



# KOSOVO<sup>1</sup>

## BACKGROUND

The 16 years since the end of the conflict in Kosovo have seen considerable progress, with significant infrastructure investment, the promulgation of a constitution and a new legal framework, and the creation of central and municipal institutions. However, challenges remain in regard to the effectiveness and efficiency of many institutions, the effectiveness of rule of law, gender equality, and corruption, which continues to be one of the more significant obstacles to the implementation of reforms. Kosovo has seen progress on inter-ethnic relations since the end of the conflict with a decline

of ethnically motivated incidents. Nevertheless, the level of trust between communities remains low, particularly in the four northern municipalities.

The signing of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement between the EU and Kosovo in November 2015 marked a milestone in Kosovo's European integration path. During 2015, Kosovo took steps to address the apparent high level of recruitment of Kosovars as foreign fighters,<sup>2</sup> with new anti-terror laws that allow for the arrest and conviction of those who participate in foreign conflicts. Kosovo has also developed a strategy and action plan for the prevention of violent ex-

<sup>1</sup> All references to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).

<sup>2</sup> Kosovar Center for Security Studies, "Report inquiring into the causes and consequences of Kosovo citizens' involvement as foreign fighters in Syria and Iraq", April 2015. Available from [http://www.qkss.org/repository/docs/Report\\_inquiring\\_into\\_the\\_causes\\_and\\_consequences\\_of\\_Kosovo\\_citizens%27\\_involvement\\_as\\_foreign\\_fighters\\_in\\_Syria\\_and\\_Iraq\\_307708.pdf](http://www.qkss.org/repository/docs/Report_inquiring_into_the_causes_and_consequences_of_Kosovo_citizens%27_involvement_as_foreign_fighters_in_Syria_and_Iraq_307708.pdf)

tremism. As of 2016, the number of foreign fighters in Syria from Kosovo is believed to have fallen significantly.<sup>3</sup>

In 2015, Kosovo witnessed a series of mass protests, both inside and outside the Assembly, primarily driven by political differences between the Government and opposition parties on plans to establish a separate association of Serb majority municipalities in Kosovo, and the proposed solution to a border demarcation dispute with Montenegro.

Exacerbating the scale and intensity of the protests is the poor state of the economy. A period of relatively rapid economic growth in the 2000s has been followed by slower growth, and has been accompanied by high levels of unemployment, currently over 35 percent<sup>4</sup>. Labour force participation for women in Kosovo is one of the lowest in the region, with just 21.4 percent of women working or actively seeking work<sup>5</sup>. This lack of meaningful work for large sections of the population feeds into disillusionment with the political system and the rule of law, which in turn negatively impacts foreign investment.

Despite a strategic framework to combat organized crime, amongst other things, the informal economy, corruption, money laundering and human trafficking, also still remain issues of concern.

## ASSISTANCE AND IMPACT

Improving the accountability and transparency of the Kosovo authorities is a key focus for UNDP. Taking a sectoral approach, UNDP helped to increase transparency and minimize corruption in the energy, mining, and extractive industries by mapping corruption risks. This risk assessment was then provided to the central institutions to enable a better understanding of those risks and possible mitigation approaches. The benefits of technology in anti-corruption also continue to

be utilized. Created in 2012 with UNDP support, the online platform, [kallxo.com](http://kallxo.com) continues to help fight corruption by engaging citizens and improving the accountability of institutions. In 2015, approximately 5,000 cases of corruption were reported by citizens through the platform, 300 of which were referred to rule of law institutions. This level of participation is evidence of the determination of the local community to reduce corruption.

UNDP continues to support the strengthening of the rule of law, including the development and establishment of a formal policy coordination and strategic planning process for the four key justice institutions: The Ministry of Justice, Kosovo Judicial Council, Kosovo Prosecutorial Council and Kosovo Judicial Institute. UNDP also helped the Basic and Appeal Courts in the unifi-



Participants in Week of Women 2015 discuss the role of women in the fight against corruption

Photo by: UNDP Kosovo

cation of decision and sentencing practices, and by supporting training for judges, prosecutors, and others involved in the legal system on the application of human rights conventions. In efforts to reduce the court and prosecution backlog, UNDP supported the referral of 714 cases to mediation, and invested in the Judicial Institute's Initial Education Training Programme that resulted in 16 new judges and prosecutors being appointed. Lastly, following the Pristina-Belgrade agreement for the integration of the judiciary in the northern municipalities, UNDP is supporting the integration of the Kosovo Serb judges and prosecutors into the judicial system.

<sup>3</sup> Official website of the Office of the Prime Minister, "Prime Minister Isa Mustafa opened the third international conference", 2 February 2016. Available from <http://www.kryeministri-ks.net/?page=2,95554>

<sup>4</sup> Kosovo Agency of Statistics, "Results of the Kosovo 2014 Labour Force Survey", June 2015. Available from <https://askrks-gov.net/en/lm?download=7:results-of-the-Kosovo-2014-labour-force-survey> (accessed June 24 2016)

<sup>5</sup> Kosovo Agency of Statistics, "Results of the Kosovo 2014 Labour Force Survey", June 2015. Available from <https://askrks-gov.net/en/lm?download=7:results-of-the-Kosovo-2014-labour-force-survey> (accessed June 24 2016)

UNDP is also working to improve the capacities of civil servants for better public service delivery, supporting the drafting and finalization of the Civil Service Training Strategy 2016-2020 and Action Plan 2016-2018 intended to benefit over 20,000 civil servants. UNDP also provided assistance to the Department for Standardization,

*“UNDP must be commended for its support to the Coordination Mechanism, which is an important tool for reinforcing the Rule of Law in Kosovo and guaranteeing the independence, impartiality and integrity of the justice institutions”*

– **Professor Hajredin Kuçi**, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Justice, at the Roundtable on the Coordination Mechanism

Approximation and Legal Harmonization with training on research and data collection for the support staff of 12 Parliamentary Committees, as well as facilitating an exchange of experience with the Czech Parliament. Furthermore, UNDP contributed to the drafting and finalization of Strategy 2016-2020 for the Assembly of Kosovo. The strategy was drafted to be both gender inclusive and to comply with human rights obligations.

To facilitate better targeting of public administration reform going forward, the 5th triennial Kosovo Mosaic survey was conducted in 2015 by UNDP, in combination with USAID and the Ministry of Local Government Administration. The survey collects the views of 6,700 citizens on the quality of public services and performance of local authorities with respect to service delivery, with [the results](#) released in 2016.

In efforts to prevent the radicalization of Kosovars and reduce violence, UNDP supported two important initiatives in 2015. The first was the provision of support and expert advice to assist Kosovo institutions as they drafted and finalized the ‘Strategy on Prevention of Violent Extremism and Radicalisation Leading to Terrorism 2015-2020’ and a corresponding action plan. The strategy aims to address the push and pull factors that influence the radicalization of the population, with special emphasis on youth, and will serve as a guiding document for UNDP and Kosovo institutions to better coordinate efforts in this important area.

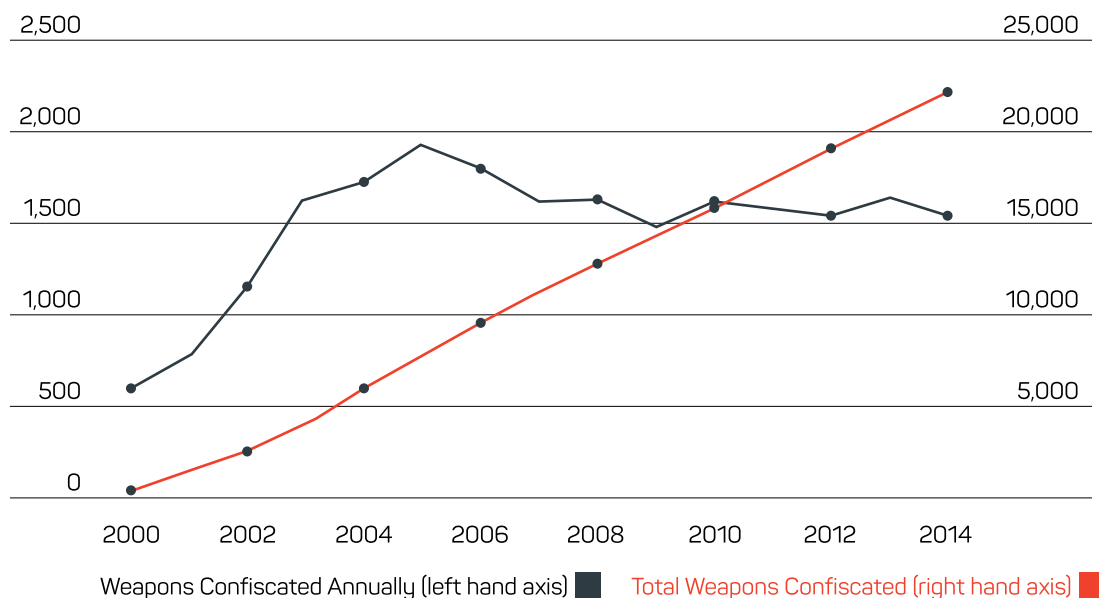
Complementing this, the second initiative saw UNDP working with the authorities to restrict illicit arms trafficking. In addition to the destruction of 4,000 weapons and 160,000 rounds of ammunition in 2015 alone, Kosovo introduced new regulations in line with EU legislation that govern the possession of weapons by civilians. Kosovo also continues to participate in several regional initiatives such as SEEFEN, the regional SALW commissions, the Europol European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats (EMPACT) project, and FRONTEX.



Reviewing a range of confiscated weapons to be destroyed

Photo by: UNDP Kosovo

# CONFISCATED ILLEGAL WEAPONS IN KOSOVO - 2000 TO 2014



## Key results



*Reduced the court and prosecution backlog by referring 714 cases to mediation*



*16 new judges and prosecutors (including five women) appointed*



*5,000 reported cases of corruption made by citizens through online portal kallxo.com*



*20,000 public servants to benefit from improved training and strategic clarity*



*Destroyed 4,000 weapons and 160,000 rounds of ammunition*

## CHALLENGES, LESSONS LEARNED AND THE WAY FORWARD

The timely implementation of the Stabilization and Association Agreement and compliance with the requirements and rules for visa-free travel are of crucial importance and a political priority. However, significant challenges lie ahead in the alignment of the legislation with EU requirements in a broad range of sectors, including the modernisation of the rule of law and governance institutional setup.

Kosovo continues to face problems with its high rate of unemployment, particularly among youth. This, in combination with poor economic growth and a low women's labour participation rate, feeds into general dissatisfaction with the political process in Kosovo, religious extremism, tension between the different communities, and brain drain as educated and ambitious Kosovars leave for better opportunities in Europe and the US. For this reason, supporting Kosovo's European integration efforts, particularly meeting the requirements for visa-free travel, will be a high priority going forward.