeing social rights. Likewise, most Western Balkan countries maintain ministries dedicated to this field, treating employment, workplace safety, and social welfare as distinct political priorities. This underscores the strategic importance attached to the sector.¹⁰⁰

Officials knew their role in implementing the NSPVAW but noted delays due to ongoing legal changes and the absence of finalised sub-legal acts. Twenty-four (24) training modules have been developed by the Professional Council for Social Services.¹⁰¹ In 2022, in cooperation with KWN, the Department for Social and Family Policies and the General Council of Social and Family Services, developed two modules: “Working with Victims of Domestic Violence: Treatment and Referral” and “Working with Victims of Sexual Crimes and Trafficking.” Then, 13 officials and CSO representatives attended a training of trainers (ToT) for both modules and were certified. The further rollout of trainings for social workers was planned for 2025.

The database for registering domestic violence cases, shared with institutions like police, courts, and social workers, functions well. However, data entry at CSWs is inconsistent due to staff turnover, retirement, and lack of training. This could contribute to inaccurate maintenance of data, hindering accurate planning and budgeting. With support from UN Women, trainings were held in 2024, during which 80 professionals from 40 CSWs were trained in improving data entry. While funding has increased, it remains insufficient to meet the growing needs of social

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A 15-person department cannot meet the broad needs of social welfare. Most countries have a separate ministry for this.

- Official

⁹⁸ Official Gazette of the Republic of Kosovo, [Decision No. 08-V-005 \(Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo\)](#), 2021. Kosovo Law Institute, [The Impact of Merging the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare with the Ministry of Finance – an analysis of government reform in the social sector](#), 2025.

⁹⁹ MJ, [Department for Social and Family Services](#), n.d.

¹⁰⁰ Kosovo Law Institute, [The Impact of Merging the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare with the Ministry of Finance- an analysis of government reform in the social sector](#), 2025.

¹⁰¹ These modules have been supported by partners such as the KWN, the Coalition of NGOs for Child Protection (KOMF), Terre des Hommes, the Institute of Psychology, the Kosovo Rehabilitation Centre for Torture Victims (KRCT), the International Labour Organization (ILO), and SOS Children's Villages Kosovo.

and family service providers, including the need to hire additional staff, recruit new personnel, improve facilities, purchase equipment and vehicles, and strengthen professional capacities.

Centers for Social Work

CSWs support victims of gender-based violence by providing social services, protection, reintegration, and long-term support for their recovery.¹⁰² Each referred victim is assigned a case manager, appointed by the CSW, to help identify and coordinate available services and develop a comprehensive case management plan. This process should involve collaboration with other MCM members to ensure the victim receives comprehensive support in housing, security, justice, education, training, employment, social assistance, and legal aid.

In general, CSW representatives had knowledge about the LGVB and NSPDV.¹⁰³ While social workers knew their duties under SOPs, some said they did not know how to implement them properly, stating they do not have enough time. Their understanding of the amended CCK also was inconsistent. While they knew that domestic violence is a crime, some were unsure about other offenses. Some explicitly denied that sexual harassment is a crime and/or considered stalking a minor issue rather than a serious crime.

CSW employees had varying levels of knowledge about different forms of gender-based violence. Most demonstrated clear knowledge about domestic violence, but they tended to confuse sexual harassment with sexual assault. Meanwhile, interviews revealed concerning attitudes among some social workers who tended to blame victims and justify abuse. A CSW representative said that cultural norms and immaturity could influence how girls dress, leading to violence. When asked if it is acceptable for non-consensual sexual relations to occur if a victim is dressed provocatively, one stated, “Some of it is her fault too,” suggesting that victims share responsibility for violence. Another said, “When they dress in a provocative way, it is not a crime.” Such statements constitute victim-blaming.

These attitudes extended to rationalising the behaviour of perpetrators. Particularly in domestic violence cases, CSW employees empathised with abusers’ circumstances. For example, a representative proposed that women should take a more accommodating approach, such as offering comfort to frustrated husbands: “Did she make him a coffee and gently ask, ‘Love, how was your day? Did you go through any difficulties?’” They said that women often contribute to emotional and psychological abuse, describing women as more argumentative and provocative than men. Such socialised beliefs regarding gender norms homogenise women and

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Perhaps for the moment they think their outfit is trendy, but over time they realise it only causes problems.

- Woman, CSW

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Nowadays all we hear in the media is about women, women, women... We women also commit psychological violence, especially against men. Men are actually much calmer than us. We women are far more quarrelsome and provoking.

- Woman, CSW

¹⁰² LGVB, NSPDVAW, SOPs.

¹⁰³ In 2024, KWN interviewed staff at seven CSWs across Kosovo, including social workers, psychologists, and directors.

men while ignoring gendered power structures that often exist between women and men. Such attitudes may contribute to victim-blaming and an insufficient victim-centred approach.

Regarding child custody in domestic violence cases, CSW representatives tended to agree that children should stay with their mothers, especially if their father is the abuser: “I don’t know... children being with the perpetrator of violence is never okay”.¹⁰⁴ This suggests a potential shift in views over time, as social workers previously tended to recommend to courts that children stay with perpetrators for financial reasons. This used to place children at risk and limit survivors’ access to their children. Fear of losing access to their children is among the reasons some victims hesitate to report violence and seek assistance. Thus, this change in approach suggests progress.

Social workers recurrently stated that they found domestic violence cases particularly difficult, describing them as emotionally and professionally draining. They struggled with a lack of support, psychotherapy, staff shortages, and safety concerns, which made it hard to handle cases properly.

Different trends exist in how male and female staff handle cases. Some male staff members were uncomfortable working with domestic violence victims. Some hesitated to enter shelters. A CSW representative said, “Men and women [CSW employees] differ in the way that they treat cases, especially divorce and violence cases. Their views have been different. Men have always considered women to be at fault.” Some male CSW employees blamed women for their situation. Reportedly, some even used inappropriate language, such as calling victims “That bitch”.

Case: “Reconciling” Couples

During a hearing to review a request for a PO related to domestic violence against a woman and her two children, a CSW representative told the victim: “It doesn’t seem like something very dangerous... what has happened between you [and your husband]. Because as you describe it, he doesn’t seem like an abusive type.” She told the victim that a PO was not necessarily required and suggested that the responsible party may need psychiatric treatment or therapy more than protective measures. The CSW representative added, “There have been even more serious cases where the parties have reconciled, let alone in cases like this. These things can be overcome.” Such statements suggest a troubling minimisation of the victim’s experience, prioritising the perceived needs of the abuser over the safety and rights of the survivor. Notably, reconciliation is strictly prohibited in domestic violence cases to protect victims from potential recidivism.

CSW support for victim reintegration is reportedly minimal, interviews with other actors suggested. CSWs often deflect responsibilities to shelters due to their own human resource restraints. Research participants said that most victims find employment and housing on their own, with limited help from CSWs. “Institutions treat it like a case file and move on”, a participant said. This may relate to a shortage of personnel and resources rather than a lack of commitment or concern. CSWs also lacked vehicles and funds to provide victims with food or clothing according to their immediate needs when reporting a case.

¹⁰⁴ KWN interview with CSW representative, 2024.

CSWs lack sufficient, professional staff. A research participant observed: “You have people with geography degrees working in the Centres for Social Work. It’s like these centres are used just to give someone a job. But they lack seriousness... They cannot be experts in 72 categories; specialisation is necessary.” Social workers treat all kinds of cases and not only those related to gender-based violence. At present there are not social workers specialised in treating gender-based violence. Caseloads per municipality and thus social worker vary significantly from one municipality to another. Municipalities such as Prizren, Peja, Ferizaj, and Theranda have an overall workload of around 2,000–3,000 total active cases, while smaller municipalities like Hani i Elezit, Sharr, and Junik report fewer than 1,000 active cases. In some small municipalities, such as Junik, a social services officer has fewer than 10 active cases, whereas in larger municipalities like Pristina and Mitrovica, an officer can have up to 150 cases. These differences indicate that there is no unified formula or standard for distributing cases among social workers across municipalities.¹⁰⁵ Having insufficient, specialised staff clearly presents a recurrent challenge to CSWs in adequately ensuring a comprehensive victim-centred approach in line with the IC. For example, in 2023, CSW officers were present in only 3.3 of every 10 cases of domestic violence.¹⁰⁶

In 2025, the Government adopted an Administrative Instruction on Determining the Procedures for Providing Services from the Emergency Fund for the Needs of Victims during Their Stay in Police Premises.¹⁰⁷ This Instruction establishes an emergency fund to meet the immediate needs of victims of gender-based violence during their stay in police facilities. The CSWs are tasked with planning and administering this fund, while case managers are responsible for assessing victims’ needs and facilitating access to relevant services. The fund covers food, clothing, hygiene products, medications, and other essential services, including psychosocial treatment.

Shelters

The LGBV provides that specialised shelters should offer protection, accommodation, rehabilitation, and reintegration services for all victims of violence. This aligns with IC Article 23, which requires states to establish appropriate and easily accessible shelters for all forms of gender-based violence, especially for women and their children. Despite legal commitments, in practice Kosovo’s shelter system primarily serves women and children survivors of domestic violence. Only one shelter is operated by the state: the Interim Security Facility for high risk cases of sex trafficking, usually related to ongoing court trials. All other eight shelters are NGOs contracted by the government. Shelters primarily serve women and children, offering temporary protection and support for reintegration and empowerment.

Shelters accommodate victims of other forms of gender-based violence when institutions have no alternative housing. However, swift action is needed to relocate them separately, as it is inappropriate to house victims of sexual violence together with other victims. Meanwhile, victims with mental health issues often remain in shelters because psychiatric institutions refuse to admit them: “We’re forced to keep them, even though it affects other cases”, a shelter director said. Shelters also accommodate children without parental care. However, they are not designed for this purpose, requiring additional human resources and

¹⁰⁵ Coalition of NGOs for the Protection of Children (KOMF), [Analysis of the Centres for Social Work. Challenges in the Legal, Institutional and Functional Aspect](#), 2023, p. 31.

¹⁰⁶ Police Inspectorate of Kosovo, [Inspection report on the handling of domestic violence cases by the Kosovo Police](#), 2024, p. 5.

¹⁰⁷ Government, MJ, [Administrative Instruction MoJ No. 02/2025 on Determining the Procedure for the Provision of Services from the Emergency Fund for the needs of Victims during their stay at Police](#).

investments in physical spaces to ensure child-friendly atmospheres. The situation was exacerbated by the closure of the shelter for children due to insufficient and inconsistent financing. CSW representatives expressed concerns about using foster families for sexually abused children, as families are often ill-equipped to handle severe trauma, and children need specialised rehabilitation institutions.

Since September 2024, one shelter has begun admitting child victims of domestic violence, children without parental care, low-risk child victims of trafficking, and children in conflict with the law. Placement decisions are made jointly with the MJ, via the Department for Social and Family Policy, in line with the Administrative Instruction on residential housing.¹⁰⁸ To date, no municipality provides financial support for this children's shelter; operations are funded solely by the MJ. The shelter has accommodated boys over age 12 together with their mothers; however, this co-accommodation requires case-by-case risk assessment, particularly where girls aged 12+ are also present. Enhanced safeguards are needed, such as separation by age/sex and strengthened supervision protocols.

The absence of specialised shelters and housing for LGBTQIA+ victims exacerbates their vulnerabilities. Financial and social assistance programs are largely absent, forcing many survivors to either return to abusive environments or endure extreme economic hardship.¹⁰⁹ CSOs continue to advocate for creating such a shelter. Since 2020, discussions have been ongoing with the Municipality of Pristina, but the process has been significantly delayed. Currently, LGBTQ+ survivors tend to be referred to shelters in Tirana, but this is an unsustainable solution due to the distance, limited resources, and lack of long-term support.

Following extensive advocacy by KWN and its shelter members, other CSOs, and stakeholders, the national government established a budget line for the "basic operation of shelters" in 2019. Government allocations to shelters increased from €880,000 in 2020 to €1 million in 2021. The same allocation was made in 2022, and it rose to €1.5 million in 2023. In 2024, the budget remained at €1.5 million. Some shelters also receive support from municipalities. Despite improvements in financing, shelters still face several challenges, including persisting funding shortages, insufficient human resources, and inadequate cooperation with institutions.¹¹⁰ Some shelters lack vehicles, relying on police for transport, which can create challenges in supporting survivors in accessing various services. Some also have limited security infrastructure. Cybersecurity is a concern; most shelters lack training or tools to prevent data breaches, which could place victims at risk. While they have attended extensive training, capacities can be further enhanced in working with victims of sexual abuse.

Other research participants raised concerns that victims can only stay in shelters for three to six months. As a result, victims often must return to abusive environments due to the lack of stable housing, family support, or financial stability. While some municipalities provide temporary housing, their application periods tend to be short and annual, rather than on a rolling basis, so women seldom can apply for housing when they need it. Moreover, Kosovo municipalities have not allocated enough social housing to meet the level of demand, as such housing is also used by several other vulnerable or marginalised categories of people. Historically, allocated funds for social housing have mainly benefited ethnic minorities; only five of 57 house beneficiaries were women in 2023.¹¹¹ Without access to social housing, victims risk

¹⁰⁸ Official Gazette of Republic of Kosovo, [Administrative Instruction \(MoJ\) No. 03/2025 on Residential Housing](#), 2025.

¹⁰⁹ OSCE, [Survey on Well-Being and Safety of Women in Kosovo](#), 2019.

¹¹⁰ In 2024, KWN interviewed seven shelters across Kosovo.

¹¹¹ MJ, [Annual Implementation Report of the National Strategy for Protection from Domestic Violence and Violence against Women 2022-2026](#), 2024, Point IV.2.5.

returning to violent households and re-victimisation. The OIK has observed that due to the lack of reintegration programs, shelters often become long-term housing solutions. While they are not supposed to provide such services, the lack of alternative housing solutions provides no other option to ensuring a victim-centred approach. Meanwhile, some municipalities have started paying rent for victims, which is a good practice.¹¹²

Employment Offices and Vocational Training Centres

Economic dependence remains a major barrier to survivors of gender-based violence attaining autonomy. Without financial independence, many women are forced to return to abusive environments. Institutions such as Employment Offices (EOs) and Vocational Training Centres (VTCs) are tasked with supporting survivors.

EO and VTC staff tended to lack knowledge regarding legislation like the NSPVAW and policies pertaining to gender-based violence.¹¹³ They confused terms, misunderstood legal definitions (e.g., stalking, incitement to expose intimate body parts, FGM, sexual harassment, sexual assault), and tended to blame victims. They tended to uphold traditional gender roles and relations.

EO and VTC staff recurrently advised reconciliation within the family rather than reporting violence. This suggests poor understanding of survivors' security needs. Limited awareness and such attitudes suggest that EOs and VTCs tend to be ill-equipped to support gender-based violence survivors. While UNDP developed a curriculum for EO and VTC staff on a victim-centred approach and trained several staff, the training took place several years ago. Time and staff turnover suggest the need for institutionalising continued training.

EOs and VTCs do not maintain data on how many survivors they have trained or employed, making it difficult to assess the impact of their work and to plan future programs and needed budget allocations.

Health Institutions

MH, public health institutions, and Centres for Mental Health are responsible for providing free medical and psychological care to victims of gender-based violence, as outlined in SOPs. When persons with violence-related injuries seek medical attention, health institutions serve as first responders in identifying and preventing further domestic violence. Under the CCK, medical workers are legally obliged to report suspected gender-based violence to police. Failure to do so constitutes a criminal offence. SOPs reinforce this duty, stating that healthcare

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Usually, violence happens because women want to be independent... In our families, men work, and women should do housework.

- Woman, EO

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Sometimes people act in a moment of anger... We should try to resolve things peacefully.

- Man, EO

¹¹² Peer reviewer comment on draft report.

¹¹³ In 2024, KWN interviewed 6 staff across Kosovo. KWN faced challenges contacting VTC officials, and not all targeted offices were interviewed.

providers must notify authorities. Meanwhile, GREVIO has indicated that: “blanket reporting obligations may raise issues around the provision of victim-centred and gender-sensitive support services”.¹¹⁴ This has contributed to confusion among healthcare professionals. In practice, health workers tend to seek victim consent before reporting.

The healthcare workers interviewed lacked knowledge about the State Protocol for Treatment of Sexual Violence Cases, LGBV, and their responsibilities under the NSPVAW, such as identifying cases of violence, treating them, and referring them to responsible actors. They observed the absence of a treatment protocol for FGM. They had limited knowledge about gender-based violence, often equating it solely with physical violence.¹¹⁵ They tended to be unable to differentiate between sexual assault and rape; nor were they familiar with FGM. This could limit their ability to identify signs of abuse so that it could be documented properly and victims referred for assistance. Some workers believed violence could be justified if a woman was “immoral”. Some justified crimes related to the degradation of sexual integrity, blaming such violence on women’s increased freedoms. CCK Article 230 criminalises degrading acts of a sexual nature regardless of the victim’s actions, clothing, or behaviour. Meanwhile, others suggested survivors should first seek help within the family rather than reporting abuse. Together, these views reflect entrenched patriarchal ideologies and a tendency for victim-blaming that undermine a victim-centred approach.

According to the LGBV, MH has an obligation to adopt administrative instructions for providing services to drug users, alcohol users, and other vulnerable groups.¹¹⁶ However, these acts have not been adopted yet. Nor has the Ministry established the working group responsible for drafting them. Although the needs of these groups have been consistently identified and recognised, the lack of institutional action has created significant gaps in access to and treatment of individuals with mental health conditions, substance users, and other groups requiring specialised services.

Although MH reportedly provides training regularly, research participants said they had insufficient training. Other concerns mentioned by healthcare workers included a lack of private rooms for treating victims of sexual violence, which can create challenges to ensuring confidentiality. Confidentiality breaches remain an issue; police reports often expose victims’ identities, and media then reports whether victims received medical care. Such reporting may discourage women from seeking medical attention or reporting abuse for fear that their identity may be revealed.

Education Institutions

Schools hold a critical role in the early identification and support of pupils who may be direct or indirect victims of gender-based violence. Children are particularly vulnerable to experiencing violence both within domestic settings and in public environments, including

¹¹⁴ For further discussion, see I. Reporting by professionals (Article 28), [Assessment of the alignment of Kosovo’s laws, policies and other measures with the standards of the Istanbul Convention](#), 2022. For further information please see the Legal Analysis Chapter.

¹¹⁵ KWN interviewed eight healthcare professionals across Kosovo in 2024, including doctors, nurse, a Health Directorate, a Mental Health Centre, and the Ministry of Health. Given the small sample size, the potential for error exists, as different views may exist. Nevertheless, in this qualitative research, the identification of this level of knowledge and attitudes evidences the need for institutionalising improved education.

¹¹⁶ LGBV, Article 36 on Protection Measures of psycho-social treatment; Article 37 on Protection measures of medical treatment for alcohol and psychotropic substances Dependency; Article Compulsory psychiatric treatment in healthcare institution.

educational institutions.¹¹⁷ School personnel therefore have dual responsibilities: to contribute to the prevention of violence through education and awareness and to respond appropriately and effectively when incidents of violence occur.

The Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation (MESTI) is responsible for developing policies to address gender-based violence in the educational system. As of 2013, Kosovo had a Protocol for Prevention and Referral of Violence in Institutions of Pre-University Education. It is applicable for all pre-university education institutions (public and private), as well as related local and central institutions, including municipal education directorates (MEDs) and CSWs. The regulation defines the responsibilities, roles, and procedures of relevant institutions for: prevention, identification, data collection, referral, treatment, and reporting of violence against children in pre-university education environs.¹¹⁸ It emphasises the need for inter-institutional and multidisciplinary cooperation to protect children from violence and uphold their rights. Building on this framework, in 2023 MESTI developed the *Child Protection Policy in Pre-University Education Institutions*, which establishes a binding framework for all pre-university educational institutions to prevent, identify, respond to, and monitor all forms of violence, abuse, neglect, and exploitation of children. The Policy is grounded in the principles of child rights, safeguarding, and multi-agency cooperation across educational, social, health, and legal services.¹¹⁹ As of 2024, in partnership with CoE, MESTI was developing guidelines for teachers and education professionals on the role of schools in preventing and identifying violence against women and domestic violence.¹²⁰

Pre-university schools do not seem to have specific internal policies addressing sexual harassment. However, the University of Pristina¹²¹ and the University of Prizren¹²² have adopted regulations for Prevention and Protection from Sexual Harassment, approved in 2021 and 2024 respectively. Implementation remains limited due to several fundamental shortcomings: a short reporting window (only one year), a requirement for persons reporting sexual harassment to sign a moral and criminal liability statement, unclear allocation of the burden of proof, and lengthy institutional timelines for processing cases.¹²³ By April 2023, five official cases of sexual harassment had been reported, most of which were closed as “unfounded” because they were filed anonymously. Moreover, 59.6% of students were aware of the regulation’s existence, while 40.4% were not. Mandatory training for students and staff have not been put in place. Decisions of the Ethics Council lack transparency, and there are no supportive structures at the faculty level, hindering implementation.

The NSPVAW outlines several actions to be implemented by education institutions. MEDs are responsible for conducting awareness-raising campaigns to prevent early marriage, delivering information sessions on violence for school officials, principals, and school psychologists, and promoting peer education as a means of preventing and identifying sexual

¹¹⁷ More than 70% of documented cases of sexual violence are perpetrated against minor girls, predominantly by boys of a similar age group (KWN interview with IML, 2024). In 2020, the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) found that 71.6% of children aged 1–14 years were subjected to some form of violent disciplinary practice in the month preceding the survey, including 65.6% of children aged 1–2 years (UNICEF, *Situation Analyses of Children and Adolescents in Kosovo*, 2022).

¹¹⁸ [Regulation GRK No. 21/2013 Protocol for the Prevention and Referral of Violence in Institutions of Pre-University Education](#), 2013.

¹¹⁹ MESTI, [Child Protection Policy for Pre-University Education in Kosovo](#), 2023.

¹²⁰ To be launched in 2025. KWN is part of the working group.

¹²¹ University of Pristina, [Regulation on Prevention and Reporting of Sexual Harassment](#), 2021.

¹²² University of Prizren, [Regulation on Prevention and Reporting of Sexual Harassment](#), 2024.

¹²³ Artpolis, [Analysis on Knowledge of Students on the Existence and Implementation of the University of Pristina “Hasan Prishtina” Regulation against Sexual Harassment and Harassment](#), 2023.

harassment in schools. While some awareness raising activities have been implemented, often in cooperation with the OSCE, Kosovo Police, and CSOs, these have yet to be fully institutionalised.

The MED officials interviewed tended to have limited knowledge of relevant legal provisions and misconceptions about gender-based violence.¹²⁴ Some officials acknowledged the value of the LGBV but admitted that they lacked time to read it or receive training on it. Meanwhile, officials tended to conflate domestic violence with gender-based violence. Similar uncertainty surrounded other legal terms like harassment, sexual harassment, and sexual assault.

MEDs seemingly have not organised informative sessions with education staff or implemented peer-education programs addressing sexual harassment, harmful gender portrayals, and early marriages, as foreseen in the NSPVAW. No officials reported concrete activities in these areas. Parent and student engagement on topics such as gender equality and the consequences of domestic violence was also largely absent. Additionally, schools, especially in rural areas, still lack sufficient psychologists, which can hamper young people's access to support when gender-based violence has affected them or their families. Concerns were raised about confidentiality, with some officials stating that personal information is often leaked. This could hinder young people from coming forward to receive assistance.

Moreover, if students hear of gender-based violence occurring at schools, they may not feel safe seeking assistance at school. Officials shared examples of incidents of teacher suspensions related to sexual misconduct. In one case, disciplinary action was taken. In another, swift action was taken after a student reported inappropriate messages from a teacher.

Since 2013, the online Education Information Management System has existed, through which educators can report potential cases of domestic violence. This could facilitate the identification and monitoring of potential abuse. However, historically teachers have lacked awareness about the system and thus it has not been used consistently.¹²⁵

Ombudsperson Institution

The Ombudsperson Institution of Kosovo (OIK) is responsible for addressing human rights violations committed by the state, including cases involving gender-based violence.¹²⁶ If a victim feels mistreated by a Kosovo institution when handling her/his case, the person can report it to the OIK for investigation and support. The OIK can recommend measures to institutions and government bodies to improve their response to gender-based violence.¹²⁷ Institutions are legally obliged to respond to the OIK and to implement its recommendations. The OIK handles complaints related to judicial rights, administrative inefficiencies, employment disputes, and access to social and healthcare services. Common grievances include non-responsiveness from public authorities, irregular hirings, and barriers to essential services.

The OIK receives approximately 10-15 domestic violence complaints per year. Meanwhile, its investigations have shown systemic failings in risk assessment, case prioritisation, and inter-agency coordination. "Even with our recommendations, there has been no effective response to prevent recurring violations," the OIK observed. Despite improvements since 2022, by the end of 2023, only 28% of all of the OIK's recommendations were fully

¹²⁴ KWN interviewed five officials across Kosovo in 2024.

¹²⁵ See Endrita Banjska, Besarta Breznica, David JJ Ryan, and Nicole Farnsworth for KWN *From Laws to Action*, 2021.

¹²⁶ Government of Kosovo, *National Strategy for Protection from Domestic Violence and Violence Against Women 2022–2026*, 2022, p. 32.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

implemented, more than 50% pending, and 16% ignored.¹²⁸ While this is in reference to all cases and not only gender-based violence, it indicates insufficient institutional attention to the OIK's recommendations, including those related to addressing gender-based violence.

OIK faces several challenges related to its human resources and inter-institutional cooperation. Currently, the OIK has approximately 50 employees at its headquarters in Pristina and only one or two staff in each regional office. This affects the OIK's efficiency and coverage. Although the Institution has adopted a Code of Ethics, it still lacks a dedicated internal regulation on sexual exploitation and harassment that would strengthen integrity mechanisms, as well as staff and beneficiary protection. Moreover, its cooperation with public institutions is unsatisfactory, as many authorities fail to implement the OIK's recommendations in a timely manner.

Civil Society Organisations

CSOs, especially those focused on women's rights, play a key role in preventing and addressing gender-based violence. They assist victims, help secure protection orders, raise awareness, prevent violence, provide support services, conduct policy research, monitor institutional accountability, offer expertise based on experience, and advocate for needed policy reforms.

CSO representatives emphasised that victims of gender-based violence often hesitate to report cases to institutions due to distrust.¹²⁹ This is where CSOs provide crucial assistance, as victims tend to trust them and seek help. Several CSOs provide support services to survivors of gender-based violence. As discussed, CSO shelters provide several services.¹³⁰ Additionally, the Kosovo Law Institute, the Centre for Legal Aid and Regional Development, and KWN offer legal advice and representation, as well as support in navigating institutions. KWN and Kosovo Law Institute also conducts legal monitoring and publishes reports assessing the judiciary's handling of cases of domestic and sexual violence, focusing on the consistency of court decisions, delays in proceedings, and institutional coordination. Women 4 Women provides free psychological counselling and socioeconomic empowerment programs to support women's independence. Since 2022, it has held individual and group support sessions, assisting survivors, including those of sexual violence during the war, in their healing process. Medica Gjakova and Medica Kosovo provide psychosocial treatment for victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence. The Centre for Equality and Liberty and the Centre for Social Group Development have legal advisors, counsellors, and psychologists who support LGBTQIA+ persons who have suffered violence.

Beyond service provision, CSOs play a crucial role in prevention efforts by raising awareness about gender-based violence and how to report it. While several CSOs have been engaged, it was beyond the scope of this research to map all their many, important efforts; this section mentions only a few examples. KWN regularly leads awareness campaigns, utilising forum theatre, social media, and street exhibitions. Artpolis has delivered training on sexual violence in universities and regularly organises forum theatre and film screenings, showcasing international films coupled with facilitated discussions with various stakeholder groups. The Centre for Equality and Justice has conducted training on sexual harassment in high schools. The Network of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Women's Organisations of Kosovo raises awareness about domestic violence among women in these ethnic groups, cooperating closely with shelters

¹²⁸ KWN interview with OIK representative, 2024.

¹²⁹ In 2024, KWN interviewed 15 staff across Kosovo

¹³⁰ For further information, see the section on [Shelters](#).

for referrals. Medica Kosovo also organises sessions with Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians. The Centre for Education and Community Development conducts information sessions on early marriages in lower and upper secondary schools. Handikos Mitrovica supports women with disabilities who face double discrimination and increased exposure to violence, informing them of their rights and how to seek assistance. QIKA uses its platform Qika.org, Kosovo's first feminist journalism site, to report on gender-based violence. Similarly, the Balkan Investigative Reporting Network regularly investigates and reports on cases of gender-based violence, institutional responses and accountability gaps through in-depth journalism and monitoring. Kosovo 2.0 also covers related issues through in-depth journalism, public debates, and multimedia campaigns to raise awareness about gender equality, sexuality, and systemic discrimination.

CSOs have contributed substantially to Kosovo's existing legal framework by conducting policy-oriented research to inform it, preparing policy recommendations, participating in working groups, advocating for the adoption of policies, and monitoring their implementation, in efforts like this report among many others. Meanwhile, LGBTQIA+ representatives said they were underrepresented in these processes due to limited invitations to participate.

Meanwhile, amid global funding cuts, CSOs, their expert services for victims, expertise offered, and awareness efforts are under threat. KWN's 2025 survey of the situation of 100 women's rights organisations in Kosovo illustrated that 90% have insufficient funds for their work, half operate without any funds, and 57% do not have funds secured for 2026.¹³¹ Other organisations providing legal aid and other services similarly have reported severe funding cuts and risks to their services. This could place victims at risk of accessing quality assistance, particularly when they hesitate to go to institutions.

International Actors

Various international actors have played an important role in addressing gender-based violence in Kosovo. Their contributions include expertise, training, financial support, and technical assistance to improve policies, institutional infrastructure, performance, and coordination. For example, the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) has supported training on the appropriate use of interview rooms in police stations to ensure a more sensitive approach toward survivors. OSCE has organised training for justice professionals and police officers, as well as supported coordination mechanisms at central and local levels. CoE has provided technical support for legislative implementation, including perpetrator rehabilitation. UN Women have supported coordination mechanisms and policy development at municipal and national levels. UNFPA and UNICEF have been engaged in policy development and awareness-raising. These are just a few of many other efforts undertaken. However, a comprehensive mapping of international support and activities was beyond the scope of this research, which focused on institutional performance.

Conclusion

Institutions have improved Kosovo's legal and institutional frameworks for addressing gender-based violence, aligning them with international standards. They have demonstrated an increased commitment to survivor protection. Specialised staff in several institutions, improved coordination mechanisms, expanded training, and increased funding for shelters reflect progress.

¹³¹ Initial findings from KWN survey in fall 2025 (forthcoming).

Meanwhile, implementation remains fragmented, particularly at the municipal level, where staffing, coordination, and resources are insufficient. Patriarchal attitudes, socialised gender stereotypes, and victim-blaming persist across institutions, undermining survivor-centred responses. While courts have shown some improvements, reconciliation attempts and mishandling of cases by judges and prosecutors continue. Inaccurate classification of cases, lenient sentencing, poor enforcement of protection orders, and confidentiality breaches contribute to distrust in the justice system, undermining reporting and thus proper treatment of cases.

Interinstitutional coordination remains weak, especially where civil and criminal cases overlap. Victim representation is fragmented across prosecutors, VAs, and LAOs, contributing to delayed or inadequate assistance. Interinstitutional coordination in devising victim-centred case management plans and ensuring quality rehabilitation and reintegration services remains weak. Survivors of sexual violence, LGBTQIA+ persons, women with disabilities, and children face added systemic barriers to accessing protection and services. CSOs help bridge institutional gaps, but their work is under threat.

The institutional response to gender-based violence has relied heavily on external assistance, with few examples of sustainable local ownership or institutionalisation of capacity-building within institutions. Dependency on short-term donor-funded initiatives hinders institutional continuity and the consolidation of a self-sustaining national response system. The main challenge lies in translating policies into locally owned practice through institutionalised capacity development, consistent implementation, accountability, and inclusive, survivor-centred approaches.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For the Office of Prime Minister

- Consider moving the interministerial group on gender-based violence from MJ to the OPM as a higher inter-institutional body than the MJ. This would promote a more comprehensive approach to addressing all forms of gender-based violence, moving beyond a justice-centred framework, to include long-term reintegration, rehabilitation and holistic support for victims and survivors. Equip it with its own expert human resources, including more, specialised staff. Allocate state financing for a new, permanent *civil servant* position (the National Coordinator on Gender-based Violence) for a person with extensive expertise, to coordinate inter-institutional cooperation and the drafting and implementation of future strategies and action plans related to addressing gender-based violence, protecting this position from political instability.
- Reinstate MLSW and the Department for Social Services within it.
- Ensure summary data related to gender-based violence cases are submitted by all institutions to the KAS and published online regularly regarding cases treated, based on VAWD minimum standards.

For the Ministry of Finance, Labour, and Transfers

- Establish permanent budget lines dedicated to addressing gender-based violence in the budgets of responsible institutions and ensure sufficient allocations, including for appropriate training. Approve requests from the prosecution, VAAO, and municipalities for allocating more and sufficient resources, particularly human resources, for treating gender-based violence cases.
- Enforce legal requirements for budget organisations to implement gender-responsive budgeting, incorporating gender analysis to inform their budget allocations.
- Allocate regular annual funds for experienced CSOs to provide services, further awareness, and independently monitor government implementation of the relevant legal framework on gender-based violence.

For the Ministry of Justice and National Coordinator

Amend the CCK

Definitions and General Provisions

- Include a clear, comprehensive definition of “gender” aligned with international standards and the broader definition provided by the IC.
- Ensure that gender-based motivations are explicitly recognised as aggravating circumstances in all relevant criminal offences under the CCK, reflecting the seriousness of crimes rooted in gender discrimination. Include situations in which crimes are committed by partners and ex-partners who do not live with the victim and where crimes are committed in the presence of a child.

- Amend the definition of harassment to remove that a victim is “placed in a reasonable fear of death, grievous bodily injury, serious damage to property or substantial emotional stress” to establish the offence. Reforms should focus on criminalising the intrusive invasion of a person's psychological space or mental privacy without requiring proof of consequences for the victim.
- Introduce a dedicated provision on psychological violence to better address psychological violence from a gender-sensitive perspective.

Domestic Violence Provisions

- Include a single, simplified formulation that defines domestic violence as physical, psychological, sexual, or economic violence or mistreatment within a “domestic relationship” to ensure greater clarity and consistency in application.
- Explicitly include all family members, regardless of living arrangements, as well as any individuals sharing a common living arrangement, irrespective of their relationship, to ensure comprehensive legal protection. Include partners and ex-partners who do not cohabit with the victim, ensuring that violence within intimate relationships outside of cohabitation is appropriately penalized.
- Remove the provision referring to “the aim of violating the dignity and keeping under constant control and position of dependence, the persons against whom violence has been exercised”, as it may create ambiguity and an unnecessarily high threshold for proving domestic violence because it may be difficult to provide sufficient evidence of the alleged perpetrator’s aims.

Other Gender-based and Sexual Violence Offences

- Ensure that gender-based violence offences, including rape, sexual assault, forced abortion, forced sterilisation, and FGM (including incitement or assistance), carry aggravated penalties when they result in the death of the victim. These changes would close protection gaps and better reflect the realities of gender-based violence and severities of such crimes.
- Ensure that forced sterilisation is prohibited not only where there is lack of consent but also where the victim does not understand the nature and consequences of the procedure.
- Strengthen protections by broadening the scope of the aggravated murder offence.
- Legislate against FGM overseas and criminalise the failure to protect a girl from undergoing the practice, ensuring compliance with international standards. Consider adopting an approach whereby parents or any person responsible for a girl who exposes her to the risk of FGM, including overseas, may face prosecution. This would strengthen prevention efforts and better protect potential victims in Kosovo.

Technology-facilitated Violence

- Adopt a targeted criminal provision in the CCK and in the Law on Prevention and Fight of Cybercrime to address TFGBV.
- Align the CCK with the VAWD by introducing offences for non-consensual sharing of intimate or manipulated material, cyber stalking, cyber harassment, and cyber incitement to hatred.
- Apply aggravating factors to additional offences related to TFGBV, in line with the IC.

Amend Other Laws

- Amend CPC Article 63.1.15, ensuring that the transposition of the VD is accompanied by a needs-based and resource-sensitive assessment, so that the rights provided are not only formally guaranteed but also practically implementable.
- Repeal inappropriate references to reconciliation in the Family Law.
- Develop a more gender-responsive legal framework for social housing, strengthening support for survivors of violence with long-term sustainable housing solutions in close cooperation with the Ministry of Environment, Spatial Planning, and Infrastructure.
- Amend the Law on Mediation to forbid mediation in civil proceedings such as child custody, alimony, and divorce, where the potential exists for mediation to traumatise victims and exploit their vulnerable positions.
- Align the Law on Child Protection with the VAWD by defining specific procedures to protect children before a parent or guardian who is involved in an act of violence is informed of a child's report.

Improve Inter-institutional Cooperation

Governance, Coordination and Accountability

- Establish an independent inter-institutional body with civil society representatives to monitor and evaluate implementation of the IC, towards a stronger domestic monitoring system.
- Conduct a post-implementation review of the new LGBV with specific attention to addressing cyber violence and operational clarity.
- Consider establishing a “femicide watch” mechanism, particularly following the 2023 Constitutional Court ruling that found state institutions failed to protect a victim of domestic violence from femicide. This mechanism would focus on prevention by systematically identifying and addressing shortcomings in law, policy, and implementation related to gender-based violence.

Data Management and Information Systems

- Enforce proper use of the case management database, inclusive of all forms of gender-based violence covered by the IC.
- While ensuring data protection, limitations on access, and confidentiality, use software solutions to link the case management database with CMIS for interoperability, enabling relevant actors to make efficient use of their time in data entry. This can be done with levels of protection so only relevant persons have access to data, but numbers and trends are logged in an interoperable system.
- Functionalise CMIS by (1) ensuring that data is disaggregated by gender and types of violence, enabling analysis of overall cases by external experts; (2) engaging gender experts specialising in gender statistics in the finalisation to ensure it tracks and produces live reports that the public can use in monitoring the overall treatment of gender-based violence cases, including information on conviction rates.
- Ensure summary data is publicly accessible through an online interface, as well as submitted at least quarterly to KAS in accordance with the Law on Gender Equality.

Training, Capacity-Building, and Professional Standards

- Institutionalise obligatory, recurring training for police, prosecutors, judges, court staff, lawyers, healthcare professionals (including paediatricians, gynaecologists, obstetricians, midwives, psychologists, and healthcare staff), social service officers, educational staff, and persons with supervisory functions on all forms of gender-based violence, particularly those less understood (e.g., sexual violence, FGM), gender stereotypes, victim-blaming, and case management with risk assessments.
- Coordinate and facilitate completion of the process of establishing specific protocols and guidelines for professionals assisting victims of all forms of gender-based violence in the IC, coupled with consistent, systematic specialised training.
- Ensure MCMs are sufficiently trained and capable to implement the new regulation guiding their work, ensuring a coordinated response that strengthens prevention, protection, and reintegration.

Service Provision and Resource Allocation

- Ensure compliance with safeguards outlined in the EU VD, including victims' informed and voluntary participation, protection from re-victimisation, and professional service delivery.
- Conduct thorough gender analysis using gender-responsive budgeting to adequately assess the resources required to implement social services appropriately. Then, based on this analysis, ensure MFLT assigns adequate budget allocations in annual budgets for implementing these programs, including adequate, professional human resources across all services. Ensure sufficient budget allocations for compensating victims and adequate assistance for victims in filing requests for compensation.
- Ensure adequate geographic distribution and financing of specialised services per IC requirements, including shelters operated by NGOs, in close cooperation with MFLT.
- Improve procedures for referrals and allocations to shelters using established costing methodologies,¹ ensuring long-term accommodation options and continuity of support for survivors. Ensure all shelters have consistent funding and are equipped with sufficient, professional human resources and the necessary infrastructure for safe, effective operation, including official vehicles, secure and accessible facilities, adequate physical space, cybersecurity measures, and reliable communication systems.
- Budget for and ensure the availability of shelter specifically designated for survivors of sexual violence, ensuring access to specialised care and protection.
- Expand and adapt shelter availability for children, including the development of supervision protocols that address age-appropriate needs and provide separate accommodation for boys over the age of 12.
- Establish a dedicated shelter for LGBTQIA+ persons, ensuring safe, inclusive, and affirming environments.
- Create or designate a shelter with trained staff and adequate resources to support individuals with severe mental health conditions.
- Allocate dedicated budgetary support to diverse WCSOs to finance their critical work in implementing the legal framework, delivering services, and supporting survivors, in line with gender-responsive budgeting principles.

¹ Building on global experience and the costing methodology developed by AGE in 2019 ([Kosovo Shelter Operational Budgeting & Design Guidelines](#)), KWN has developed a comprehensive methodology that could be adopted, potentially adapted, and used by MJ, or responsible Ministry, in the future.

- Allow survivors applying for the measure to subsidise 70% of their gross salary (up to €300) to register without disclosing their status as victims in public EOs, ensuring confidentiality and minimising the risk of stigma or privacy breaches. Assign the dedicated case manager from the CSW to assist survivors throughout the application, registration, and employment process.

For the Kosovo Police

Enhance Training, Capacity Building, and Awareness

- The Police Academy curriculum must be standardised, and accountability measures introduced for refusal to attend training.
- Mandate systematic, obligatory initial and in-service training for all officers, especially first responders, covering all forms of gender-based violence (particularly psychological abuse, control, sexual violence, sexual harassment, FGM, early marriage, and TFGBV), the needs and rights of victims, socialised gender stereotypes, prevention of secondary victimisation, power relations, victim-blaming, ensuring confidentiality, and trauma-informed approaches.
- Ensure KP officers understand and apply relevant laws correctly. Specifically, ensure officers fully understand the importance of documenting any gender-related extenuating circumstances in crimes, including gender-based violence, hate crime, hate speech, and discrimination.
- Ensure police are adequately trained on issuing and enforcing removal orders to remove content involving TFGBV, including addressing these to hosting service providers and/or intermediary service providers.

Improve SOPs and Case Handling

- Revamp existing DVIUs into Gender-based Violence Investigation Units, so that they treat all forms of gender-based violence. Further capacities of existing officers in treating such cases.
- Develop clear, consistent protocols for handling gender-based violence cases to ensure uniform practices and quality service throughout Kosovo.
- Ensure only KP officers trained in gender-based violence and a victim-centred approach conduct interviews, preventing re-victimisation.
- Undertake additional affirmative measures to recruit and promote more, diverse women in KP, particularly in DVIUs (and future gender-based violence units), which can improve trust, access, and the quality of services. This is particularly important for northern Kosovo; gender *and* ethnic balance is needed. Provide access to childcare, flexible working hours, and duty stations near home.
- Establish access to supervision and other psychological support services for officers handling gender-based violence towards preventing burnout.
- Ensure all stations have private, safe interview rooms and necessary equipment to protect survivors' dignity and privacy, expanding their availability to all municipalities.
- Further functionalise electronic bracelets to monitor compliance with protection orders.
- Ensure police respond to all breaches of protection orders promptly and pursue them through the criminal justice system.
- Enhance cooperation among DVIUs and the Cybercrime Unit in addressing TFGBV.

- Operationalise the “Emergency Fund” covering urgent needs of victims while they are at police stations, ensuring officials are informed about it and how to access the funds, particularly CSWs.
- Facilitate rapid transport of victims by KP to IFM for timely access to forensic services.

For the Institute of Forensic Medicine

- Increase the number of female forensic doctors to ensure survivors the option to choose the gender of their examiner, enhancing comfort and trust.
- Increase the number of trained forensic professionals to ensure a comprehensive, victim-centred approach in all forensic examinations of sexual violence cases.
- Improve the documentation of psychological and emotional abuse alongside physical injuries in forensic reports.
- Implement “systematic and mandatory initial and in-service training” for all forensic professionals, as recommended by the CoE, on the prevention, detection, and prosecution of all forms of violence against women covered by the IC; legal procedures; the needs and rights of victims, particularly those in vulnerable situations; prevention of secondary victimisation; and the elimination of gender stereotypes.
- Provide IFM staff with free access to supervision and psychotherapy to support professional wellbeing and reduce burn-out.

For the Prosecution and Kosovo Prosecutorial Council

- Ensure that all municipalities have a prosecutor available who is specialised in gender-based violence cases.
- Ensure prosecutors undergo comprehensive “systematic and mandatory initial and in-service training”, as recommended by CoE. Training should emphasise gendered power relations, patriarchy, and other structural factors contributing to violence. It should include a victim-centred approach that considers social and power contexts surrounding each case. Prosecutors require training to distinguish between sexual harassment and sexual assault; to better understand FGM; on legal misclassification, aggravated circumstances, and combining the CCK offence of domestic violence with additional relevant charges; and to recognise that gender-based violence can affect men. Consider using case studies in training and guidance from KJC.
- Increase financing for institutional infrastructure, including hiring additional support staff, expanding office space and ensuring access to private rooms for interviewing victims.
- Provide access to free psychotherapy for prosecutors through public institutions towards their well-being.

For Victim Advocates

- Recruit additional VAs to address understaffing issues and reduce caseload burdens, ensuring sufficient human resources to support victims consistently in all municipalities.
- Ensure the mandatory presence of VAs during key procedures, including police interviews and court hearings, to prevent re-victimisation and uphold legal obligations.
- Strengthen confidentiality safeguards, coordinating with police and courts to prevent media leaks and protect victims’ identities throughout the legal process.

- Provide obligatory initial and in-service training to distinguish between “gender-based violence” and “domestic violence”, addressing misconceptions and legal ambiguities. Training should challenge patriarchal attitudes, emphasise the importance of taking victims’ reports seriously, and promote a victim-centred, trauma-informed approach.
- Ensure access to free supervision and psychological support for VAs from public institutions to prevent burnout.
- Allocate funds for securing transportation to attend court sessions and expanding limited office space to ensure confidentiality in interactions with victims.

For Free Legal Aid Agency

- Ensure adequate human resources.
- Clarify roles and responsibilities vis-a-vis coordination with other institutions. Provide clear guidance on when LAOs can and should be involved in criminal proceedings, particularly where additional legal support may strengthen victim protection.
- Institutionalise obligatory initial and continuous comprehensive training on all forms of gender-based violence, a victim-centred approach, the NSPVAW, and SOPs.
- Allocate resources for infrastructure to better support women who seek legal aid while caring for children, ensuring their safety, privacy, and dignity throughout legal proceedings.

For the Kosovo Judicial Council, Academy of Justice and Judges

- Require use of the Supreme Court Sentencing Guidelines Guidelines, including the clearer explanations of *gender*-based violence and the need for clear reasoning for aggravating or mitigating factors in all gender-based violence related verdicts.
- Ensure all criminal and civil judges attend obligatory initial and in-service basic and advanced training on gender-based violence, including psychological, economic, and sexual violence, with an emphasis on socialised gender norms. Judges require further training on the legal framework, including the LGBV, NSPVAW, SOPs, the State Protocol for the Treatment of Sexual Violence Cases, and the Curriculum for the Treatment of Perpetrators of Violence. Training should deepen their understanding of sexual harassment, sexual assault, FGM, and TFGBV, including stalking using technological devices. The judiciary must be adequately trained on issuing removal orders for TFGBV addressed to hosting service providers and/or intermediary service providers. Training must also address professional ethics, bias, and victim-blaming.
- Ensure judges’ training on forced marriage emphasises that cultural and gendered factors must be considered when assessing what constitutes “force”, “threat”, and “coercion” under Family Law. Training should also make clear that no culture, custom, religion, tradition, or so-called “honour” can ever justify forced marriages under any circumstances, in line with international human rights standards. Broaden and diversify the types of training provided by AJ to address these gaps.
- Introduce disciplinary actions for judges’ use of stigmatising language or shifting the blame onto survivors in civil cases.
- Ensure judges request and accept a broader range of admissible evidence in PO cases and do not dismiss cases solely due to lack of physical evidence or full testimonies.

- Enforce the legal prohibition on mediation and reconciliation in gender-based violence cases, including domestic violence cases; monitor courtroom practices to ensure victims are not pressured into forgiving or reconciling with perpetrators.
- Remind judges of their duty to refer victims to the compensation fund when restitution cannot be obtained from the perpetrator.
- Ensure judges use at least legally mandated minimum sentencing, particularly in cases of domestic violence, rape, and marital rape towards ending impunity. KJC should undertake disciplinary actions against judges when they fail to apply minimum sentences set by law, as such actions constitute a violation of the law.
- Include rehabilitation programs for gender-based violence in sentencing and probation conditions issued by courts.

For Correctional and Probation Services

- Amend the legal framework to require participation in certified rehabilitation programs for all individuals convicted of gender-based violence-related crimes.
- Use motivational approaches, peer models, and confidential formats to address shame and pride-related barriers to perpetrators' participation in programs.
- Ensure corrections and probations officers receive obligatory initial and continued in-service training on psychological, sexual, and economic violence, emphasising non-physical forms of violence. Include ethics and gender-sensitivity training to address victim-blaming and shift the focus from preserving the family to survivor protection. Ensure all officers are trained in implementing rehabilitation programs.

For Social Services

For Departments for Social Welfare and Centres for Social Work

- Adopt minimum standards for social service professionals for handling cases of gender-based violence, developed by MJ, ensuring adequate training on standards for all responsible social workers.
- Provide mandatory initial and in-service continual training for all social workers on the CCK, SOPs, and gender-based violence, using the training and guides developed by KWN, updating these as needed. Focus on sexual violence, sexual harassment, stalking, ethics, gender-sensitivity to eliminate discriminatory attitudes, victim-blaming, justification of perpetrators' behaviour, and a victim-centred approach to case management. Further social workers' capacities in strategies and approaches for preparing sufficient documentation to inform court proceedings.
- Hire additional staff based on the population size and ensure staff are specialised in treating particular types of cases rather than all categories. As per the State Protocol for the Treatment of Sexual Violence Cases, at least two social workers should be specialised in treating sexual violence in each municipality. Appoint specialised social workers who are trained specifically in managing gender-based violence cases with a trauma-informed and victim-centred approach.
- Provide access to free supervision and psychotherapy for social workers, particularly for those assisting gender-based violence cases towards preventing burnout.

- Monitor performance to ensure social workers and other social service providers contracted by the state consistently follow written service standards and protocols to ensure consistent, professional, and non-judgmental support for survivors, including in court settings. Take actions to improve capacities where poor performance exists.
- Budget for more human resources, transportation, and logistical support to enable CSWs to respond to cases efficiently across municipalities.
- Improve data entry and tracking to inform policies, programs, and budgets with data on cases assisted. This can support reallocating human resources to meet service demand and gender-responsive budgeting.

For Employment Offices, and Vocational Training Centres

- Implement mandatory initial and in-service training for EO and VTC staff on legal frameworks and definitions related to gender-based violence, including distinctions between sexual harassment, assault, FGM, stalking, and related offences. Consider updating and using the existing UNDP curriculum. Training should cover gender stereotypes, victim-blaming, and the principles of a victim-centred and trauma-informed approach that emphasises survivor safety, autonomy, and empowerment over reconciliation.
- Integrate the NSPVAW into EO and VTC operational plans, ensuring all staff are familiar with its provisions and capable of implementing relevant measures in their daily work.
- Ensure sufficient qualified staff across EOs and VTCs to provide consistent, quality services to survivors, including specialised focal points trained in gender-based violence response.
- Develop and standardise clear protocols and guidelines to support survivors in accessing vocational training and employment opportunities safely without discrimination.
- Budget for and provide employment incentives for companies that hire survivors of gender-based violence, including wage subsidies or tax benefits to encourage inclusive hiring.
- Establish robust data collection and monitoring systems to track how many survivors receive training, find employment, and maintain it, to measure program impact.
- Ensure targeted outreach to survivors in both urban and rural areas to promote equitable access to employment and training services across regions.
- Strengthen collaboration with NGOs and women's rights organisations to co-design survivor-centred employment and training programs, facilitate referrals, and provide comprehensive support to survivors.

For Shelters

- Improve budgeting systems to accurately cost services annually, proposing budget needs to MJ.
- Provide obligatory initial and in-service continual comprehensive staff training in feminist, trauma-informed, and intersectional approaches; tailor services to meet the specific needs of diverse persons, including with disabilities, LGBTQIA+ individuals, and ethnic minorities. Increase capacities for handling all types of gender-based violence cases, particularly sexual violence.
- Offer regular psychological supervision and counselling for shelter workers to prevent burnout, enhance staff wellbeing, and improve the overall quality of care provided.

For the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology, and Innovation and Educational Institutions

- Provide practical implementation guidelines and resources to support MEDs and educational institutions in implementing the NSPVAW and SOPs, including by developing municipal plans. Encourage and monitor adequate follow-up and monitoring.
- Establish and enforce clear policies and procedures for reporting sexual harassment and other forms of gender-based violence in pre-university education institutions ensuring accessible, confidential, and survivor-centred mechanisms, and their adequate enforcement
- Expand, harmonise, promote, and enforce sexual harassment policies across all public and private universities, drawing on the experiences and lessons learned from the University of Prishtina and the University of Prizren.
- Develop and implement clear protocols for protecting victims' personal data and identity and ensure that all staff are trained in maintaining confidentiality in all interactions with victims and survivors.
- Institutionalise mandatory initial and regular in-service training for MESTI, MED officials, educators, and school staff on legal frameworks and definitions related to gender-based violence under the CCK; distinctions between domestic violence, gender-based violence, sexual harassment, and sexual assault; institutional responsibilities under the NSPVAW and SOPs; and the prevention, detection, and response to all forms of gender-based violence in line with the IC. Training should cover the needs and rights of victims, particularly those in vulnerable situations, and focus on preventing secondary victimisation and addressing gender stereotypes.
- Increase the number of psychologists in schools, prioritising rural and underserved areas, to ensure accessible psychosocial support and adequate response for students.
- Ensure safe and confidential counselling spaces within all educational institutions where students affected by gender-based violence can receive immediate and professional support without fear of retaliation or stigma.
- Improve the institutionalisation of awareness-raising and prevention efforts aimed at transforming gender norms that underpin violence, toward preventing future violence. Include in the Law on Textbooks obligatory gender review to remove stereotypes and promote a gender-transformative approach. Conduct a comprehensive gender review of all curricula at all levels to identify and remove gender stereotypes and discriminatory content that can perpetuate gender-based violence. Integrate education on gender equality, mutual respect, and non-stereotyped gender roles across subjects and grade levels, in line with Article 14 of the IC.
- Develop joint campaigns and outreach like forum theatre between MEDs, schools, and CSOs on topics such as gender equality, respectful relationships, the consequences of gender-based violence, prevention of early marriages, and TFGBV.
- Develop age-appropriate educational materials for teachers, parents, and students that promote gender equality, prevent violence, and challenge harmful gender norms.

For the Ministry of Health and Healthcare Institutions

- Prepare the legal framework (together with MJ), allocate resources, and establish sexual violence referrals and a rape crisis centre in cooperation with CSO experts, shelters, and IFM, as foreseen by the IC. This centre should provide comprehensive integrated services:

emergency healthcare, psychological counselling, short-term protective accommodation until relocation is possible, and forensic documentation by trained professionals. Draw from the experiences and lessons learned in establishing the Liliu Centre in Tirana: ensure adequate budget allocations for human resources and other costs, including supervision of staff to prevent burnout; and consider establishing a psychological counselling helpline within the centre, with appropriate, trained human resources.

- Establish immediately the working group responsible for drafting the administrative instructions on Treatment for Abuse with Alcohol and Psychotropic Substances and for Psycho-Social Treatment; prioritise their finalisation and adoption.
- Develop and strengthen mechanisms for compulsory psychiatric treatment by building new capacities, clear protocols, and monitoring systems in line with the Mental Health Law and international standards.
- Establish a dedicated treatment protocol for cases of FGM.
- Healthcare institutions (at all three levels) should receive mandatory and continuous training on the collection, preservation, and documentation of medical evidence in cases of gender-based violence. This training should be integrated into both pre-service education for healthcare professionals and ongoing professional development programs.
- Build the capacities of healthcare workers on the clinical management of rape and sexual assault cases, ensuring alignment with WHO and IC standards, as well as a victim-centred and trauma informed approach.
- Institutionalise mandatory initial and regular in-service training for healthcare workers on prevention, detection, and response to all forms of gender-based violence, including training on the CCK, LGBV, and SOPs. Training should include furthering healthcare workers' skills to challenge gender stereotypes, identify signs of violence, address victims' needs, safeguard their rights, communicate sensitively with victims, maintain confidentiality, and facilitate safe referrals, preventing secondary victimisation.
- Clarify reporting procedures and responsibilities to ensure health professionals understand when reporting is legally required, and that obtaining victim consent is not currently a prerequisite for fulfilling mandatory reporting obligations. As per GREVIO recommendations, the wellbeing of the victim should be the main criteria in deciding whether to report violence, particularly in cases in which further violence may be imminent and present a grave risk to the victim.
- Ensure the availability of private, secure rooms in health institutions for treating victims of sexual violence to protect dignity, confidentiality, and safety.

For Municipalities

- Provide obligatory, basic, multi-sectoral training for municipal government officials responsible for gender equality and gender-based violence. Training should include referral mechanisms, coordination procedures, and municipal obligations to allocate and manage sufficient budgets for gender-based violence related services.
- Ensure adequate and sustainable resource allocation, guided by gender analysis and gender-responsive budgeting, for the full implementation of municipal responsibilities in preventing and addressing all forms of gender-based violence. Municipalities should identify additional local revenue sources to cover service gaps not financed by the central government.
- Strengthen the role of GEOs according to their legal duties through political support, adequate time allocation, sufficient resources, and capacity development.

- Secure appropriate premises for shelters in municipalities where they are currently unavailable.
- Allocate social housing units to support gender-based violence survivors in transitioning to independent living. Provide access to social housing on a rolling basis, as needed.
- Ensure that all mayors are informed about their legal obligations, know their responsibilities as the Chairpersons of MCMs, ensure functioning of these mechanisms, allocate sufficient budgets for their functioning and demonstrate clear political will to prevent and respond to gender-based violence.

Inter-institutional Coordination

- Ensure that police, prosecutors, and judges are part of multi-sectoral training so that they can develop a common understanding of gender-based violence with other service providers and better support victims in criminal proceedings.
- Establish structured coordination mechanisms between MESTI, MJ, MEDs, CSOs, CSWs, and other relevant institutions to ensure coherent, multi-sectoral prevention and response to violence in educational settings.
- Require regular coordination meetings and establish follow-up protocols among shelters, CSWs, police, EOs, VTCs, and other MCM actors to ensure continuous, comprehensive, victim-centred support for survivors beyond their shelter stay.

For the Ombudsperson Institution

- Establish an internal regulation on preventing and treating sexual exploitation and harassment for all OIK staff, experts, and beneficiaries.
- Hire more staff in municipalities outside Pristina to assist with monitoring poor institutional performance in gender-based violence cases and following up on OIK recommendations.
- Improve coordination with institutions to further implementation of OIK recommendations.

For the Council of Europe

- Continue GREVIO monitoring in Kosovo. This strengthens independent oversight and supports alignment with IC standards.

Inter-institutional Coordination

- Ensure that police, prosecutors, and judges are part of multi-sectoral training so that they can develop a common understanding of gender-based violence with other service providers and better support victims in criminal proceedings.
- Establish structured coordination mechanisms between MESTI, MJ, MEDs, CSOs, CSWs, and other relevant institutions to ensure coherent, multi-sectoral prevention and response to violence in educational settings.
- Require regular coordination meetings and establish follow-up protocols among shelters, CSWs, police, EOs, VTCs, and other MCM actors to ensure continuous, comprehensive, victim-centred support for survivors beyond their shelter stay.

ANNEXES

Annex 1. Gender-based Violence Data from Institutions

This annex contains data on gender-based violence cases reported, provided by various institutions in Kosovo, by institution.

Shelters

Shelters focusing on assisting victims of domestic violence and their children can fit 133 women and children comfortably, while some shelters can offer additional beds if needed in emergency situations. Most shelters also have family rooms available to accommodate women with children. The length of stay usually ranges from three to six months, depending on individual needs and progress in recovery. Notably, Kosovo does not have as many family rooms as foreseen by the IC.

Shelter Location	Number of Beds for Adults	Number of beds for babies and toddlers	Number of Family Rooms	Length of Stay (in months)
Peja	16		3	3-6
Prizren	14		4	3-6
Pristina	20	2	0	3-6
Gjakova	15	5	5	6
Gjilan	15	5	5	6
Ferizaj	15	0	0	6
Mitrovica	20	4	4	6
Novo Brdo	15	2	3	24 hours to 14
Total	115	18	24	24 hours to 14

The table below illustrates the number of women and children who were sheltered and the number who received services from each shelter by year. The table does not include data from the shelter for persons trafficked or the government-run Interim Security Facility as they did not share data. In some cases, women may have received both types of services. The shelter in Pristina has tended to house the most cases, likely due in part to the population size. Meanwhile, the shelter in Gjilan has provided services to substantially more cases than the other shelters. This may suggest extra outreach within the community to encourage women to seek services and support.

Shelter	2021 Sheltered	2021 Services	2022 Sheltered	2022 Services	2023 Sheltered	2023 Services	2024 Sheltered	2024 Services
Gjilan	71	350	66	329	94	332	76	346
Novo Brdo	20	32	38	51	39	52	23	61
Prizren	53	53	55	55	45	45	57	57
Ferizaj	55	32	81	43	75	27	45	18
Peja	66	66	117	117	98	98	64	64
Pristina	132	53	171	46	141	31	149	38
Gjakova	113		172		135		145	
Mitrovica	67		150		97		65	
Total	577	586	850	641	724	585	624	584

Police

The data presented in the table below, obtained from the Kosovo Police Informative System, provide an overview of the number of individuals recorded as victims of crimes, disaggregated by gender. It is important to note that the data include both allegedly committed and attempted offenses. However, not all crimes necessarily constitute gender-based violence (GBV), as the Kosovo Police currently lack a systematic mechanism for classifying or marking cases as GBV-related.

Despite this limitation, certain crime categories clearly reflect gender-based violence. Notably, domestic violence emerged as the second most prevalent crime reported, following light bodily injury. Within domestic violence cases, women accounted for 80.7 percent of the alleged victims, underscoring the gendered nature of this offense. Another clear manifestation of gender-based violence is sexual harassment, where women represented 98 percent of the alleged victims. Similarly, women were disproportionately represented among victims of harassment (70.6 percent), rape (95.4 percent), sexual assault (95.4 percent), and incest (100 percent).

Kosovo Police Data on Crimes Potentially Involving Gender-based Violence 2021-2024

		Number of victims involved by criminal offence and gender											
		Women	Women	Women	Women	Men	Men	Men	Men	Total # of women	% ¹ of women	Total # of men	% men
TOTAL	Crime	2021	2022	2023	2024	2021	2022	2023	2024				
24	172* Murder	1		1	1	6	3	8	2	3	12.5%	21	87.5%
74	173* Aggravated Murder	2	4	5	2	16	10	15	10	13	17.6%	61	82.4%
1	178* Unlawful termination of pregnancy	1								1	100.0%		
3,962	181* Threat	255	302	329	245	647	840	706	638	1,131	28.5%	2,831	71.5%
156	183* Sexual Harassment	19	51	34	49	1	1	1		153	98.1%	3	1.9%
758	182* Harassment	138	152	134	111	56	60	53	54	535	70.6%	223	29.4%
2,789	184* Assault	220	265	238	181	539	499	422	425	904	32.4%	1,885	67.6%
8,681	185* Light bodily injury	464	444	491	462	1,352	1,245	1,325	1,202	1,861	21.4%	6,820	78.6%
828	186* Serious bodily injury	23	25	20	18	214	172	158	130	86	10.4%	742	89.6%
305	227* Rape	89	74	72	56	2	3	5	4	291	95.4%	14	4.6%
185	229* Sexual Assault	552	40	40	41	1	3	3	24	176	95.1%	9	4.9%
4	230* Degradation of sexual integrity				1	1			2	1	25.0%	3	75.0%
6	233* Inducing sexual acts by false promise of marriage	4	1	1						6	100.0%		
10	234* Facilitating or compelling prostitution	4	1		4				1	9	90.0%	1	10.0%
3	236* Sexual relations within the family		2		1					3	100%		
6,070	248* Domestic Violence	1,245	1,414	1,144	1,095	328	296	279	269	4,898	80.7%	1,172	19.3%

¹ All percentages in the table are rounded to one decimal for readability.

Victim Advocates

The following table presents data received from VAAO, combined with information from KP (in bold and italic) for comparability. It indicates that VAs consistently assisted more cases than were reported to KP. Despite the human resource challenges reported by VAs, the table suggests that they have assisted more cases over time, albeit with a slight decrease in 2024.

Cases of Domestic Violence and Requests for Protection Orders	2021	2022	2023	2024
<i>Cases of domestic violence registered by KP</i>	<i>1,573</i>	<i>1,710</i>	<i>1,423</i>	<i>1,364</i>
Cases of domestic violence	1,822	2,538	2,636	2,620
Request for an emergency protection order	32	112	198	434
Request for a temporary emergency protection order	3	8	16	34
Request for a regular protection order	579	1,012	1,206	653
Request for the continuation of a protection order	9	31	13	7
Request for a protection order withdrawn by the party	91	31	81	29
Request for modification of a protection order	2	9	12	18
Request for termination of a protection order	6	257	11	28
Request for a protection order rejected by the court	17	15	8	1
Court-approved decisions on protection orders	518	828	1,173	861

Prosecution

The following table presents the number of domestic violence cases treated with priority by the prosecution by year and by municipality/region. In the last column, KP data is presented for comparison. This suggests that the prosecution is treating more cases than those reported to KP. This may relate to the backlog of cases that justice institutions are still processing. Pristina handles substantially more cases than the other municipalities, which likely relates to its population size.

#	Pristina	Gjilan	Ferizaj	Peja	Prizren	Mitrovica	Gjakova	Total	KP Total
2021	563	210	217	663	328	221	205	2,079	1,573
2022	1,042	245	255	640	331	250	254	3,017	1,710
2023	1,269	202	234	695	320	67	216	3,003	1,423
2024	1,160	260	256	725	340	154	245	3,140	1,364

The next table presents the number of indictments filed for domestic violence cases by municipality and year. KWN's comparison with the number of cases prioritised illustrates that the vast majority of cases result in indictments. The higher number of indictments than cases treated in 2021 may also relate to the treatment of a backlog of cases.

Year	Pristina	Gjilan	Ferizaj	Peja	Prizren	Mitrovica	Gjakova	Total Indictments	Total Cases	% of Cases Involving Indictments
2021	427	216	226	646	355	179	193	2242	2,079	108%
2022	897	258	266	661	341	121	246	2790	3,017	92%
2023	1,033	205	235	702	314	71	212	2772	3,003	92%
2024	970	278	230	881	358	183	232	3132	3,140	100%

KJC

An analysis of cases handled by the Basic Courts of Kosovo, General Departments, from 2021 to 2024, focusing on offenses involving gender-based violence, reveals several trends and challenges. The data provided KJC were extensive and complex, requiring substantial manual processing, as the database contained all court cases without clear categorization of offenses related specifically to gender-based violence. It is important to emphasise that KJC does not disaggregate data by the gender of the perpetrator or the victim, which significantly limits gender analysis. Consequently, the data presented offer only a general overview of criminal cases and do not exclusively represent gender-based violence offenses. In terms of sentencing, the analysis faced additional methodological limitations, since the database allows for up to two types of penalties per case. This made it difficult to determine which cases resulted in imprisonment, fines, or conditional sentences. For the purposes of this analysis, only the primary sentence was considered; in instances where both imprisonment and a fine were imposed, only the main or first sentence was recorded.

Domestic violence emerged as the most frequent and persistent form of violence prosecuted by the courts during the observed period. Between 2021 and 2024, the number of domestic violence cases remained consistently high, confirming that this form of violence continues to pose a serious and widespread problem in Kosovo. Of 3,106 convicted cases, 59.3% resulted in conditional sentences, 29% in fines, 9% in imprisonment, and 2.7% in other measures. Although the number of domestic violence cases remains high, the majority conclude with relatively lenient sanctions, such as conditional sentences or fines. This indicates a soften judicial approach to addressing domestic violence and raises concerns regarding the extent to which the imposed penalties reflect the severity of harm experienced by victims.

Moreover, during the same period, 14 women were killed as a result of gender-based violence, a figure that highlights the grave and sometimes fatal consequences of such violence. Regarding rape cases, a detailed analysis could not be conducted using the Serious Crimes Department database due to its complexity and lack of disaggregated information.

Overall, these findings point to critical gaps in data management and record-keeping in the judicial system. The absence of gender-disaggregated data prevents comprehensive monitoring and assessment of how the justice system addresses gender-based violence. Therefore, there is an urgent need for improved data systems and standardised reporting mechanisms that would enable more accurate, transparent, and gender analysis of cases related to gender-based violence in Kosovo.

Basic Courts, General Department

# of cases handled according to the criminal offense	2021	2022	2023	2024
Article 181 – Threat	1075	1176	1340	1413
Article 182 – Harassment	187	198	210	252
Article 183 – Sexual Harassment	23	20	16	35
Article 184 – Assault	645	712	699	874
Article 185 – Minor Bodily Injury	1224	1219	1182	1360
Article 186 – Serious Bodily Injury	73	80	71	70
Article 229 – Sexual Assault	11	10	3	12
Article 230 – Degradation of Sexual Integrity	0	0	0	0
Article 248 – Domestic Violence	991	1171	1053	1176

The next table summarises cases treated by Basic Courts.

Penalties Imposed by Type of Criminal Offense (2021–2024)	Imprisonment	Fine	Suspended Sentence	Other Measures
Article 181 – Threat	136	1553	590	231
Article 182 – Harassment	18	315	74	42
Article 183 – Sexual Harassment	11	39	11	2
Article 184 – Assault	42	885	392	158
Article 185 – Minor Bodily Injury	196	1493	968	123
Article 186 – Serious Bodily Injury	36	88	26	3
Article 229 – Sexual Assault	4	12	2	1
Article 230 – Degradation of Sexual Integrity	0	0	0	0
Article 248 – Domestic Violence	280	900	1842	84

Annex 2. Implementation of the NSPVAW 2022-2026

Based on research findings, the following table presents the implementation of the NSPVAW from 2022 through December 2024.¹ This table is an exact copy of the one included in the NSPVAW with the addition of the final column “*Implemented 2022–2024*”, introduced by KWN to reflect the extent of implementation and actions taken for each activity. KWN has used the same assessment system as in 2017 and 2020, where “0” means not implemented, “0.5” partially implemented, and “1” fully implemented. “NA” indicates that data was unavailable.

Since the current NSPVAW remains in force until 2026, data presented are provisional and subject to change, given that the Strategy is ongoing. For this report, KWN has relied primarily on MJ’s 2024 report, which provides the most comprehensive overview of achievements regarding NSPVAW implementation.² However, according to MJ, not all institutions were able to provide information on their activities. It is worth noting that the available data were collected mainly at the central level and from the relevant ministries. Collecting information at the municipal level has proven difficult, due to the absence of a dedicated mechanism for data gathering. The official reporting has been supplemented with information from this report, derived from KWN’s research and monitoring.

According to the reported data, as of the end of 2024, 54% of NSPVAW activities had been implemented, 42% were partially implemented, and 5.5% were unimplemented.

No.	Strategic and specific objectives, indicators and actions	Basic value	Provisional Objective [2024]	Last year's goal [2026]	Outcome	KWN's of Implementation 2022-2024
I.	Strategic Objective: Prevention and identification of violence:				In total, 45 activities were foreseen; 24 (53%) were completed, 16 (36%) were partially completed, two (4%) were not implemented, and three (7%) had no data available. Specific Objective 1.1. was the most implemented, focusing on changing behaviours, attitudes, roles, and stereotypes.	
I	Indicator: Percentage of women, men, girls and boys who believe that domestic violence and violence against women are intolerable.	It will be determined by a study in 2022	Increased by 5%	Increased by 10%	The number of women, men, girls and boys in Kosovo who <i>believe</i> that domestic violence and violence against women are intolerable has increased as a result of the actions undertaken to raise public awareness.	NA: While a study was conducted by KAS, it could not be used due to issues with validity. No known further studies Assessment were conducted and therefore this cannot be assessed.

¹ Therefore, any spelling or grammatical issues were in the original version. Exceptionally, for cleaner display, KWN has rounded all Euros to the nearest Euro.

² Ministry of Justice, [Annual Report on the Implementation of the National Strategy on Protection against Domestic Violence and Violence against Women 2022-2026](#).

2	Indicator: Index on security		Every 0.737 in one woman	Every 0.85 in one woman	Every 1 in 1 woman	The level of feeling secure among women increases significantly, through all actions taken to protect them from any form of violence		NA: Data unavailable to assess.		
3	Indicator: Number of cases of domestic violence that end in victim's death		13 cases of murder in family relationship in 2020	Decreased by 50%	Decreased by 100%	Successfully implemented actions within this strategy will enable a change of mentality and will avoid leading to fatalities of cases of domestic violence against women		0.5: Three cases of murder, which marks a decrease by 50%, albeit not 100%.		
I.1 Specific Objective: Changing behaviours, attitudes, roles and gender stereotypes that justify violence.										
1	Indicator: Number of cases of domestic violence denounced/ reported by a third party		It will be determined by a study in 2022	Increased by 5%	Increased by 20%	Awareness of domestic violence and violence against women is continuously improved through integrated cross-sectoral actions, which leads to an increase of denounced cases or reported by third parties, as provided by applicable law.		0.5: Using proxy of cases reported to KP, as the institution receiving the most reports, 2,764 cases were reported in 2022. A 5% increase would be 138 additional cases (2,902). In 2024, 2,959 cases were reported, marking such an increase. ¹ The 20% increase has yet to be achieved.		
2	Indicator: Percentage of women and girls older than 15 years of age that are subjected to domestic violence from different persons including partner in the previous 12 months, divided based on age and residence (SGD indicator 5.2.2)		It will be determined in 2022	Decreased by 10%	Decreased by 20%	Better institutional response and more professional services with impact an increase of community trust in law enforcement institutions, the number of denunciations on the cases of women and girls who have been sexually abused and who will seek protection from this form of violence which will cause a decrease in the percentage of women and girls aged 15 and over who are subjected to sexual violence.		NA: As stated, data unavailable.		
No.	Action	Dead-line	Budget			Source of funding	Leading and supporting institution	Output	Reference documents	
			2022	2023	2024					
I.1.1	Conduct an analysis to understand general perception on violence	2022	20,000	X	X	Kosovo Budget Donors	Moj/ Coordinator's Office	Report with findings and recommendations		I: With the British Embassy, a nationwide survey was conducted.

I.1.2	Promoting positive role models of “Agents of change in the community”, who challenge gender stereotypes and show zero tolerance to violence Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities.	2022-2024 (On-going)	9,000	9,000	9,000	Budget of the Government of Kosovo Donors additional budget ²	MoJ / Coordinator's Office, AGE, all ministries and development partners, human rights institutions, NGO	Video messages and posters of loved ones for the public that serve as positive role models and encouragement not to accept and tolerate domestic violence and violence against women	Istanbul Convention (Chapter III, Articles 7, 12, 12/5 and 13 Chapter IV, Articles 18 and 19, Chapter V, Article 42)	I: Kosovo undertook initiatives against gender-based violence, including “WOMEN” forum theatre, the 16 Days campaign, distribution of awareness materials, community engagement activities, and OSCE-supported training on trafficking prevention, among others.
I.1.3	Information sessions and mobilization of community leaders as partners and collaborators in actions against domestic violence and violence against women	2022-2026 (On-going)	6,000	6,000	6,000	Budget of the Government of Kosovo Donors	MoJ / Coordinator's Office, religious communities AGE, all ministries and development partners, human rights institutions, NGO, international institutions	More community leaders informed on the importance of their attitude against domestic violence and violence against women. A memorandum of cooperation signed between the leaders of religious and other communities and the Office of the National [Coordinator	Istanbul Convention (Chapter III, Articles 12 and 13)	I: MJ met with the Islamic Community's Women's Department to advance cooperation and is planning awareness sessions to strengthen the role of faith communities in preventing domestic violence.
I.1.4	Monthly awareness activities on domestic violence and violence against women with a particular focus on vulnerable groups of women and girls.	2022-2026 (every month)	3100	3100	3100	Budget of the Government of Kosovo Donors	MoJ / Coordinator's Office, AGE, all ministries and development partners, human rights institutions, NGO, international institutions	At least 12 awareness-raising activities carried out each year. More women and girls from vulnerable groups informed of domestic violence and violence against women	Istanbul Convention (Chapter III, Articles 12 and 13)	0.5: MJ held four meetings with vulnerable groups of women and girls in Dragash, Prizren, Peja, Fushe Kosovo, Gjakova, Kamenica, and with Ukrainian refugee women. Discussions focused on domestic violence and early marriages. In December 2023, the Government established an Inter-Institutional Group to prevent early marriages in the Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian communities. Several other actors implemented awareness campaigns, though

										it is unclear whether these activities were monthly.
I.1.5	Ongoing awareness campaigns/activities by the Kosovo Police	2022-2024	5,274	5,274	5,274	Budget of the Government of Kosovo	KP Responsible local institutions, NGO	At least three awareness-raising activities carried out each year	Istanbul Convention (Chapter III, Articles 12 and 13)	I: In 2024, 47 lectures on domestic violence reached 1,783 students. KP organised awareness campaigns on 8 March and during the 16 Days campaign, producing video messages, distributing 2,400 leaflets and 500 posters, and spreading messages through media and social networks to encourage reporting and prevention.
I.1.6	Education and promotion of positive models of boys and men as “Agents of change in the community”, who challenge gender stereotypes and show zero tolerance to domestic violence and violence against women	2022-2024 (On-going)	11,200	11,200	11,200	Budget of the Government of Kosovo Donors	MoJ/ Coordinator's Office, AGE, all ministries and development partners, human rights institutions	Video messages and posters of persons loved by the public that serve as positive role models and encouragement not to accept and tolerate domestic violence and violence against women. More men and boys allies of women and girls in the fight against domestic violence and violence against women. Reducing justifying attitudes and tolerance for domestic violence and violence against women “in the name of honor”	Istanbul Convention (Chapter III, Articles 7, 12, 12/5 and 13, Chapter IV, Articles 18 and 19, Chapter V, Article 42)	I: As part of efforts to address domestic violence, four video messages were produced and promoted, focusing on online violence, reporting, sexual harassment, and the launch of the “Afër Teje” mobile application.
I.1.7	Annual campaign of 16 Days of Activism against gender-based violence and domestic violence	2022-2024	19,716	19,716	19,716	Budget of the Government of Kosovo Donors	MoJ/ Coordinator's Office, AGE, all ministries and development partners, human	1 awareness campaign coordinated between institutions, partners and NGOs, with 16-	Istanbul Convention (Chapter III, Articles 12 and 13)	I: Global “16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence” Campaign, organised by MJ with 70+ activities with the slogan “Today and Every Other Day”, indicating that every day

	(25 November – 10 December)	(once annually)					rights institutions, NGOs	day duration, once annually. Coordination of messages and activities to maximise impact.		efforts continue to address gender-based violence. It included a digital campaign with the UK Government to raise awareness, especially among witnesses of gender-based violence, improving knowledge and encouraging reporting. Activities took place in schools, institutions, cultural centres, and NGOs, engaging women, girls, youth, students, Roma women, women soldiers, and women in art, culture, and sport alongside local and international NGOs.
I.1.8	Piloting of premarital counselling programs /courses, which provide mandatory information on applicable legislation on family protection from violence marital and property rights, etc.	2024	X	X	1,650	Budget of the Government	Municipality / Civil Registry Offices, MoJ/ Office of the National Coordinator, AGI human rights institutions, NGOs	The young men and women who decide to start a family are informed about the Law on Family Protection and the various forms of domestic violence and violence against women	Istanbul Convention (Chapters III and IV)	0.5: Activities preventing early marriage in 16 municipalities. Data suggest a need to expand activities and participation to achieve goals. Not explicitly about family counselling and information unavailable to measure foreseen output.
I.1.9	Assessment of effectiveness of piloted premarital counselling programs/courses	2024-2025	X	X	3,650	Budget of the Government of Kosovo Donors	Municipality / Civil Registry Offices, MoJ/ Office of the National Coordinator, AGI human rights institutions, NGOs	Report prepared on the assessment of the effectiveness of such programs/centers with relevant findings and recommendations. Guidelines developed for the extension of these programs/ courses throughout the country, based on this assessment.	Istanbul Convention (Chapters III and IV)	0: Not implemented.
I.1.1	Evaluation of the counselling program for positive parenting at the health	2022-2024	X	X	X	Budget of the Government of Kosovo	MoH/ counselling or consultants for mothers and children,	Report on evaluation.	Istanbul Convention (Chapters III and IV)	0.5: The implementation report states that this was conducted, but the information relies on findings submitted by various institutions rather than on an independent,

	service centers for women and the family, or at the centers for social work.					Donors	MFLT/ CSW, MoJ / Office of the National Coordinator, AGE, municipalities, human rights institutions, NGO international institutions			holistic evaluation, including of the quality of services. Institutions rather than on an independent, holistic evaluation, including of the quality of services.
I.I.I.I	Evaluation of the effectiveness of the positive parenting counselling program at women's and family health service centers, as well as at centers for social work, and preparation of a guideline for its dissemination across Kosovo..	2022-2024	X	X	X	Budget of the Government of Kosovo Donors	MoH/ counselling or consultants for mothers and children, MFLT/CSW, MoJ/Office of the National Coordinator, AGE, municipalities, human rights institutions, NGO, international	Report on evaluation.	Istanbul Convention (Chapters III and IV)	0.5: In the Home Visit Program, pregnant women, mothers, and fathers are counselled on positive parenting. Staff are trained in the "Good Parenting" module. In 2023, 234 professionals were trained (24 doctors, 137 nurses, 15 educators, 33 social workers). Grandparents present during visits also receive advice.
I.I.I.I	Awareness-raising campaign for parents to prevent early marriages	2022-Q4 2024	2,400	2,400	2,400	No need to calculate additional costs ³	MEST, MED, CSW, NGO	2 campaigns carried out annually	Kosovo Program for Gender Equality 2020 - 2024 (activity II.I.14)	I: 24 roundtables organised with municipal education directors, parents, teachers, school principals, psychologists, and pedagogues to present the Child Protection Policy, including prevention of early marriages. In total, 600 participants attended (284 women, 316 men).
Total Budget for Specific Objective I.I:			82,540	62,540	67,840					
Of which capital:			0	0	0					
Of which current:			82,540	62,540	67,840					

I.2	Specific Objective: Undertaking educational measures at all levels to prevent violence									
I	Indicator: Number of improved subject programs focusing on domestic violence and violence against women, disaggregated by level of educational institution and type of curriculum.		0 (Guidelines are being prepared, sessions will be developed later)		60 sessions in 30 municipalities	16 sessions in the other 8 municipalities	The staff of pre-university education institutions trained and trained to identify violence as well as well informed not only on how to refer such identified cases, but also to intervene effectively in prevention as a whole			NA: As stated, data unavailable to assess progress. Also, the indicator is not well-aligned with the targets.
No.	Action	Dead-line	Budget			Source of funding	Leading and supporting institution	Output	Reference documents	Implementation 2022-2024
			2022	2023	2024					
I.2.1	Comprehensive research on aspects of preventing domestic violence through pre-university and university education	2022	20,000	X	X	Budget of the Government of Kosovo MESTI	MESTI, partner institutions	Report with recommendations	Core pre-university education curricula/ subject programs University curricula/ syllabus Istanbul Convention (Chapter III Articles 12, 13, 14 and 15)	I: A comprehensive study on preventing domestic violence through pre-university and university education was conducted by the Pedagogical Institute and MESTI.
I.2.2	Information sessions on violence with officials of municipal directorates of education, school principals, school psychologists/ psychologists and academic units	2022 – 2024	2,900	2,900	2,900	Budget of the Government of Kosovo MESTI	MEST, MED schools, Academic units University Center for Human Rights, other partners	More officials of municipal education directorates, school principals, school psychologists/ psychologists informed about domestic violence	Istanbul Convention (Chapter III Articles 12, 13, 14 and 15)	I: Through 24 sessions in 20 municipalities, school directors, municipal education officials, psychologists, and pedagogues were trained on child protection, including prevention of domestic violence, peer violence, and identifying abuse. In total 52 officials (24 women, 28 men), 24 school directors, and 43 psychologists participated.
I.2.3	Addressing and monitoring the implementation of	2023-2024	X	3,300	3,300	Budget of the Govern-	MESTI	Curricula and additional materials that affect the	Pre-university and university	O.5: Based on research recommendations, the first draft of a teachers' manual on preventing domestic violence

	the recommendations arising from the comprehensive research					ment of Kosovo MESTI		prevention of domestic violence and violence against women	education policies	and identifying warning signs was developed, supported by the Council of Europe.
I.2.4	Preparation of a guide for the staff of pre-university education institutions regarding the identification signs of predispositions of domestic violence of children in schools, in order to prevent and refer to the responsible instances.	2022-2023	2,500	2,500	X	Budget of the Government of Kosovo MESTI	MESTI	Prepared guide in accordance with international standards and best practices	Istanbul Convention (Chapter III Articles 12, 13, 14 and 15)	0.5: A manual for teachers and school staff on identifying signs of domestic violence, based on the national strategy and related research is being finalised and will be published in the first quarter of 2025.
I.2.5	Preparation and development of a training program for quality coordinators and school psychologists prevention, identification, treatment and referral of incidents of sexual harassment at school, as well as domestic violence and violence against women, in the responsible instances	2022-2024	3,500	3,500	3,500	Budget of the Government of Kosovo MESTI	MEST Partners	2 sessions for participants from 10 municipalities per year/total of 30 municipalities for 3 years More quality coordinators informed and ready to prevent and refer incidents of violence to the responsible instances	Istanbul Convention (Chapter III Articles 12, 13, 14 and 15)	0.5: In 2023, seven regional information sessions were held with quality coordinators in Prishtina, Ferizaj, Gjiilan, Prizren, and Mitrovica to support the month-long campaign against violence, focusing on prevention and improved reporting.
I.2.6	Hiring a psychologist in every pre-university education institution at the national level	2022-2026	10,000	X	X	Budget of the Government of Kosovo	MESTI	All schools at the national level equipped with psychologists employed every year and trained	Legislation on Education Istanbul Convention (Chapter III Article 14)	0: Each municipality received a budget from MEST to hire one psychologist per school over the next three years. Notably, the responsibility lies with the municipalities.

I.2.7	Drafting and disseminating an information leaflet on the role of the education sector in the implementation of the Istanbul Convention	October 2022	11,750	X	X	Budget of the Government of Kosovo Donors	MESTI, OSCE, Council of Europe	Newsletter finalized and distributed to all educational institutions in Kosovo. A new publication detailing the requirements of Article 14 of the Istanbul Convention will be ready by 2022, with the support of CoE	Istanbul Convention (Article 14) Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo	I: A booklet on the IC was prepared and about 200 copies were distributed in four municipalities and during sessions with education staff across 24 municipalities, alongside child protection policies and modules.
I.2.8	Information sessions with Parents' (Mothers' and Fathers') and Pupils' and Students' Councils on the equality between girls and boys and consequences of domestic violence	2026	X	X	X	Budget of the Government of Kosovo	MESTI, Pre-University Education Institutions	Regularly organized information sessions on an annual basis. More parents (mothers and fathers) as well as more students informed about the equality between girls and boys and consequences of domestic violence	Istanbul Convention (Chapter III Articles 12, 13, 14)	I: In 2024, MESTI held 24 sessions with Parent Councils across 24 municipalities, informing 72 participants (29 women and 43 men).
I.2.9	Peer education of girls and boys on prevention and identification of sexual harassment in schools and to maintain critical attitude towards the negative and sexist portrayal of the image of women and girls in different areas of life	2022-2026	1,650	1,650	1,650	Budget of the Government of Kosovo	MEST, Pre-University Education Institutions	Girls 'and boys' education programs on prevention and identification of sexual harassment in schools and to combat the negative and sexist portrayal of women and girls, organized on an annual basis	Istanbul Convention (Chapter III Articles 12, 13, 14)	0.5: During the "16 Days of Activism" campaign, informative sessions were held with students in six municipalities, addressing school harassment, sexist portrayals of women and girls, and reporting mechanisms.
	Total budget for the Specific Objective I.2:		52,300	13,850	11,350					
	<i>Of which capital:</i>		0	0	0					

	<i>Of which current:</i>		52,300	13,850	11,350					
I.3.	Enhancing cooperation between government, media and the private sector to promote measures to prevent and combat violence									
1	Number of media institutions and private businesses joining central and local state institutions in actions against domestic violence and violence against women	0		Increased by 20%	Increased by 50%	Cooperation between government, media and private businesses has been strengthened and is accompanied by positive results in actions against domestic violence and violence against women. Preparation of self-regulatory means (protocols, guidelines, standards) to prevent discrimination, violence, sexual harassment and workplace harassment in media, institutions and private businesses, is done with the encouragement and support of the state.			NA: No data available. The official monitoring of the NSPGBV lists as a risk the “lack of genuine cooperation between the Government, the media, civil society and private businesses” and calls for “genuine cooperation” going forward. Notably, the baseline perhaps should have been phrased as “under this Strategy” as prior efforts have existed.	
2	Percentage of victims of physical or sexual harassment, by gender, age, disability status and place of occurrence, in the previous 12 months (SDG Indicator 11.7.2)	It will be determined in 2022		Decreased by 10%	Decreased by 20%	As a result of the improved institutional performance and capacities of professionals, as well as due to the increase of trust in law enforcement institutions, the number of denunciations on cases of physical or sexual harassment in various settings, including in the world, will increase. Therefore the percentage of victims of physical or sexual harassment will fall.			NA: As stated, data unavailable to assess progress.	
No.	Action	Dead-line	Budget			Source of funding	Leading and supporting institution	Output	Reference documents	
			2022	2023	2024					
I.3.1	Encourage the media to set guidelines and self-regulatory standards to increase respect for women's dignity, in order to help build positive gender roles and prevent violence against women	2022-2023	2,655	2,655	X	Budget of the Government of Kosovo	Media, Audiovisual Media Authority, MoJ / Office of the National Coordinator, AGE, NGO	The media are encouraged and supported to set and applies self-regulatory guidelines and standards that avoid discrimination and violence against women	Istanbul Convention (Chapter III Article 17)	I: Independent Media Commission (IMC) has encouraged media to fulfil their legal obligations through public meetings, conferences, open letters, and written requests.
I.3.2	Education of professionals and media professionals to deal	2022-2024	1,650	1,650	1,650	Budget of the Govern-	Media, Audiovisual Media Authority, Faculty	More men and women professionals of visual and print	Istanbul Convention (Chapter III	0.5: While some activities have been organised, the indicator needs a clear target in numbers to assess achievement.

	more responsibly and professionally with issues of domestic violence and violence against women					ment of Kosovo	of Journalism, Union of Journalists, MD / ZK AGE, NGO	media, who treat responsibly and pay due attention to domestic violence and violence against women	Articles 15, 17)	
I.3.3	Increased number of women media professionals (journalists, executives, analysts, etc.) as well as training them to access prepare and manage media information through technology.	2022-2026	1,650	1,650	1,650	Budget of the Government of Kosovo	Audiovisual Media Authority, Faculty of Journalism, Union of Journalists, MoJ / Office of the National Coordinator, AGE, NGO	More women professionals in the media field Women in the media trained to use technology in media information management	Istanbul Convention (Chapter III Articles 15, 17)	0.5: Some trainings have been held by other actors, but progress cannot be assessed without clear targets. Also, this provision cannot be enforced by the regulator but only by the media themselves. Under Article 3 of the Law on the IMC, the Commission regulates and oversees broadcasters' activities but has no authority over the internal organization of media outlets.
I.3.4	Urging to use non-sexist language and avoiding advertisements, or audiovisual materials written with sexist content and in favour of violent and discriminatory attitudes, in public and private media	2022-2026	3,000	3,000	3,000	Budget of the Government of Kosovo	Audiovisual Media Authority, Faculty of Journalism, Union of Journalists, MoJ / Office of the National Coordinator, AGE, NGO	TV shows, spots, advertisements and articles in public and private media use non-sexist, non-discriminatory and co-tolerant language against violence against women and domestic violence	Istanbul Convention (Chapter III Articles 15, 17)	0.5: IMC fined Klan Kosova €30,000 over offensive language in Big Brother VIP Kosova 3. However, several media still use sexist, discriminatory, and intolerant language.
I.3.5	Preparation and implementation of clear policies and functional grievance mechanisms that prohibit discriminatory, sexist content, or that support domestic violence and harmful practices in the audiovisual and print media	2022-2026	3,250	3,250	3,250	Budget of the Government of Kosovo	Audiovisual Media Authority, Faculty of Journalism, Union of Journalists, MoJ / Office of the National Coordinator, AGE, NGO	Clear and appeal mechanism and limited policies applicable in public and private media	Istanbul Convention (Chapter III Articles 15, 17)	0.5: The IMC addresses this issue through its Code of Ethics for Audio-visual Media Services and monitors media content for compliance, including sexist or discriminatory material. In 2022, no complaints were received regarding violent, discriminatory, or sexist content, though any individual or organisation may file a complaint through the IMC's standard legal procedure.

I.3.6	Cooperation with media and information technology companies to avoid violence, sexual harassment or harassment of women and girls through social media and internet	2022-2026	420	420	420	Budget of the Government of Kosovo	Media, ICT Companies, Union of Journalists, MoJ / Office of the National Coordinator, AGE, NGO	Girls and women are safer and protected from forms of violence they may endure while using the internet and social media	Istanbul Convention (Chapter III Articles 15, 17, Chapters IV and V)	0.5: Two sessions on online safety and technology-facilitated violence against girls were held with 48 high school students in Ferizaj and Obiliq (December 2024)
I.3.7	Design and maintenance of various websites, to provide information for children and parents on the safe use of the Internet, social media and electronic communications	2022-2026	1800	1800	1800	Budget of the Government of Kosovo	Media, ICT companies, Pre-University Education Institutions MoJ / Office of the National Coordinator, AGE, NGO	Children and parents more capable to navigate the internet safely. Certain sites required for use by children and parents, equipped with security codes and control filters. A manual to avoid violence and safe browsing the internet and social media, prepared and available to parents and children	Istanbul Convention (Chapter III Articles 15, 17, Chapters IV and V)	0: Not implemented. IMC has no legal competence to regulate the Internet, only audiovisual media.
I.3.8	Encourage the media to report properly and analyze domestic violence and violence against women by reacting professionally and respecting the principles of ethics and protection of personal data	2023	X	1,650.00	1,650.00	Budget of the Government of Kosovo	Media, Audiovisual Media Authority, Union of Journalists, MoJ / Office of the National Coordinator, AGE, NGO	A manual on reporting and analysis of domestic violence and violence against women by audiovisual and print media, prepared and is made available to professionals for implementation. Media actively and positively involved in reporting and raising	Istanbul Convention (Chapter III Articles 15, 17.)	0: In 2024, IMC adopted a Regulation on complaint procedures, ensuring faster processing within the 45-day legal deadline, with complaints either dismissed, approved, or rejected. However, no manual exists yet.

								awareness on domestic violence and violence against women		
I.3.9	Investigation with priority of possible cases of attacks on journalists, domestic violence and hate crime, hate speech and discrimination, as well as cases that violate the rights of persons of the LGBTI community with priority	2022-2026	5,550	5,550	5,550	Budget of the Government of Kosovo	KJC KPC JA Kosovo Police NGOs Media institutions	Instances of attacks on journalists, domestic violence and hate crime, hate speech and discrimination, as well as cases of violations of the rights of LGBTI persons have been urgently investigated and reviewed. Number of decisions issued by the courts.	Istanbul Convention (Chapter III, Articles 15 and 17)	0.5: Family violence (adults, 2024): 4,083 cases, 3,146 resolved, 937 pending. Outcomes: indictments, dismissals, compulsory measures, 1,915 guilty verdicts. Family violence (minors, 2024): 169 cases, 125 resolved, 44 pending. Outcomes: non-initiation, dismissals, disciplinary/diversion measures, 25 educational measures by court. Crimes against journalists (adults): 26 cases, 17 resolved; mostly indictments, 4 guilty verdicts. Other criminal cases (adults, PPN): 4 cases, 1 resolved. Other criminal cases (adults, PPP): 6 cases, ongoing. Hate crimes (Art. 147): 39 cases, 5 resolved, 34 pending; 4 indictments, 2 dismissals, 1 guilty verdict.
I.3.1	Engagement of private sector in preventing violence by ensuring the health and well-being of all working women and men / employees in this sector as well as creating working conditions that prevent sexual harassment, persecution and violence.	2022-2026	2,600	2,600	2,600	Budget of the Government of Kosovo Donors	Ministry of Economy and Finance Private sector MoJ / Office of the National Coordinator AGE, NGO	Private companies create protocols or guidelines to prevent violence, sexual harassment and persecution in the workplace	Istanbul Convention (Chapter III Article 17) ILO Convention C190 "Elimination of violence and harassment in the world of work"	0: Not implemented.
I.3.1	Encourage and support the private sector to avoid the use of sexist, violent and harmful	2022-2026	2,400	2,400	2,400	Budget of the Government of Kosovo	Ministry of Economy and Finance Private sector	Private business engaged in developing ethical standards in designing	Istanbul Convention (Chapter III Article 17)	0: Not implemented

	content in the design of goods and services as well as in their marketing					Donors	MoJ / Office of the National Coordinator AGE, NGO	and marketing of goods and services		
I.3.1	Establishing encouraging incentives as well as monitoring and evaluating initiatives ⁴ undertaken by the private sector to prevent and combat domestic violence and violence against women	2022-2026	3,650	3,650	3,650	Budget of the Government of Kosovo Donors	Ministry of Economy and Finance Private sector MoJ / Office of the National Coordinator AGE, NGO	Private sector is encouraged to take action against domestic violence and violence against women. There is a monitoring and evaluation mechanism of these initiatives, based on which the level of stimulation of private businesses in this regard is determined.	Istanbul Convention (Chapter III Article 17)	0: Not implemented.
	Total budget for the Specific Objective I.3:		28,625	30,275	27,620					
	<i>Of which capital:</i>		0	0	0					
	<i>Of which current:</i>		28,625	30,275	27,620					
I.4	Specific Objective: Developing and implementing programs for the psycho-social treatment of violent perpetrators									
I	Number of perpetrators of domestic violence and violence against women treated in psycho-social programs		To be determined	Increased by 30%	Increased by 60%	The perpetrators of domestic violence are treated in the psycho-social aspect in accordance with international requirements and standards			NA: The pilot program has started, but its outcomes have not yet been assessed. A baseline is required to measure progress.	
No.	Action	Dead-line	Budget			Source of funding	Leading and supporting institution	Output	Reference documents	
			2022	2023	2024					
I.4.1	Develop an analysis to understand the causes of domestic violence	2022	10,000,000	X	X	Budget of the Government of Kosovo	MoJ MoH	Punitive measures to change violent behaviour for perpetrators addicted	Istanbul Convention (Chapter II, Article 11,	0.5: Analysis conducted but no specific data.

	with a focus on the perpetrator							to alcohol and intoxicants, provided and defined in the amendments to the Law on Protection from Domestic Violence	Chapter III, Article 16)	
I.4.2	Assessment to understand measures imposed for perpetrator addicted to alcohol and intoxicants	2022	0	X	X	Budget of the Government of Kosovo Donors	MoJ MH	Situation assessment and recommendation on punitive measures to change violent behavior for perpetrators addicted to alcohol and intoxicants	Istanbul Convention (Chapter II, Article 11, Chapter III, Article 16)	0.5: The NSPGBV reported that this was in process, but no further data was provided.
I.4.3	Identify the needs for treatment of perpetrators of domestic violence and violence against women, and assessment of programs for this purpose	2022	1,650	X	X	Budget of the Government of Kosovo	MFLT, MoJ MoH, Forensics Institute	Evaluation report prepared with identified needs and suggestions for types of programs that may be set up	Istanbul Convention (Chapter II, Article 11, Chapter III, Article 16)	I: MJ with CoE support completed a needs assessment on training perpetrators of domestic and gender-based violence and the capacities of the Correctional and Probation Service.
I.4.4	Developme of a package of modules for psycho-social treatment programs of perpetrators	2022-2023	3,000	3,000	X	Budget of the Government of Kosovo	MFLT, MoJ MoH	Source package with modules of psycho-social treatment programs prepared	Istanbul Convention (Chapter II, Article 11, Chapter III, Article 16)	0.5: Two guidelines for treating perpetrators of violence and training healthcare professionals have been applied in institutions where perpetrators are treated by court decision.
I.4.5	Training of staff of psycho-social treatment programs for perpetrators of domestic violence and violence against women,	2022-2023	600	600	X	Budget of the Government of Kosovo Donors	MoJ, MoH Independent institutions NGO	Personnel of psycho-social treatment programs of perpetrators of violence, trained and qualified	Istanbul Convention (Chapter II, Article 11, Chapter III, Article 16)	I: In 2024, the Kosovo Forensic Psychiatry Institute treated 266 domestic violence perpetrators (242 men, 24 women), with some under compulsory psychiatric care. It also handled 178 inpatient/outpatient cases, 61 detention cases, and provided psychological expertise for 21 victims.

	and perpetrators of sexual crimes									
I.4.6	Implementation of psycho-social treatment programs for perpetrators of domestic violence and violence against women, as well as programs for perpetrators of sexual crimes	2024	10,000	10,000	10,000	Budget of the Government of Kosovo Donors	MFLT, MoJ MoH	Treatment programs for perpetrators of domestic violence and violence against women, functional and with professionals trained for this purpose	Istanbul Convention (Chapter II, Article 11, Chapter III, Article 16)	0.5: Two guidelines for treating domestic violence perpetrators and training health professionals have been implemented in institutions, based on court decisions. They are not yet fully functional everywhere.
I.4.7	Treatment and re-socialization of violent perpetrators while serving a sentence	2022-2026	0	0	0	Budget of the Government of Kosovo Donors	MoH MoJ Partners	Perpetrators of domestic violence and violence against women are educated to use non-violent behaviour and are treated while serving their sentences	Istanbul Convention (Chapter II, Article 11, Chapter III, Article 16)	NA: No specific data available on implementation.
I.4.8	Measuring the frequency of recidivism cases by sharing data on whether recidivist perpetrators were treated while serving their sentences, or subsequently in psycho-social programs designed for them	2022-2026	0	0	0	Budget of the Government of Kosovo Donors	MoJ	Frequency of recidivist cases of domestic violence and violence against women decreases, as a result of psycho-social treatment of perpetrators during and after sentencing	Istanbul Convention (Chapter II, Article 11, Chapter III, Article 16)	NA: No data available.
I.4.9	Engagement and capacity strengthening of the Kosovo Probation Service to monitor the	2022	10,000	3,000	3,000	Budget of the Government of Kosovo	MoJ	Kosovo Probation Service engaged to monitor the rehabilitation	Istanbul Convention (Chapter II, Article 11,	I: All cases currently in the rehabilitation program are monitored by KPS.

	rehabilitation of violent perpetrators					Donors		of perpetrators of violence	Chapter III, Article 16)	
I.4.1	Creating a database of perpetrators who have received psycho-social services/treatment during and after serving their sentences, as well as perpetrators of sexual crimes and their ongoing updating.	2022-2024	11,000	1650	1650	Budget of the Government of Kosovo Donors	MFLT, MoJ Partners, MoH, UP	Collected, disaggregated and regularly updated data	Istanbul Convention (Chapter II, Article 11, Chapter III, Article 16)	0.5: In 2024, steps were taken to strengthen data collection and management on domestic violence offenders. Probation and Correctional Service staff gained access to the database and were tasked with updating case records. The database module was translated into Serbian for three sectors, and a draft regulation on its operation, aligned with the new LGBV was to be finalised in 2025. However, data is still not collected regularly.
I.4.1	Preparation of the annual report on the rehabilitation of perpetrators of violence	2022-2026	0	0	0	Budget of the Government of Kosovo Donors	MFLT, MoJ, Partners	Regularly published annual reports	Istanbul Convention (Chapter II, Article 11, Chapter III, Article 16)	I: MJ, with CoE support, completed monitoring and evaluation of the pilot National Program for Treating Perpetrators of Violence Against Women at Dubrava Prison (Feb–July 2024), involving 20 offenders. The program was monitored using a tailored plan and the European Network for the Work with Perpetrators of Domestic Violence (WWPEN) Outcome Monitoring System, resulting in two reports on its implementation.
I.4.1	Increasing the number of beds, preparation of the specific protocol and training of professionals in the Forensic	2022-2026	15,000	15,000	15,000	Budget of the Government of Kosovo	Forensic Psychiatric Institution	Specific protocols and programs for the treatment of perpetrators addicted to substances, or with mental health problems, approved. Professionals trained to treat people addicted to substances or with mental health problems, as well		0.5: The Kosovo Forensic Psychiatry Institute still faces challenges in expanding capacity and increasing bed numbers. Special protocols and programs for treating perpetrators with substance abuse or mental health issues are approved, along with two guidelines for treating domestic violence perpetrators across three levels of healthcare.

								as perpetrators of violence, in accordance with their age group. Reduced cases of sending defendants into custody due to lack of beds.		
	Total budget for the Specific Objective 1.4:		61,250	33,250	29,650					
	Of which capital:		22,000	15,000	15,000					
	Of which current:		39,250	25,250	14,650					
	Total budget for the Strategic Objective I		224,715	46,915	36,460					
	Of which capital:		22,000	15,000	15,000					
	Of which current:		202,715	31,915	21,460					
No.	Strategic and specific objectives, indicators and actions	Basic value	Provisional Objective [2024]	Last year's goal [2026]	Outcome					
II.	Strategic Objective: Advancing and harmonizing public policies with international standards.					In total, 14 activities under Strategic Objective I were implemented, with five (36%) fully completed, seven (50%) partially implemented, and two (14%) with no available data. Significant progress was made in advancing legislative reforms, with the Assembly of Kosovo adopting new laws and MJ initiating amendments to the CCK, including provisions on cybercrime, as part of the 2025 Legislative Program. KWN contributed analysis to inform these reforms, while the MJ also drafted amendments to the CPC and LGBV. Administrative improvements continued, though the Instruction on court fees exempting victims of domestic violence has yet to enter into force. A working group established under Law No. 08/L-185 advanced the harmonisation of SOPs and the drafting of administrative instructions, finalising three of five acts, including the Regulation on the National Coordinator's Office, the Inter-Ministerial Coordinating Group, and the National Emergency Hotline. The Regulation on Local Coordinating Mechanisms is pending approval, with SOP harmonisation expected by mid-2025.				
I	Indicator: Number of indictments with adult and	13 offenses with adult perpetrators	Reduced by 50%	Reduced by 90%	Reported cases of all forms of domestic violence and violence against women are investigated and punished in accordance with the law, updated and harmonized to				NA: No data is available.	

	juvenile perpetrators, unsolved for each year	and 43 offenses with juvenile perpetrators, for 2020			international standards. Institutions coordinate actions and correctly implement harmonized public policies, as a result of which the number of unsolved criminal reports with adult and juvenile perpetrators is reduced, each year.	
2	Indicator: Percentage of women abused by intimate partner	4% in 2021	Decreased by 10%	Decreased by 20%	As a result of the improved institutional performance and capacities of professionals, as well as due to the increase of trust in law enforcement institutions, the number of denunciations on cases of women raped by their intimate partner will increase, which will result in a decrease in the percentage. of women raped by intimate partner.	NA: As stated, data was unavailable to enable assessment.
3	Indicator: Percentage of women and girls aged 15 and over exposed to physical, sexual or psychological violence by a current or former intimate partner in the previous 12 months, disaggregated by the form of violence and by age (SGD indicator 5.2.1)	To be determined in 2022	Decreased by 10%	Decreased by 20%	As a result of the improved institutional performance and capacities of professionals, as well as due to the increase of trust in law enforcement institutions, the number of denunciations on cases of women raped by their intimate partner will increase, enabling the measurement of forms of violence. suffered by them and the age since this violence began to be exercised and reducing the overall percentage.	NA
II.1 Specific Objective: Improving the legal framework to handle all cases of domestic violence and violence against women.						
I	Indicator: Number of legal acts and policies for protection against violence, improved and approved, disaggregated by type of legal act or policy	The current Legal framework lacks the gender meaning of violence against women, especially outside the sphere of domestic violence	50% compliance with the Istanbul Convention	100% compliance with the Istanbul Convention.	Approval of legal acts and policies for protection from domestic violence and violence against women, a priority of the Government of Kosovo. The gender meaning of violence against women, especially outside the sphere of domestic violence, is clearly reflected and in accordance with the Istanbul Convention, in all adopted legal acts and policies.	0.5: The Legal framework partially but not thoroughly addresses the IC meaning of gender-based violence (see the Legal Analysis).

No.	Action	Dead-line	Budget			Source of funding	Leading and supporting institution	(Output	Reference documents	
			2022	2023	2024					
II.I.1	Amendment/ supplementation of the Law on Protection from Domestic Violence and harmonization with the Istanbul Convention and implementation of an ex-post evaluation of the Law on Protection from Domestic Violence	2022	6000	X	X	Budget of the Government of Kosovo	Assembly/Moj/NC, OPM AGE	Law on Protection against Domestic Violence, amended, harmonized with the Istanbul Convention, adopted and evaluated	Istanbul Convention (Chapter V)	I: Law adopted by the Assembly of Kosovo.
II.I.2	Full analysis of the civil and criminal legal framework on violence against women, domestic violence, as well as identification of measures to be taken to harmonize this legal framework with international instruments, including CEDAW and the Convention Istanbul	2022	10,000	X	X	Budget of the Government of Kosovo Donors	Moj AGE Specialized NGOs	Analysis report with findings and recommendations, as well as suggestions for interventions in the civil and criminal legal framework, completed	CEDAW, Istanbul Convention, etc.	I: In 2024, the MJ began amending the Criminal Code, including provisions on cybercrime. The draft is part of the 2025 Legislative Program. KWN also provided an analysis to inform these legal changes. ⁵
II.I.3	Preparation and submission of draft acts for amending/ supplementing the legal framework, in accordance with the findings from the above analysis	2023	X	1,750	X	Budget of the Government of Kosovo	Moj	Draft acts prepared in accordance with the findings from the analysis, consulted and sent to the Assembly for review and adoption	CEDAW, Istanbul Convention, etc.	I: As part of updating the legal framework, MJ drafted amendments: to the Criminal Code, CPC, and LGBV.

II.I.4	Amending / supplementing of legislation to provide for exemption from court fees for the expertise needed in dealing with cases of domestic violence (psychologist, sign language interpreter, court fees, etc)	2022-2024	0	0	0	Budget of the Government of Kosovo	KJC	Victims of violence released from court fees, expressed in the amendments to be adopted in the Law on Protection from Domestic Violence	Istanbul Convention	0.5: The Administrative Instruction on court fees has not yet entered into force, but it exempts victims of domestic violence from all payments.
II.I.5	Review and enrich Standard Operating Procedures on integrated services	2023	0	3,000	0	Government, Municipality and Donors	MoJ, Municipality and Donors, AGE	Creating access for the provision of new, effective, accessible and integrated interconnected services	Istanbul Convention, (Chapter IV)	0.5: In 2024, under Law No. 08/L-185, MJ established a working group to draft Administrative Instructions and harmonize SOPs on integrated services. Of five acts, three have been finalized, while two will be completed in 2025. Adopted: Regulation on the National Coordinator's Office and Inter-ministerial Coordinating Group. Finalised (pending approval): Regulation on Local Coordinating Mechanisms. Finalised: Administrative Instruction on the National Emergency Hotline for victims of domestic and gender-based violence. The harmonization of SOPs is expected to be completed by mid-2025.
II.I.6	Drafting of the National Protocol on treatment of cases of sexual violence	2022	5000	X	X	Budget of the Government of Kosovo Donors	MoJ, KP, KPC, KJC, IFM, CSW, VPAO, MoH, specialized NGOs	Guidelines/protocols for the proper functioning of Coordination Mechanisms at the local level, prepared and approved in accordance with international	Istanbul Convention	I: Implemented.

								standards		
II.I.7	Effective investigation and prompt police response to calls for help, proper management of dangerous situations and investigation of all allegations on violence against women and domestic violence, highlighting aggravating circumstances.	On-going	0	0	0	Budget of the Government of Kosovo	Police	Cases of domestic violence and violence against women are treated responsibly and with priority, without ignoring any aggravating circumstances.	Istanbul Convention (Chapter V, Article 46 and Chapter VI)	0.5: In 2024, 2,959 domestic violence cases were investigated. Aggravating factors considered included: prior criminal record, weapon possession (legal/illegal), repeat offenses, use of objects causing harm, substance or alcohol abuse, and committing the crime in the presence of children. However, not all were responsibly handled as this report illustrates.
II.I.8	Allotment of physical space for interviewing the victim and perpetrator of violence.	2022-2024	45,000	45,000	45,000	Budget of the Government of Kosovo	Court, Police, Prosecution Office	The victim's right to confidentiality and privacy is ensured at all stages of case management, including in civil and criminal proceedings.	Istanbul Convention (Article 56)	0.5: 31 of 41 police stations have functional victim-friendly rooms. In 2024, four rooms were renovated, while stations without them designated separate offices for domestic violence victims.
II.I.9	Providing communication technology for interviewing the victim and perpetrator of violence.	2022-2023	25,000	15,000	X	Budget of the Government of Kosovo Donors	Court, Police, Prosecution Office	The victim's right to confidentiality and privacy is ensured at all stages of case management, including in civil and criminal proceedings.	Istanbul Convention (Article 56)	0.5: Most courts are equipped with IT and technology to support trials, and since the strategy's adoption, no obstacles have been reported due to lack of technology.
II.I.10	Invitation of victim advocates when the party addresses the court	2022-2026				Budget of the Government of Kosovo	Police, Court VAAO	Victim's advocate present even in cases when the request for a protective order is initiated by the party	Istanbul Convention (Article 56)	0.5: In 2,959 cases, VAs were notified by phone and through daily electronic reports, with none appearing at police stations. Based on assessments, KP issued 189 Protection Orders and monitored 692.
II.I.11	Monitoring the implementation of the legal provision for	2022		X	X	Budget of the Govern-	KJC	Harsher sentences for recidivist perpetrators of domestic violence	Istanbul Convention	0: There is no data from the responsible institution.

	harsher sentences of recidivist perpetrators of violence					ment of Kosovo		and violence against women, in accordance with applicable law		
II.1.1.2	Establishment of a digital monitoring system for adequate implementation of protective orders in accordance with the Law on Electronic Supervision and monitoring of the effectivity of this system	2023 / 2024		15,000	10,000	Budget of the Government of Kosovo	MIA Police	Digital system set up Adequately conducted monitoring		0: KP established an electronic system for managing POs, with monitoring devices installed in all eight Regional Operational Centres and the Central Communication Centre. However, implementation had not started, as no court decision for electronic monitoring had been issued.
II.1.1.3	Review of the regulation on the internal work of victims' advocates (KPC)	2023	X	1,650	X	Budget of the Government of Kosovo	KPC	Reviewed regulation		0.5: In 2024, KPC approved the Regulation on the Mandate, Structure, Functioning, and Organization of the Office for Victim Protection and Assistance.
II.1.1.4	Reporting on the application of adhesion procedures in cases of domestic violence and violence against women	2022-2026				Budget of the Government of Kosovo Donors	KJC	Reporting done regularly and upon request with detailed data		0.5: Courts give special attention to domestic violence cases, including their handling and the application of adhesion procedures.
II.1.1.5	Implementation of the peer review on criminal prosecution and judgement of domestic violence cases	2022	2,400	X	X	Budget of the Government of Kosovo Donors	KCK, KPC	Reports with recommendations finalized		0: No data from the responsible institution.
Total Budget for Specific Objective II.1:			93,400	81,400	55,000					
<i>Of which capital:</i>			70,000	75,000	55,000					
<i>Of which current:</i>			23,400	6,400	0					
II.2 Specific Objective: Strengthening capacities for handling cases of domestic violence and violence against women.										

1	Indicator: Number of training curricula for men and women professional prepared and developed		4	8	12	Improved and unified curricula to strengthen the capacity of men and women professionals to handle deal cases of violence effectively			I: 24 training modules have been developed by the Professional Council for Social Services. ⁶	
2	Indicator: Number of men and women professionals trained to deal with cases of violence on an annual basis		Data will be collected for 2020-2021	Increased by 10%	Increased by 20%	Men and women professionals of all institutions responsible for dealing with cases of domestic violence and violence against women, trained and skilled			NA: More than 500. However, a clear baseline is needed to assess progress.	
No.	Action	Dead-line	Budget			Source of funding	Leading and supporting institution	Output	Reference documents	
			2022	2023	2024					
II.2.1	Development of annual training curricula for capacity building of judges/prosecutors, professional associates, victim advocates and other relevant actors for the fair and effective implementation of legislation focusing on the punishment of perpetrators of domestic violence as well as persons violating protective orders.	December 2022, 2023, 2024	1,800	1,800	1,800	Budget of the Government of Kosovo	Academy of Justice (AJ) Kosovo Judicial Council (KJC) Kosovo Prosecutorial Council (KPC)	Training curriculum designed and approved ⁷	Strategy for the functional review of the rule of law 2021 Strategic Plan of the Prosecutorial System 2019-2021 Training program of the Academy of Law	I: The 2024 training curriculum was drafted and approved on November 22, 2022, and the 2023 annual training program was published on November 25, 2022.
II.2.2	Providing training for judges and prosecutors on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence and gender-based crimes - the criminal aspect.	On-going	1,650	1,650	1,650	Budget of the Government of Kosovo	Academy of Justice (AJ) Kosovo Judicial Council (KJC) Kosovo Prosecutorial Council (KPC)	5 specialized training sessions held during the year	A training calendar Criminal Code of the Republic of Kosovo, Instruction of the Supreme Court no. 113/20120	I: For the criminal aspects of domestic violence, five specialised trainings were delivered for judges and prosecutors, covering topics such as effective criminal justice response, gender-based violence, prosecution of crimes against women, links between animal abuse and domestic violence, EU gender equality law, and handling femicide cases.

									regarding the legal qualification and handling domestic violence cases according to the KPC and Istanbul Convention	
II.2.3	Providing training for judges on the civil aspect, respectively court procedures for deciding on requests for protection orders, and concerning the division of joint property after divorce, alimony, financial maintenance of the spouse, etc.	On-going	1,650	1,650	1,650	Budget of the Government of Kosovo	Academy of Justice (AJ) Kosovo Judicial Council (KJC) Kosovo Prosecutorial Council (KPC)	2 trainings held during the year		0.5: For the civil aspect, a training was conducted for judges on the topic: The Meaning of Domestic Violence in Civil Law: Protective Orders and Family Law Considerations
II.2.4	Capacity building of judges and prosecutors in handling cases when perpetrators with mental disorders are involved in criminal-civil proceedings.	2022-2023	1,680	1,680	X	Budget of the Government of Kosovo	Academy of Justice KJC KPC	Number of training sessions held At least 60 judges and prosecutors trained Equal and non-discriminatory treatment of persons with mental disorders, in order to respect their physical integrity and human dignity		0.5: A training was conducted on the procedure for perpetrators with mental disorders.
II.2.5	Capacity building of judges and prosecutors in handling cases of gender-based violence,	2022-2024	1,650	1,650	1,650	Budget of the Government of Kosovo	Academy Justice of (AJ) Kosovo KJC, KPC	2 joint trainings held during the year	Istanbul Convention	1: Two additional sessions were conducted on criminal offenses against sexual integrity involving child victims and on EU gender equality law.

	domestic violence and sexual harassment with a victim-centred approach and explanation of trauma and trauma impact on the victim.									
II.2.6	Review of training curricula and modules in the training department of the Kosovo Police and their updating according to the requirements of the national and international legal framework (including the gender perspective) on professional capacity building of cadets and police officers	2022	2,320	X	X	Budget of the Government of Kosovo Donor	Kosovo Academy for Public Safety (KAPS), Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA)/Kosovo Police (KP), AGE	Reviewed curriculum for building the professional capacity of cadets and police officers Updated and unified training modules for strengthening the capacities of police officers focusing on domestic violence and violence against women	Istanbul Convention	I: KAPS revised the Professional Training for Kosovo Customs and submitted the updated version to the National Qualifications Authority in October. The Gender Equality Course was also updated as part of the annual training review.
II.2.7	Training of newly appointed men and women police officers on handling with cases of domestic violence and violence against women	On-going	1650	1650	1650	Budget of the Government of Kosovo	Kosovo Police AGE	More informed men and women police officers specialised in handling domestic violence cases and violence against women	Istanbul Convention (Article 15)	I: Four one-day workshops with AGE trained 87 police officers on the Istanbul Convention and domestic violence law amendments.
II.2.8	Training of police officers on the definition of gender-based violence and sexual harassment under the laws of Kosovo, as well as on how to handle these cases in accordance with the	2022	1650	X	X	Budget of the Government of Kosovo	Kosovo Academy for Public Safety Kosovo Police AGE	Number of trainings held. Number of police officers who have participated in trainings Update training courses in accordance with the amendments to the Criminal Code related to gender-		I: KAPS held 12 trainings on sexual harassment, gender equality, and domestic violence, including a session on victims' psychological needs. Participants: 1,104 (829 men, 275 women).

	Criminal Code of Kosovo							based violence and sexual harassment, with a focus on the victim.		
II.2.9	Joint training sessions on addressing and combating domestic violence and violence against women, for police officers, prosecutors/judges on duty, Victims' Advocate, CSW, MoH, VA, Forensic Psychiatry, in the criminal and civil aspect and trauma impact on the victim	On-going	10,000	10,000	10,000	Budget of the Government of Kosovo	AJ, AGE, KP, KPC, KJC, CSW, MH, VAPO, Forensic Psychiatry, General Council of Social and Family Services (GCSFS)	Men and women employees informed and specialized in handling cases of domestic violence and violence against women, through a coordinated multi-sectoral approach, including access to information about the trauma, prioritizing the restoration of the victim's sense of safety, choice and control.	Istanbul Convention (Article 15)	0.5: Training included lawyers, legal aid officers, police, and child protection staff. Five specialised sessions focused on family law, domestic violence, IC implementation, and femicide case handling. Nevertheless, KWN research suggests that all responsible employees are not fully specialised and further training is still needed.
II.2.10	Training of VAAO staff	2022-2024	1,250	1,250	1,250	Budget of the Government of Kosovo	VAAO-OCSP [Office of State Prosecutor], Academy of Justice, OPDAT, OSCE, GIZ	VAPO [VAAO] staff profiled and trained	Istanbul Convention (Article 15)	I: Participation in OSCE and municipal workshops across Kosovo on domestic and gender-based violence, victim compensation and access to justice, including: 8 women, 16 men staff.
II.2.11	Training sessions on policies against domestic violence and violence against women in the sector of protection and social welfare	2022	1250	X	X	Budget of the Government of Kosovo	MFLT CSW	Men and women professionals in the sector of protection and social welfare, trained on issues of violence against women and domestic violence	Istanbul Convention (Article 15)	I: MJ organised 24 accredited training modules for social and family service providers, including support for victims of sexual crimes and domestic violence. Since 2023, 82 trainers (76 women, 14 men) have been certified.

II.2.1 2	Curriculum preparation and development of trainings for health workers for identification, treatment and referral of cases of domestic violence and violence against women	2022	1050	X	X	Budget of the Government of Kosovo	MoH	Men and women professionals in the health sector trained in issues of violence against women and domestic violence	Istanbul Convention (Article 15)	I: MH conducted accredited trainings on domestic violence, gender-based violence, and violence against women across Kosovo. A total of 94 participants were certified, including doctors, nurses, police officers, mental health professionals, and VAs. Training covered identification, treatment, referral, and documentation of victims.
II.2.1 3	Curriculum development and training of experts who are licensed for psychological expertise, for the elements of psychological violence in accordance with the legislation applicable to this form of violence	2022-2024	1050	1050	1050	Budget of the Government of Kosovo Donors	MFLT	Experts trained to implement applicable legislation	Instruction of the Supreme Court of Kosovo – Regarding the legal qualification and handling cases of domestic violence according to the Criminal Code of the Republic of Kosovo with number GJ.A.S uA 113/2020 dated 12.06.2020	0: The 2024 Law on Social and Family Services dissolved the General Council, postponing professional trainings until 2025.
II.2.1 4	Joint trainings between judges, prosecutors and police officers to stop the issuance of acquittal verdict of despite the criminal offense	2022-2024	1,250	1,250	1,250	Budget of the Government of Kosovo Donors	KJC KPC KP	Duly implementation of legislation and standards for protection from domestic violence	Istanbul Convention	0.5: The Justice Academy prepared a training plan for courts, including domestic violence and gender-based crimes. Training held and planned for 2025 cover: child rights in divorce and domestic violence cases, victim compensation, prosecution and sentencing in domestic violence cases, and judicial practice in family cases. Regular

										domestic violence trainings have been conducted so far.
II.2.1 5	Holding regular lectures, on an annual basis, by judges and prosecutors / prosecutors to raise awareness of professionals and young professionals regarding the handling of cases of domestic violence and violence against women	2022-2026	600	600	600	Budget of the Government of Kosovo	KJC and KPC	Lectures held annually Awareness of more professionals raised	Istanbul Convention (Chapter III, Articles 12, 13, 14 and 15)	0.5: There is a training plan for newly appointed judges, which includes domestic violence sessions as part of the initial program, and ongoing training for permanent judges also covers domestic violence.
II.2.1 6	Upgrading and development of community policing and intelligence-led policing related to domestic violence and violence against women and training of Police Cybercrime Investigation Unit on online violence against women	2024-2026	X	X	35,000	Budget of the Government of Kosovo Donors	MIA/KP	Community policing developed in support of the identification and prevention of domestic violence cases. The Police Cybercrime Investigation Unit trained to prosecute and prevent online violence against women and girls	Istanbul Convention	I: KP, under the Integrated Intelligence-Led and Community Policing Strategy, has planned various activities related to domestic violence, including awareness campaigns and capacity-building for personnel.
	Total budget for the Specific Objective II.2:		30,500	24,230	57,550					
	<i>Of which capital:</i>		0	0	0					
	<i>Of which current:</i>		30,500	24,230	57,550					
	Total budget for the Strategic Objective II:		123,900	105,630	112,550					
	<i>Of which capital:</i>		70,000	75,000	55,000					
	<i>Of which current:</i>		53,900	30,630	57,550					

No.	Strategic and specific objectives, indicators and actions	Basic value	Provisional Objective [2024]	Last year's goal [2026]	Output	
III.	Strategic Objective: Institutional strengthening for protection and treatment of victims.	In total, 11 activities were assessed: four (36%) fully implemented, six (55%) partially implemented, and one (9%) with no comprehensive analysis available. The Division for Access to Justice and Protection from Violence was established as the Secretariat of the National Coordinator (NC), with staff recruited mid-2024 and its regulation approved in December 2024, marking a major institutional milestone. Progress continued through alignment with the Ministry of Justice's internal regulations on Secretariat staffing and ongoing capacity-building efforts. A monitoring tool was introduced to enable evidence-based decisions and facilitate reporting by NGOs and international partners. Although some activities remain in progress and are difficult to evaluate due to vague formulation, consistent monitoring and reporting actions were taken under the National Strategy. The NC, legally defined under Law 08/L-185, ensures political accountability for addressing gender-based violence; however, combining implementation with monitoring functions raises accountability concerns noted by the Istanbul Convention. Additional outputs include a confidential report on institutional accountability in domestic and gender-based violence cases, accompanied by official recommendations to improve institutional performance.				
1	Indicator: Percentage of institutions members of central and local coordination mechanisms that are empowered and properly implement joint responsibilities in accordance with the Istanbul Convention.	It will be determined in 2022	Increased by 50%	Increased by 80%	Central and local coordinating mechanisms established, functional and efficient in the implementation of actions for the prevention and protection of domestic violence and violence against women. The member institutions of these mechanisms properly implement the joint responsibilities in accordance with the Istanbul Convention.	NA: No comprehensive analysis exists.
2	Indicator: Percentage of cases of violence reported to responsible institutions (SDG Indicator 16.3.1)	It will be determined in 2022	Increased by 10%	Increased by 20%		NA
3	Indicator: Number of domestic violence cases with a final court decision	It will be determined in 2022	Increased by 50%	Increased by 100%		0.5: In 2022, courts addressed 991 cases of domestic violence, while in 2024 this number increased to 1,176 cases, marking an 18.7% rise. This indicates an increase in cases being processed by the judiciary, which may reflect an increase in reporting and improved institutional response mechanisms. As the baseline is unclear, it is difficult to assess achievement of the target, but based on publicly available data, it seems partially albeit not fully achieved.

III. I	Specific Objective: Strengthening the inter-institutional coordination group at the central level									
I	Indicator: Adequate budget line for strengthening the Office of the National Coordinator against Domestic Violence, for effective coordination and monitoring of actions against violence.		It will be determined in 2022		Increased by 15%		Increased by 30%		Kosovo Government designates an appropriate budget for the strengthening of the Office of the National Coordinator against Domestic Violence, to enable effective coordination and monitoring of actions against domestic violence and violence against women	0: As the legal basis was not yet established in 2024, the budget was not yet allocated.
No.	Action	Dead-line	Budget			Source of funding	Leading and supporting institution	Output	Reference documents	
			2022	2023	2024					
III. I.	Establishing and making functional the support mechanism of the Office of the National Coordinator for Protection against Domestic Violence	2022	10,780	5,000	5,000	Budget of Kosovo Government Donors	MoJ/NC	Office established staff recruited in appropriate numbers for the purposes and responsibilities of this office	Istanbul Convention	I: The Division for Access to Justice and Protection from Violence was established as the Secretariat of the NC. Staff were recruited mid-2024, and the office's regulation was approved in December 2024.
III. I.	Training and strengthening of the capacities of the staff of the Office of the National Coordinator for Protection against Domestic Violence in terms of monitoring and evaluation of the entire legislation and policies against domestic violence and violence against women	2022	3,000	X	X	Budget of Kosovo Government Donors	MoJ/NC	Staff trained and capable of application of monitoring and evaluation processes	Istanbul Convention	0.5: This activity aligns with the MJ's internal regulations, specifying staff numbers for the Secretariat. Following its establishment, training and capacity-building continue.
III. I.	Establishing a system for monitoring and evaluating the	2022	X	X	1,015	Budget of Kosovo Government	MoJ/NC	A monitoring-evaluation system established an	Istanbul Convention	0.5: The monitoring tool now supports evidence-based decisions and allows NGOs

	implementation of the National Strategy on Protection against Domestic Violence and Violence against Women 2022-2026					Donors		d functional. Tools to be used by the central and local level to monitor the implementation of activities and objectives of the strategy prepared and agreed		and international partners to report on Action Plan activities.
III.1.	Capacity building for the stakeholder responsible for the implementation of the objectives and activities of this strategy, at the central and local level	2024	3,000	X	X	Budget of Kosovo Government Donors	[National Coordinator's Office] ONC-Moj, MFLT, Municipalities	Capacities of implementing partners enhanced and strengthened	Istanbul Convention	0.5: In progress. Notably the action and output are rather vague, contributing to difficulties in assessing progress.
III.1.	Periodic monitoring of the implementation of the National Strategy on Protection from Domestic Violence and Violence against Women and its action plan, and publication of relevant results	On-going (on annual basis)	X	X	X	Budget of Kosovo Government Donors	MoJ/NC Institutions responsible for implementation at the central and local level NGOs International organizations acting in this area	Standard format of the monitoring report prepared by the Office of the National Coordinator. Data on Strategy implementation progress collected every six months from all responsible actors. Monitoring report with detailed data according to strategic and specific objectives, published annually on the MoJ website	Istanbul Convention	I: Continuous actions taken to monitor and report on the implementation of the National Strategy.
III.1.	Defining under the Law on Protection against Domestic Violence the	2022	5000	X	X	Budget of Kosovo Government	MoJ/NC	Profiling and training of the staff of the Office of the National	Istanbul Convention	I: Under Law 08/L-185, the Minister of Justice serves as the NC, defining duties and ensuring political accountability for

	responsibility of the Office of the National Coordinator as a state body that supervises the coordination, monitors the implementation of the Istanbul Convention, as well as reporting on the implementation of this Convention in GREVIO					Donors		Coordinator on recognition, coordination and monitoring of the implementation of the Istanbul Convention Reports prepared and submitted according to GREVIO requirements		addressing gender-based violence. However, it remains somewhat problematic that the NC is responsible for both implementation and monitoring and evaluation, which the IC suggests should be roles under separate bodies to ensure accountability.
III.1.	Capacity building of the state body and other institutions responsible for reporting to GREVIO	2022	1,350	X	X	Budget of Kosovo Government Donors	MoJ/NC AGE	Professionals trained to prepare reports in GREVIO according to standards	Istanbul Convention	0.5: In progress.
III.1.	Developing a report on the response of the responsible institutions in cases of domestic violence and assessing the possibilities for inspection regarding the assistance provided by the responsible institutions and the quality of inter-institutional cooperation	2022-2026	0	0	0	Budget of Kosovo Government Donors	MoJ/NC	Assistance provided by responsible institutions and the quality of inter-institutional cooperation, appreciated. Report on the response by the responsible institutions in cases of domestic violence and violence against women prepared and published		0.5: A report on institutional accountability in domestic and gender-based violence cases was prepared, and inspections conducted. Due to confidentiality, reports were not published, but official documents were sent to relevant institutions.
III.1.	Publication of best practices identified during the operation of responsible institutions	Every year				Budget of Kosovo Government Donors	MoJ/NC	A report on best practices in the functioning of the responsible institutions has been published.		0.5: Following the preparation and publication of the 2023 annual report, recommendations and good practices were issued to improve the functioning of the responsible institutions

III.1. 10	Developing co-operation relations with authorities of other countries to strengthen international cooperation in the fight against domestic violence		3000	3000	3000	Budget of Kosovo Government Donors	MoJ/NC	International cooperation in the fight against domestic violence and violence against women, with authorities of other countries, established and strengthened		0.5: The NSPVAW reported progress and several efforts are ongoing, such as the 16 Days conference that brought together actors across the region, but no data was publicly available to evaluate progress. International cooperation could also refer to KP, the judiciary, and cross-border collaboration, but information was not available regarding this.
Total budget for Specific Objective III.1:			23,130	8,000	9,015					
<i>Of which capital:</i>			0	0	0					
<i>Of which current:</i>			23,130	8,000	9,015					
III.2	Specific Objective: Establishing and strengthening coordination mechanisms at the local level for the management of cases of violence.									
I	Indicator: Number of Local Coordination Mechanisms for managing cases of domestic violence and violence against women, set up throughout the country	20	28	38	Local Coordination Mechanisms for managing cases of domestic violence and violence against women, established and functional in all municipalities of Kosovo				I: Reportedly 36 exist, but their capacities differ.	
No.	Action	Deadline	Budget			Source of funding	Leading and supporting institution	Output	Reference documents	
			2022	2023	2024					
III.2.	Extending the multi-sectoral coordinated approach to addressing domestic violence and violence against women throughout Kosovo, through the establishment of Coordination Mechanisms in municipalities where they are not available	2022-2024	855	855	855	Budget of Kosovo Government Municipalities Donors	MoJ/NC, Municipalities, All institutions responsible for being members of CM at the local level, NGO	Coordination Mechanisms established throughout Kosovo, in line with the multi-sectoral coordinated approach of the Istanbul Convention	Istanbul Convention (Article 7)	0.5: In cooperation with the OSCE Mission, the CM in Prizren was reestablished. In total, 36 CMs reportedly operated nationwide in 2024. However, the quality and extent of their work differed and were not fully in line with the IC.

III.2.	Development of guidelines/protocols for functioning and operating standards on coordination mechanisms at the local level, in accordance with the coordinated multi-sectoral approach.	2022	1,650	X	X	Budget of Kosovo Government Municipalities Donors	MoJ/NC, MLGA AGE	Guidelines/protocols for the proper functioning of Coordination Mechanisms at the local level prepared and approved in accordance with international standards	Istanbul Convention (Article 7)	0.5: MJ finalised the LC regulation towards an organised and effective local response to gender-based violence, defining roles and responsibilities of local actors. However, KWN finds the political engagement (e.g., of Mayors) concerning, particularly related to case management which requires training, expertise and confidentiality; the roles are not sufficiently clear.
III.2.	Providing sufficient financial resources for the functioning of the Coordination Mechanisms at the local level	2022-2026	2200	2200	2200	Budget of Kosovo Government Municipalities Donors	MFLT, MoJ/NC, Municipalities, All institutions responsible for being members of CM at the local level, NGOs	Full-time Coordinators of Coordination Mechanisms to be appointed in each municipality. Coverage of coordination costs and activities of Coordination Mechanisms from the annual budget of the municipality	Istanbul Convention	0: While data are unavailable, KWN's monitoring suggests that full-time coordinators have not been appointed and budgets have not been allocated.
III.2.	Capacity building/ strengthening of members of the Local Level Coordination Mechanisms through a periodic training session on dealing with cases of domestic violence and violence against women, through a coordinated multi-sectoral approach	2022-2024	0	0	0	Budget of Kosovo Government Municipalities Donors	MoJ/NC AGE Municipalities Police MLSW/CSW MoH VAAO NGO	Periodic joint training sessions of the members of the Coordination Mechanisms developed on an annual basis Professionals from all areas trained to adequately and responsibly deal with cases of domestic violence and	Istanbul Convention (Article 7)	0: Following adoption of the Regulation on LCs, a training plan was to be developed in cooperation with AGE.

								violence against women		
III.2.	Supporting the municipalities in breaking down this strategy into local strategies, including the drafting of work plans of the Coordination Mechanisms.	2022	915	X	X	Budget of Kosovo Government Municipalities Donors	MoJ/NC AGE Municipalities NGO	Strategy 2022-2026 broken down into applicable and easily monitored local action plans		0.5: MJ met with KWN to support municipalities in localizing the NSPVAW, including drafting local action plans, which are under legal review before finalisation. In cooperation with OSCE and UN Women, initiatives were launched to help municipalities draft MCMDV's work plans. Plans were finalised for Shtime, Malisheva, Gjakova, Kamenica, and Vushtrri, and other municipalities' plans will be reviewed to align with the NSPVAW.
	Total budget for Specific Objective III.2:		5,620	3,055	3,055					
	<i>Of which capital:</i>		0	0	0					
	<i>Of which current:</i>		5,620	3,055	3,055					
III.3	Specific Objective: Advancing inter-institutional coordination and cooperation between the central and local level and Civil Society Organizations.									
I	Indicator: Permanent budget line designated to NGOs working closely on the implementation of the Istanbul Convention, in terms of prevention, protection (excluding shelters), reintegration and empowerment of victims/survivors	It will be determined in 2022	Increased by 10%	Increased by 30%	Specialized Civil Society Organizations working closely to implement the Istanbul Convention on Prevention, Protection and Reintegration, backed by financial resources				I: KWN monitoring suggests that the budget allocation was €1 million in 2022 (baseline), €1.5 million in 2023, and the same in 2024. €0.5 million represents a 50% increase in budget, exceeding the target of a 30% increase compared to the baseline.	
No.	Action	Deadline	Budget			Source of funding	Leading and supporting institution	Output	Reference documents	
			2022	2023	2024					

III.3.	Organizing regular consultation round tables with NGOs and civil society during the preparation and updating of the legal framework and policies on protection against domestic violence and violence against women	2022-2026	1,025	1,025	1,025	Budget of Kosovo Government Municipalities Donors	MoJ/NC, AGE Municipalities Institutions responsible for drafting the legal framework related to domestic violence and violence against women	Legal and policy framework for domestic violence and violence against women, updated in consultation and cooperation with specialized NGOs and civil society	Istanbul Convention	0.5: While the government reported that this has been implemented, NGO expertise in providing comments on laws was not always taken.
III.3.	Support from central and local state bodies, as well as working together with civil society and NGOs, as esteemed partners in the implementation of the Istanbul Convention (<i>drafting joint implementation plans</i>)	2022-2026	1,025	1,025	1,025	Budget of Kosovo Government Municipalities Donors	MoJ/NC AGE Municipalities	Istanbul Convention recognized and understood to be properly implemented by NGOs and civil society	Istanbul Convention	0.5: The Government reported that this is in progress. As evidenced in this report, this is an ongoing activity that will continue throughout the implementation of the NSPVAW. Some NGOs have extensive knowledge about the IC while others require further knowledge for proper implementation.
III.3.	Strengthening the capacity of NGOs to properly report the implementation of activities on domestic violence and violence against women, in accordance with the requirements and standards of the Istanbul Convention	2022-2026	1050	1050	1050	Budget of Kosovo Government Municipalities Donors	MoJ/NC AGE Municipalities	Relevant NGO staff and civil society, well informed on adequate reporting according to Istanbul Convention standards	Istanbul Convention	I: MJ held a workshop on reporting and monitoring under the 2022–2026 Strategy, supported by the Council of Europe with 15 women participants.
III.3.	Adequate funding of NGOs working closely on the implementation of the Istanbul	2022-2026	0	0	0	Budget of Kosovo Government	MFLT MoJ/NC AGE Municipalities MCYS	NGOs operating under the Istanbul Convention, mainly in terms of prevention	Istanbul Convention	0.5: The Government reported, and this report illustrates, that this is in the process of being implemented. Notably, the

	Convention, in terms of prevention, protection and reintegration					Municipalities Donors		and those focusing on boys and men or rehabilitation services for perpetrators of violence, supported by financial and infra-structural resources		Strategy did not allocate any resources for this, which is problematic.
	Total budget for Specific Objective III.3:		3,100	3,100	3,100					
	<i>Of which capital:</i>		0	0	0					
	<i>Of which current:</i>		3,100	3,100	3,100					
III.4 Specific Objective: Researching, collecting and updating of inter-institutional data for case identification.										
1	Indicator: Database with administrative data for cases handled in a multi-sectoral manner coordinated, functional and regularly updated by professionals trained for this purpose.		Database 65% functional	Database 100% functional			Relevant specialists of institutions such as: Police, Victims' Advocates, Centers for Social Work, Prosecution, Courts and Shelters, trained to effectively maintain a functional database of cases handled. Administrative data for cases handled in a multi-sectoral coordinated manner, updated by all responsible institutions and in real-time			0.5: The database has been updated, but data is not regularly logged by all responsible institutions.
2	Indicator: Percentage of young men and women aged 18-29 who experienced sexual violence by age 18 (SDG Indicator 16.2.3)		To be determined in 2022	Decreased by 10%	Decreased by 20%		As a result of the increase of institutional professionalism, but also of the improvement of the way the data is collected and kept, it will be possible to identify an increasing number of cases of young women who have suffered sexual violence in their childhood, namely due to the growing belief that this form of violence should be denounced and that they too can be treated and helped to be empowered. As a final result, the percentage of young women who have experienced sexual violence will fall.			NA
No.	Action	Deadline	Budget			Source of funding	Leading and supporting institution	Output	Reference documents	
			2022	2023	2024					
III.4.	Preparation of a guide on the type of data (administrative and	2022	2,250	X	X	Budget of Kosovo Government	MoJ AGE KAS	Guide prepared with the	Istanbul Convention (Article 11)	0.5: Under Law 08/L-185, MJ finalised the Administrative Instruction for secure system use and reporting, ensuring victim

	through research) as well as the methodology of data collection and analysis, in accordance with the definitions and requirements of the Istanbul Convention					Donors		defined methodology ⁸ ⁷⁴		confidentiality, to take effect in 2025. The full Guide has not been prepared.
III.4.1	Strengthening the capacities of the responsible central and local institutions for the collection of administrative data in accordance with the methodology agreed upon above	2022	0	X	X	Budget of Kosovo Government Donors	MoJ AGE KAS Partners	Responsible officers for collecting administrative data on domestic violence and violence against women, trained and qualified	Istanbul Convention (Article 11)	0: Not implemented; this activity is linked to activity III.4.1.
III.4.1	Mobilizing and coordinating with stakeholders (such as Higher Education and Research Institutions, NGOs, field experts, independent institutions, etc.) to agree on the methodology of data collection and processing through researches	2022	0	X	X	Budget of Kosovo Government Donors	MoJ AGE Institute of Statistics Partners	Identified partners and collaborators, agreed on the methodology and application of international standards	Istanbul Convention (Article 11)	0: Not implemented as related to drafting the Administrative Instruction arising from the Law.
III.4.1	Conducting periodic national surveys on the phenomenon, size, profile of perpetrators and the perception of citizens of domestic violence and violence against women.	2023	X	2,400	X	Budget of Kosovo Government Donors	MoJ MFLT AGE Partners	A study report published, with detailed and disaggregated data	Istanbul Convention (Article 11)	0: Information is publicly available that this has occurred. Further, it seems this would be under the responsibility of KAS, though it is not listed as a responsible body.

III.4.	Strengthening the capacities of officers of responsible institutions integrated in the database against domestic violence, in identifying cases in the application during the recording process	2022	0	X	X	Budget of Kosovo Government Donors	MoJ/ONCPDW [NC] Responsible institutions	Officers/database entry officers, trained and qualified to perform their duties responsibly	Istanbul Convention (Article 11)	I: In total, 105 officials were trained in 2024, including 48 men and 57 women.
III.4.	Real-time recording/ updating of data by the six institutions integrated into the database against domestic violence	On-going	0	0	0	Budget of Kosovo Government Donors	MoJ, KP, KPC, KJC, CSW, VA and Shelters.	Complete database with updated real-time data	Istanbul Convention (Article 11)	I: In 2024, the domestic violence database added three new modules, linking nine institutions and the Civil Registration Agency to improve accuracy, efficiency, and real-time reporting.
III.4.	Generation of statistics and preparation of periodic statistical bulletins on the number of cases reported and handled in a multi-disciplinary manner	On-going	0	0	0	Budget of Kosovo Government Donors	MoJ/ONCPDW [NC]	Quarterly and annual reports with updated, prepared and published statistics	Istanbul Convention (Article 11)	I: MJ regularly prepared and published quarterly reports with processed statistics, available after each reporting period.
	Total budget for Specific Objective III.4:		2,250	2,400	0					
	<i>Of which capital:</i>		0	0	0					
	<i>Of which current:</i>		2,400	2,400	0					
III.5. Specific Objective: Improving access to justice for victims/survivors/survivors of violence										
1	Indicator: Number of victims/survivors/survivors of violence who receive free legal services	It will be determined in 2022	Increased by 40%	Increased by 70%			Access of victims/survivors of domestic violence and violence against women receiving free legal services improved			NA: No data publicly available. This would require data from public institutions, including LAOs, as well as NGOs providing these services.
2	Indicator: Number of women with access to justice	Every 1.83 in 4 women	Every 2.5 in 4 women	Every 4 in 4 women			Improved access to justice			NA: This could not be determined as KJC does not keep gender desegregated data.

No.	Action	Deadline	Budget			Source of funding	Leading and supporting institution	Output	Reference documents	
			2022	2023	2024					
III.5.	Informing victims/survivors/ survivors of domestic violence and violence against women of their rights and services where they can receive assistance, in a language they understand	2022-2026	4,500	4,500	4,500	Budget of Kosovo Government Donors	MoJ/ONCPDW [NC], AGE, Police Judiciary, Municipalities Members of Coordination Mechanisms CSW, NGO	Information on the rights and protection of victims of domestic violence and violence against women prepared in clear and understandable language and disseminated to the community	Istanbul Convention (Article 19)	I: In 2024, MJ and the Free Legal Aid Agency [FLA] furthered awareness on free legal aid, held mobile clinics, distributed materials, and collaborated with civil society and international partners to improve access to justice for vulnerable groups. NGOs also contributed.
III.5.	Preparation and dissemination of information in official languages and appropriate for persons with special needs (Braille, etc.), on the legislation in force, the protection provided and relevant institutions where victim/survivors of domestic violence and violence against women	2022-2024	3,000	3,000	3,000	Budget of Kosovo Government Donors	MoJ/ Coordinator's Office, AGE, Kosovo Journalists Association MESTI, GEOs and CMs at the local level, human rights institutions, NGOs, International institutions	Awareness materials for the recognition of forms of domestic violence and violence against women as well as for the protection that exists, prepared and distributed every year in several languages and according to the Braille alphabet. Awareness information also disseminated through social media	Istanbul Convention (Chapter III, Articles 12, 13 and 17)	I: Over 200 awareness meetings were held; 4,000 brochures, 260 posters, and 1,600 leaflets were distributed in multiple languages, Braille, and digital format.
III.5.	Organizing a week for victims' rights, with a special focus on victims of various forms of criminal offenses of domestic violence and violence against	On-going (every year)	5000	5000	5000	Budget of Kosovo Government Donors	VAMO [VAAO], OCSP	More information and awareness on the rights of victims/survivors of domestic violence and violence against women	Victims' Rights Week Istanbul Convention (Chapter IV, Articles 18, 19)	I: The VAAO joined the "16 Days of Activism" campaign, conducting school lectures, public events, regional presentations, and videos to raise awareness on victims' rights and its support services.

	women, as provided for in the Istanbul Convention ⁹²⁵							Preparation of relevant materials and (depending on the format) an information stand for women/victims will be prepared by CoE.		
III.5.	Information sessions with different groups of women, young women, girls, men, young people and boys, on gender roles and the existence of coordination mechanisms for protection from domestic violence and violence against women at the local level, as well as protection, treatment and access in justice through these mechanisms.	2022-2026				Budget of Kosovo Government Donors	Municipalities / GEOs, Member institutions of the Coordination Mechanisms NGOs	Information sessions held in all municipalities where it exists and where Coordination Mechanisms will be established. More different groups of women, young women, girls, men, young people and boys, informed about the protection, treatment of access to justice through these mechanisms.	Istanbul Convention (Chapter III, Articles 7, 12 and 13, Chapter IV, Articles 18, 19)	0.5: While information sessions were held, no data is publicly available from responsible institutions to specifically measure progress.
III.5.	Facilitating access to justice for citizens who do not have sufficient funds, especially for victims of gender-based violence, sexual violence, non-majority communities and displaced persons, as well as free legal aid support for persons	On-going	0	0	0	Budget of Kosovo Government Donors	The Agency for Free Legal Aid as well as specialized NGOs KJC KPC	Number of citizens who have received free services for access to justice, (including cases exposed to violence in court proceedings), disaggregated by ethnicity and gender of beneficiaries		I: In 2024, FLA opened 9 mobile offices and a mobile bus, serving 8,049 people (3,534 women, 4,515 men), including 806 non-majority community members, handling 214 domestic violence cases through 347 legal actions.

	exposed to violence in court proceedings									
III.5.	Ensuring sustainable funding and the presence of the Agency for Free Legal Aid in all municipalities, by increasing the number of legal aid officers trained on the provision of online legal aid, in its regional offices	2022-2023	2,000	2,000	X	Budget of Kosovo Government Donors	The Agency for Free Legal Aid as well as specialized NGOs, etc	The number of legal aid officers in the Agency's regional offices has increased		I: In 2024, LAO employed 38 staff (23 women) and held 53 online and in-person trainings aimed at enhancing knowledge, skills, and organisational approaches, ensuring legal service staff remain responsive to citizens' needs, in partnership with the Academy of Justice.
III.5.	Increasing cooperation between the Agency for Free Legal Aid and Non-Governmental Organizations that provide free legal aid	On-going	0	0	0	Budget of the Government of Kosovo	Agency for Free Legal Aid Regional offices for free legal aid NGOs that provide free legal aid	Memorandums of Understanding reached between the Agency for Free Legal Aid and Non-Governmental Organizations which provide free legal aid	Action Plan (2021-2023) for the implementation of the Program for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights (2021-2025), activity IV 3.3	I: Under MJ Regulation 05/2023, LAO partnered with seven NGOs, extending free legal aid nationwide to targeted groups.
III.5.	Informing the public and promoting through activities the Crime Victims Compensation Program ⁷⁷¹⁰	On-going	3.000	4.000		Budget of Kosovo Government	MoJ Crime Victim Compensation Commission	The right to compensation for crime victims has been promoted through awareness campaigns, debates or other forms of promotion.		0.5 Informative materials on victims' compensation rights were distributed in multiple languages across institutions and underserved municipalities. A meeting with the Pristina Probation Service guided officials on application procedures with seven domestic violence cases referred to the Compensation Commission. These rights can be further promoted.
III.5.	Awareness-raising of society through advocacy and awareness of access	On-going	2022 Q4	10,000		No additional costs are required. ¹¹	GE, Victim Advocates, SPO,	Campaigns implemented.	Kosovo Program for Gender	I: AGE with KP trained 106 regional investigators on gender-based violence laws and revised SOPs for victim protection.

	to justice focusing on property rights, gender-based violence, survivors of sexual violence of war and other rights arising under the relevant legislation					Ombudsperson Donors, civil society		Equality 2020 - 2024, activity III.1.6	During the “16 Days of Activism”, AGE trained Correctional Service staff, engaged Istog officials, and promoted the campaign with building illuminations and materials nationwide
	Total budget for Specific Objective III54:		30,700	21,700	15,700				
	<i>Of which capital:</i>		0	0	0				
	<i>Of which current:</i>		30,700	21,700	30,870				
	Total budget for Strategic Objective III:		64,800	38,255	3,870				
	<i>Of which capital:</i>		0	0	0				
	<i>Of which current:</i>		64,800	38,255	30,870				
No.	Strategic and specific objectives, indicators and actions	Basic value	Provisional Objective [2024]	Last year's goal [2026]	Outcome				
IV.	Strategic Objective: Sustainable rehabilitation and reintegration of victims					In total, 29 activities were planned. Five (17%) were fully implemented, 15 (52%) are ongoing, two (7%) were not implemented, and seven have no data. Achievements included funding for NGOs, appointment of specialised judges and coordinators, profiling reintegration service providers, and capacity-building. Challenges remained in planning, budgeting, support for specific groups, and sustainable services for child victims. Childcare subsidies reached 19 municipalities, and 20 of 26 municipalities developed three-year social housing plans, though gaps persist.			
I	Indicator: Permanent annual budget line determined according to an adequate gender analysis dedicated to the operation of specialized support service centers for all forms of violence.	Budget for shelters in 2020: 495,000 EUR	Increased by 5%	Increased by 10%	The operation of specialized support service centers for all forms of violence is supported by the necessary budget from the central and local government, despite the situations of humanitarian crises and natural disasters.				I: The budget has increased by 70.5%. Notably the baseline is incorrect.
2	Indicator: Number of women that enjoy property rights same to men	Every 0.732 in 1 woman	Every 0.85 in 1 woman	Every 1 in 1 woman	Improving the property rights of woman as guarantee for sustainable and long term empowerment				0.5: In 2020, only 18% of properties in Kosovo were registered in women’s names, while in 2024, this share increased to

									19.8%. This indicates an increase, but not full realisation, which is rather ambitious.	
IV.1	Specific Objective: Support and strengthening of the specialized support services for victims/survivors from all groups and child victims and witnesses of violence									
I	Indicator: Number of specialized services for survivors of violence expanded and strengthened, disaggregated by type of service, target group and characteristics of target groups		It will be determined in 2022	Increased by 10 %	Increased by 30%	Specialized support services for survivors/survivors of domestic violence and violence against women, established and functional, in accordance with the requirements/standards of the Istanbul Convention			0: KWN monitoring has shown that there was no expansion in specialized services. During this period focus was more on establishing secondary legislation and policies that will guide establishing new services.	
No.	Action	Deadline	Budget			Source of funding	Leading and supporting institution	Output	Reference documents	Implementation 2022-2024
			2022	2023	2024					
IV.1.1	Advocacy at the central and local levels to increase existing funding.	2022-2024	0	0	0	Kosovo budget and donors	MoJ, MFLT, MoH Municipalities	Budget growth and sustainable funding		I: In 2024, MJ allocated €1.5M for licensed NGOs in social services, running projects from April 2024 to May 2025. For 2025, €2.5M was allocated, with a public call in February for 12-month projects.
IV.1.2	Increasing human resources capacities, employment of psychologists and social workers in public institutions and NGOs in proportion to the number of inhabitants in each municipality	2022-2024	10,000	5,000	5,000	Kosovo budget and donors	MoJ, MFLT, MoH Municipalities	Satisfying the minimum professional and structural standards Employment of at least one social worker per 20 victims in each CSW. Specialized psycho-social counseling service tailored to the needs of special groups	Istanbul Convention, Law on Public Officials, LSFS, Law on Professions	0.0: Not implemented; no data provided by institutions, but budgets indicate the same number of staff.

IV.1.3	Functioning of the National Helpline for all forms of violence against women and domestic violence, available 24/7 in all official languages in Kosovo, in accordance with the requirements of the Istanbul Convention	2022-2026	0	0	0	Kosovo budget and donors	MoH MFLT MoJ/NCDF AGE	Functional and efficient Helpline, with nationwide service, available 24/7, dedicated to all forms of violence against women and domestic violence, with service in all official languages in Kosovo and meeting the standards of the Istanbul Convention	Istanbul Convention	0.5: MH operates a nationwide, multilingual helpline for all Kosovo citizens, available 08:00–16:00, five days a week. It serves the general public and is not limited to domestic violence or violence against women cases. VAs also have a helpline, but also serves various groups. A National Helpline has not yet been officially established and likely will require budget allocations.
IV.1.4	Enhancing the professional skills of the current staff and the new staff involved in reintegration and empowerment services, through workshops and training sessions, for dealing with cases of domestic violence and violence against women	2022-2024	1,200	1,200	1,200	Government, Municipality and donors	KIPA, ONC-MoJ, GCSFS, MoH Specialized NGOs Council of Europe	Validated module, professional capacity building List of staff who have attended specialized training sessions	Istanbul Convention (Article 15)	I: MJ developed 24 accredited training modules for social service providers, including support for victims of sexual crimes and domestic violence, with trainings continuing in 2025.
IV.1.5	Supporting shelters with continuous funding	2023-2026	320,000	320,000	320,000	Budget of Kosovo Government	Municipalities, Ministry of Justice, Agency for Administration of Sequestered or Confiscated Assets, State Prosecutor's	Shelters supported in infrastructural and financial terms	Istanbul Convention	I: In 2024, MJ/Social Services allocated €1.53M to 41 NGOs for psychosocial services, including €739K for 10 shelters supporting domestic violence victims. This exceeded the budget foreseen and progressed towards meeting needed expenditures.
IV.1.6	Provision of support and shelter services for special groups (boys and men victims of	Ongoing	120,000	120,000	120,000	Budget of Kosovo Government Donors	MFLT MoF Municipalities NGOs	Specialized sheltering service tailored to the needs of specific groups	Istanbul Convention	0.5: There is a shelter for boys but there are no services available for men victims of gender based violence, and LGBTI persons.

	domestic violence, LGBTI persons, etc.)									
IV.1.7	Financial support of services for victims of sexual assaults provided in public institutions or specialized NGOs	2022-2026	30,000	30,000	30,000	Budget of Kosovo Government Donors	MFLT MoF Municipalities	Specialized service for victims of sexual assaults tailored to the needs of specific groups	Istanbul Convention	0: No specialised services available.
IV.1.8	Financial support of services for child victims and witnesses of violence provided in public institutions or specialized NGOs	2022-2026	30,000	30,000	30,000	Budget of Kosovo Government Donors	MFLT MoF Municipalities	Specialized service for child victims and witnesses of violence, adapted to the needs of the targeted age group	Istanbul Convention	0: Data lacking but does not seem to have been implemented.
IV.1.9	Appointment in courts of coordinators and profiled judges, for the treatment of cases of domestic violence in the civil and criminal aspect	2022	14,000	X	X	Budget of Kosovo Government	KJC	Professionals of the judiciary profiled in dealing with cases of domestic violence and violence against women	Istanbul Convention (Article 15)	0.5: All courts have appointed coordinators, and, in some, judges have already been profiled. Profiling remains pending in others.
IV.1.10	Establishment of a unit for handling cases of domestic violence in prosecutor's offices where a large number of cases of domestic violence are reported	2022	0	X	X	Budget of Kosovo Government	KPC	Profiling of prosecutors and professionals in dealing with cases of domestic violence and violence against women	Istanbul Convention (Article 15)	0.5: Domestic violence coordinators and deputy coordinators have been appointed in the basic prosecutor's offices, but there is a need to increase the number of prosecutors.
IV.1.11	Establishment of a special directorate in the police at the central level and units from the regional and local level for dealing with cases of	2022	32,000	32,000	32,000	Budget of Kosovo Government	MIA	Police professionals profiled in dealing with cases of domestic violence and violence against women	Istanbul Convention (Article 15)	1: At the central level, a dedicated directorate on GBV has been established and is functional with 110 staff (53 women, 57 men), including 5 specialized professionals (2 women, 3 men). At the regional level, 8 units operate with 5 specialized professionals (2 women, 3 men). At the local level, 16 specialized professionals (9 women, 7 men) are

	domestic violence and violence against women									engaged, with a total of 91 staff (42 women, 49 men).
IV.1 .12	Purchasing vehicles for police directorate at the central level and regional levels	2022	210,000	200,000	0	Budget of Kosovo Government	MIA	Purchase of 7 vehicles	Istanbul Convention (Article 15)	I: Currently, all police stations and regional investigations are equipped with vehicles, while 1 vehicle was purchased during the reporting period.
IV.1 .13	Making functional the special directorate in the police at the central level and units from the regional and local level for dealing with cases of domestic violence and violence against women	2022	50,000	10,000	10,000	Budget of Kosovo Government	MIA	Functionality of the special directorate in police at the central level and regional and local level	Istanbul Convention (Article 15)	I: In all municipalities and at the national level, investigation units for handling cases of domestic violence are operational in each Police Station.
IV.1 .14	Increase on the percentage of women police	2022-2026				Budget of Kosovo Government	MIA	Increased number of women among the police	Istanbul Convention (Article 15)	I: In 2024, the Kosovo Police (KP) employed 255 female officers of 1,374 total new recruits (18.6 %). The total number of female officers reached 1,241 within a total force of 9,011 officers (13.8 %). In 2023, there were 51 women police officers assigned to handle domestic violence cases across the regional directorates.
IV.1 .15	Establishment and functioning of friendly rooms for interviewing and treating victims at the local level for the Police	2022-2026	40,000	40,000	40,000	Budget of Kosovo Government Donors	MIA Police	Friendly rooms for interviewing established and functional victims in Kosovo police buildings	Istanbul Convention	0.5: To provide professional care and a safe environment for victims and their children in police facilities, KP established 31 "friendly rooms". They do not yet exist in all stations.

IV.1 16	Providing the necessary means for immediate and adequate transportation of victims as well as a manageable cash budget for meals for victims,	2022-2024	10,000	10,000	10,000	Budget of Kosovo Government Municipalities and Donors	MIA, Police, MoH, Municipalities MFLT ACCK	Transportation of victims as needed to the police or CSW carried out immediately and with appropriate means Means of transport for the police. Means of transport for the Centers for Social Work Manageable petty cash for meals for the victims	Istanbul Convention	0.5: Under Law 08/L-185, KP must maintain an emergency fund, and KP should provide transport for victims and dependents to medical facilities or safe locations with a social worker using official vehicles. KWN monitoring suggests that KP still lacked these funds in 2024.
IV.1 17	Strengthening VAMOs with adequate human, financial and infrastructural capacities	2022-2023	45,000	45,000	x	Budget of Kosovo Government	Office of the General Prosecutor	Increase of VAPO staff from 25 to 40 employees and recruited employees		0.5: Currently, 40 officials are employed at the VAAO. However, more employees are needed.
IV.1 18	Strengthening of the VAMOs	2022-2026	25,000	25,000	X	Budget of Kosovo Government Donors	MLSW MoF Municipalities	Purchase of laptops/computers, and other office inventory	Istanbul Convention	0.5: All officials have advanced computers and system access, with regional leaders receiving laptops from the U.S. Embassy; additional inventory is provided as needed. Further, VAAOs often share offices, which does not offer victims adequate space for confidentiality.
IV.1 19	Purchase of vehicles	2022-2026	75,000	75,000	x	Budget of Kosovo Government Donors	MLSW MoF Municipalities	Specialized service for children witnessing violence, adapted to the needs of the targeted age group	Istanbul Convention	0.5: KPC has provided support to the VAAO in this regard and currently there are 9 vehicles in use by the VAAO. However, there are still not enough vehicles.
Total budget for Specific Objective IV.1:			1,112,200	1,043,200	798,200					
<i>Of which capital:</i>			645,000	635,000	460,000					

Of which current:			467,200	408,200	338,200					
IV.2 Specific Objective: Implementing integrated policies that enable long-term and sustainable reintegration of victims/survivors/survivors of violence										
I	Indicator: Number of victims/survivors/survivors of violence reintegrated through relevant programs, at the central and local level.		It will be determined in 2022	Increased by 30 %	Increased by 50%	Kosovo Government invests with priority in the reintegration of survivors/survivors of domestic violence and violence against women, through the efficient functioning of various supporting programs in this regard				NA: No data exists on this.
Nr.	Action	Deadline	Budget			Source of funding	Leading and supporting institution	Output	Reference documents	Implementation 2022-2024
			2022	2023	2024					
IV.2.1	Profiling of professionals providing rehabilitation and integration services	2022-2024	2,000	2,000	2,000	Kosovo budget and donors	Municipalities	List of profiled staff	Law on Public Official, Law on Professions, Law on SFS	0.5: CSWs in 18 municipalities increased budgets by 8% on average, with 23 municipalities employing three female and two male specialists for victim reintegration and empowerment. However, several municipalities have no increased budgets or profiled staff.
IV.2.2	Creating a database on the number of victims/survivors of violence reintegrated through relevant programs, at the central and local level		6000	x	x	Kosovo budget and donors	MFLT	Database created/updated	Istanbul Convention	0.5: MJ with MFLT launched Measure 1.8 under the “Government for Families” scheme to support employment and reintegration of women victims of domestic violence. 69 cases registered via the free hotline, which were verified and referred to the Kosovo Employment Agency. However, no clear comprehensive system exists.
IV.2.3	Skills identification, referral for vocational guidance, and design of new programs in	2024-2026	3,000	3,000	3,000	Kosovo Government and donors	MFPT, MoH, MoJ, MESTI, specialized NGOs	List of identified skills Consolidated vocational training programs.	Istanbul Convention	0: Not implemented and no data from responsible institutions.

	accordance with the identified skills development needs and adapting current vocational training programs.									
IV.2.4	Providing employment opportunities for survivors of domestic violence and violence against women.	2022-2026	50,000	50,000	50,000	Kosovo Government and donors	Employment Offices Municipalities Other local institutions, members of the Coordination Mechanisms	Referred cases treated on a priority basis and employed	Violence, Istanbul Convention	0.5: Partially implemented by NGOs in cooperation with CSW and Employment Offices, but not fully implemented by institutions.
IV.2.5	Development of a three-year social housing plan in the municipalities and planning of social housing for victims of DV/GBV (rents, provision of housing).	2022-2024	120,000	120,000	120,000	Government of Kosovo, Municipalities	Municipalities	Consolidated social housing for victims	Istanbul Convention	0.5: Of 26 municipalities that reported to MLGA, 20 have drafted a 3-year plan for social housing. It is unclear whether housing is allocated specifically for victims.
IV.2.6	Establishment of a fund for grants for employment of victims of domestic violence	2022-2024	30,000	30,000	30,000	Government of Kosovo, Municipalities	MoJ, MFLT	Fund created	Istanbul Convention	0: Not implemented
IV.2.7	Establishment of a fund for grants for self-employment of victims of domestic violence	2022-2024	80,000	80,000	80,000	Government of Kosovo, Municipalities	Government of Kosovo	Fund created	Istanbul Convention	0: There is no data from the responsible institution.
IV.2.8	Creating facilities for employers/businesses that employ vulnerable categories of society including victims of	2022-2024	1,500	1,500	1,500	Government of Kosovo	Government of Kosovo, MFLT, MoJ, MED	Employment of victims	Istanbul Convention	0: Not implemented

	domestic violence and violence against women									
IV.2.9	Subsidizing projects for economic empowerment of victims of domestic violence and violence against women	2022-2024	25,000	25,000	25,000	Government of Kosovo	AGE/OPM, Municipalities, MCYS, MTI	Projects for economic empowerment of women implemented	Kosovo Program for Gender Equality 2020 - 2024	0.5: According to the Government's report, AGE funded 4 NGOs to empower women with disabilities, minority women, single mothers, and the elderly, focusing on health awareness, labour market training, positive parenting, and skills development for blind women and girls. However, it is not clear if they were victims of violence.
IV.2.11	Subsidizing kindergarten payments to victims of domestic violence and violence against women	2022-2024	20,000	20,000	20,000	Government of Kosovo	Municipalities	Facilitating the situation of women victims of domestic violence and access to education for their children	Kosovo Program for Gender Equality 2020 - 2024	0.5: 19 municipalities reported that they subsidized an average of 3 children to attend kindergartens. Not all municipalities reported and thus may not have provided such support.
	Total budget for Specific Objective IV.2:		337,500	331,500	331,500	337,500				
	<i>Of which capital:</i>		0	0	0	0				
	<i>Of which current:</i>		337,500	331,500	331,500	337,500				
	Total Budget for the Strategic Objective IV:		1,449,700	1,374,700	1,129,700	1,449,700				
	<i>Of which capital:</i>		645,000	655,000	460,000	645,000				
	<i>Of which current:</i>		804,700	719,700	669,700	804,700				
	Total Budget for the Action Plan:		1,857,115	1,665,500	1,409,580	1,857,115				
	<i>Of which capital:</i>		797,000	745,000	530,000	797,000				
	<i>Of which current:</i>		1,060,115	920,500	879,580	1,060,115				

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