

LEGAL INSTRUMENTS FOR ADVANCING MINORITY RIGHTS: THE KOSOVO CONTEXT

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Abstract: For developing multi-ethnic countries, the creation of sustainable peace as a condition for thorough social development is somewhat difficult. Safeguarding minorities' rights through constitutional and legal protections helps ensure long-term peace in the state; then, those rights are enforced. Lack of basic rights and freedoms will surely lead to turmoil and unrest within the state, perhaps involving neighboring nations and intensifying hostilities. The Western Balkan area is an example of conflict, which causes atrocities and deeply connected grievances among ethnic communities that once lived together in peace. With proactive involvement of government agencies to incorporate ethnic minorities in the decision-making, the study examines the status of Kosovo on the importance of enhancing legislative procedures for strengthening minority rights. The paper uses a legal-dogmatic, quantitative, qualitative, and analytical research approach to ascertain the legal frameworks for progressing the rights of minority communities in Kosovo, while considering the degree of interaction between these communities and institutions.

Keywords: Minority rights; equal opportunities; Constitutional provisions; inclusion in decision-making.

INTRODUCTION

Establishing enduring peace depends on authorities at different levels the means they need to utilize to tackle the fundamental sources of insecurity and promoting varied, unbiased societies free of religious and ethnic disputes.

If societies impacted by the disputes are to be included, the need for mutual respect for each other, acceptance of other people's opinions, and a constant readiness to compromise to resolve conflicts must be emphasized. Strong uphold for systems that allow growth of trustworthy affiliation is particularly crucial in communities where division and polarization remain daily reality if one is to attain enduring peace. Thus, by encouraging the general social shift from a background filled with warfare to a state of stability, institutions and civic organizations must assist in creating a durable peace. Moreover, such methods should be customized to the specific setting instead of applying "universal solutions." Assisted by the international community, Balkan nations engaged to reduce the consequences of violence and division in society using primarily ad hoc approaches proven in other areas, especially in Africa. These approaches, however, did not produce notable improvements since they were not developed in line with the cultural backgrounds and unique ethnic characteristics of the Balkan nations. Among other ways, these approaches simply produced "imposed" ideal solutions that were transient and had no genuine permanent influence. They did not create systems running on a legally acceptable foundation within society. Utilizing an egalitarian approach, including local

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customs and lessons learned from other countries, most Balkan countries have assured minority rights. This has somewhat affected how rights and liberties have been maintained. By contrast, Kosovo was treated normatively, which led to the creation of several institutional systems at all levels. Though they were officially established, some of these systems lack uniqueness for their utility and value.

This article looks in-depth at the legally binding and regulated protections for ethnic community rights as well as their implementation and degree of satisfaction of minority wishes and needs in Kosovo context. The study underlines the flaws in current legal-based rights protection systems and provides specific suggestions for their enhancement. Furthermore, paper looked into the present debate on the depth and breadth of the civil liberties of the many communities living in Kosovo since it could be utilized to compromise the peace by generating dissatisfaction among the dominant community.

The paper offers useful suggestions on the use of assenting actions in support of ethnic minorities in reaction to the results above, as well as the utilization of a comprehensive strategy to their active participation in decision-making while contrasting the existing international standards with legal principles used in Kosovo. While they oppose any attempt to pertain disparate approach to a single group in excess to another, that could compromise the fragile peace, the proposed remedies advocate safeguarding ethnic communities' rights through their inclusion in decision-making.

I. THE ROLE OF MINORITY GROUPS IN MULTICULTURAL PEACEBUILDING

Peacekeeping works when all sides in a conflict are seeking peacefulness. In many situations, it is bad for opposing sides to genuinely want peace. In addition, to steer clear liability for civilian loss, they publicly consent to the stipulations and strains of the peacekeeping organization even as they hinder the peace process.¹

After the violent battle, society and the belligerents are more polarized than before. Internal conflicts are bad for the economy and society since they hinder the capacity of important institutions to maintain peace and promotes violence. Substantial changes in authority and communities across the war make post-war peace difficult to attain. Steadfast leadership structures that promote, alienate, and immerse citizens in a conflict-oriented mindset exclude moderates from the conversation. If former enemies continue to cohabit the same country and try to pursue their wartime goals by other means, extensive international measures will be needed to maintain peace. Rivalry usually leads to conflict when one feels he is suffering from the other's hostility.²

Peacebuilding activities have changed greatly since 1945, when the first modern peacebuilding initiative started, turning increasingly proactive in their goals and approaches. During this time, there has always been no major question on the effectiveness of civil rights as tools for peacebuilding. A crucial component in the formation of peace includes contemplating human rights either by penalizing offenders or by keeping them open. As

¹ OBERSCHALL, A. *Conflict and Peace Building in Divided Societies: Responses to Ethnic Violence*. London: Routledge, 2007. p. 81.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 185–186.

a basic belief in liberal peacebuilding, human rights have lately been more important as it has been practiced all over subsequently in the mid-1990s. This peace-building grand design holds that the development of liberal institutions, including legality, free trade, and the custody of human rights, requires an overhaul of violent societies. Therefore, precedents of different societies indicate that civil liberties are used to promote peace instead of universality. Considering its post-war constitution, BiH, has ratified 16 treaties pertaining to human rights.³

Whereas, Constitution of Kosovo incorporates eight international treaties for safeguarding the human rights, and the third chapter defines further rights of ethnic minorities as affirmative actions as regards to partnership and lasting peace.⁴

Not understanding the function of peacebuilding could lead one to mistakenly believe that including any human rights regulations into the peacebuilding plan will produce consistent positive results. Furthermore, this could prevent those in charge of decisions from judging whether reliance on basic rights is better than other peacebuilding strategies. Furthermore, ignoring the factors that make human rights powerful tools for peacebuilding could promote the false belief that their protection would always produce good outcomes, regardless of the context of application. Standardized methods may therefore be carried out without enough knowledge of how the different qualities of every post-violent community should be considered. Though not unavoidable, these risks are more likely to happen if decision-makers do not give the complex interaction between peace-making and human rights top priority.⁵

While simultaneously promoting open, varied, and flexible societies that can endure violent crises and wars, establishing lasting peace mostly means enhancing local resources and organizations on all levels to attend to the basic roots of insecurity. Post-conflict recovery and rebuilding initiatives must include addressing human rights violations, hatred, prejudice, and the deficiency of effective democratic structures and legality.⁶

For peace to last, activities ought to concentrate on meeting the basic requirements of the people living in a particular setting. Engaging conflict-affected societies call for knowledge of collective respect, leniency for other points of view, willingness to consensus, and devotion to non-violent dispute settlement. Creating enduring peace calls for the encouragement of procedures that establish mutual trust and peaceful coexistence, particularly in torn and fractured societies. Two ways to enable people to live together and face their past are to promote lasting peace and support changes. Like any other peace-building project, these processes must be guided in contextually responsive way. This suggests they ought to be customized to the particular circumstances and used together alongside ongoing or suggested reconciliation projects.⁷

³ HADJIGEORGIOU, N. *Protecting Human Rights and Building Peace in Post-violence Societies*. Oxford: Hart Publishing, 2020. pp. 4–5.

⁴ Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo. Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo, 2008. Article 22. In: *gzk.rks-gov.net* [online]. [2024-01-21]. Available at: <<https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDetail.aspx?ActID=3702>>.

⁵ HADJIGEORGIOU, N. *Protecting Human Rights and Building Peace in Post-violence Societies*. p. 6.

⁶ Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. *Building Sustainable Peace and Democracy*. OSCE Experiences in South-Eastern Europe. OSCE, 2018. p. 14.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p.18.

Yet, with a few exceptions, the normative strategy has mostly been the main way to protect the basic rights of minority groups in Kosovo. Post-conflict countries, like Kosovo, lack efficient ways of attaining these rights, which creates a state of affairs that could cause conflicts with possible domino consequences because of the spread of ethnic groups over national boundaries.

II. DEMOGRAPHIC COMPOSITION OF KOSOVO

Kosovo had a demographic pattern that was like those of pre-industrial societies for a long time. A mix of bad political, historical, and social circumstances, as well as slow progress in economic growth and cultural change, led to this condition. There are 1,445 communities in the country, although only 38 are considered urban. Most people still live in rural areas. Kosovo is in the last phase of the European demographic transition, which is marked by high rates of births, an evolving demographic structure, minimal workforce participation, and high infant death rates that don't go down. In the last few decades, there has been a big change in the population. It has grown because more people are being born and fewer people are dying, even though there have been times of instability and harsh immigration restrictions. During the late 1800s and early 1900s, estimates of the population varied greatly. Kosovo's population was thought to be around 240,000 in 1880, however Ottoman statistics from 1908 to 1909 said there were 506,862 people living there. As reported by Austro-Hungarian military officials, other estimates put the population at 450,000 in 1910 and 460,607 in 1916. Kosovo's population rose by about six times over the course of a century, compared to 1880 to 1980.⁸ It grew to almost two million by 1991, and estimates for 2021 put the population at 1,773,971.⁹

Year							
Ethnic group	1948	1953	1961	1971	1981	1991	2011
Kosovo Albanian	69.62 %	65.91 %	69.53 %	74.21 %	78.64 %	82.1 %	93.2 %
Bosnian	1.5 %	0.9 %	0.9 %	2.6 %	3.8 %	3.5 %	1.6 %
Serbian	24.6 %	24 %	23.8 %	18.9 %	13.6 %	9.9 %	1.5 %
Gorani	///	///	///	///	///	///	0.6 %
Croat	0.8 %	0.9 %	0.8 %	0.7 %	0.6 %	0.5 %	///
Turk	0.5 %	4.8 %	2.9 %	1.0 %	0.7 %	0.9 %	1.1 %
Roma	1.5 %	1.8 %	0.8 %	1.5 %	2.1 %	2.5 %	0.5 %
Egyptian	///	///	///	///	///	///	0.6 %
Ashkali	///	///	///	///	///	///	0.9 %
Other	1.5 %	1.7 %	1.3 %	1.1 %	0.6 %	0.7 %	0.2 %

Table 1. Ethnic configuration of Kosovo citizen based on the census from 1948 to 2011.

Source: Academy of Science-Kosova: *Monographic View & Agency of Statistics*.

⁸ Academy of Science of the Republic of Kosovo. *Monographic View*. Prishtina: 2011. pp. 130-133.

⁹ Agency of Statistics of the Republic of Kosovo. In: *Population Assessment for 2021* [online]. [2025-12-11]. Available at: <<https://ask.rks-gov.net/sq/agjencia-e-statistikave-te-kosoves/add-news/vleresimi-i-popullise-2021>>.

For over a hundred years, Serbian government policy has regularly tried to slow down the expansion of the Albanian population and change the ethnic makeup of Kosovo. After Serbia took over Kosovo in 1912, many Albanians were forced to leave their homes and move to neighboring countries and Turkey, often in violent situations. Between the years 1912 and the beginning of World War II, there were approximately 300,000 Albanians who departed Kosovo, according to historical archives. At the same time, Serbian colonists were encouraged to settle in the area and were given ownership titles over land that Albanians had left behind. Cubrillović, Mihajlović, and Molević were some of the people that started state-sponsored programs to carry out these population engineering attempts.¹⁰

As Serbs continued to move into Kosovo, many Muslims, notably Kosovo Albanians, had to leave. Yugoslav officials tried to get rid of Muslims and Albanians who were seen as politically undesirable. At the same time, the Turkish authorities tried to repopulate districts that had been emptied out by Greeks along with other Christians leaving. As a result of the Treaty of Lausanne, which was signed in 1923 between Greece and Turkey, the movement of about 1.3 million people became less difficult. The agreement reached between Yugoslavia and Turkey in 1938 planned to move another 200,000 people from Yugoslavia to Turkey.¹¹

Kosovo has changed a lot since the end of the 1999 war. Over 65,000 Serbs have departed the area, and Albanians now make up more than 90% of the population. Some Serbs got involved in paramilitary and military operations against Albanian villages during the war. Still, over 130,000 Serbs still live in Kosovo.¹²

II. 1 MINORITY POPULATIONS' REPATRIATION TO KOSOVO

Even though there was a lot of violence in Kosovo from 1998 to 1999, the Kosovar government and international organizations have set up a legal system to help displaced people and refugees return home. People from minority groups have been given priority.¹³

The Constitution of Kosovo protects the right to return home, besides the liberty of movement, accessibility to medical assistance, schooling, and safety. Particular attention is paid to how easy it is to return and the right to keep the property.¹⁴ Also, international agreements that deal with this issue, such as the ECHR, might be directly applied in Kosovo.¹⁵ The UN Convention on Political and Civil Rights (ICCPR), which applies directly in Kosovo, safeguards every resident the right to partake in social life and make

¹⁰ Ibid., pp. 144–146.

¹¹ JUDAH, T. *Kosovo – What Everyone Needs to Know*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008. pp. 45–46.

¹² European Stability Initiative. *The Lausanne Principle – Multiethnicity, Territory and the Future of Kosovo's Serbs*. Berlin-Brussels-Sarajevo: ESI, 2004. p. 2. In: *esiweb.org* [online]. [2025-12-11]. Available at: <http://www.esiweb.org/pdf/esi_document_id_53.pdf>.

¹³ Mehmeti, Xhavit. Communities return to Kosovo. Interviewed on May 5, 2024 in Vushtrri, Kosovo.

¹⁴ Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo. Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo, 2008. Article 156. In: *gzk.rks-gov.net* [online]. [2024-01-21]. Available at: <<https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDetail.aspx?ActID=3702>>.

¹⁵ European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms- Protocol I. 1950. Article 1 & 2. In: *European Convention on Human Rights* [online]. [2024-01-21]. Available at: <https://www.echr.coe.int/documents/convention_eng.pdf>.

decisions, along as obtaining access to public facilities and benefits.¹⁶ The capacity of refugees and dislocated people to use shared resources, speak their mother tongue, follow their customs, make decisions, and other such things is directly linked to their return home. Specific laws for minority groups strongly protect these rights. This has helped create a welcoming environment for return as well as reintegration.¹⁷ The authority representatives in charge of return and integration in the Vushtrri town said that the return of ethnic minorities has gone distinctly in the last decade.¹⁸

The government department of the communities, working with international stakeholders that work to reduce displacement and increase the number of people who return, has started several programs. Thus, a lot of displaced have come back to Kosovo. MCR says that the number of people returning to Kosovo has gone up since it became independent.¹⁹

The repatriation of the displaced is still going on, but it depends more on the returnees' economic stability than on security conditions, as it did in the first ten years after the Kosovo conflict.

III. THE LEGAL STATUS OF MINORITIES IN KOSOVO

International agreements that apply directly in Kosovo²⁰ and the country's own laws protect the civil liberties of non-majority communities. Many legal tools have been created to safeguard and promote the rights of various populations as a result of these frameworks. As a result, institutions have been set up at both national and municipal levels to protect the legal liberties and interests of ethnic minorities.

At the central level, there are numerous ways for communities to have a say, such as the Communities Consultative Council, reserved in the Kosovo Legislative bodies, government representation, and representation within judicial bodies. These systems are meant to promote and protect the rights of ethnic communities by letting them take part in decision-making. Some of the ways that towns may help include having a Deputy Mayor from a minority community, giving local governments with a Serb majority more powers, allowing people to use minority languages, and setting up Community Committees and Community Offices.

The Republic of Kosovo is a state for all its residents, which shows that it is multiethnic. There are 100 allocated seats in Parliament assigned for Albanian majority ethnic community and 20 seats for non-majority communities. Ten of these seats go to the Serb community, four seats for the Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian communities,

¹⁶ ICCPR-International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966). Article 25 & 27. In: *ohchr.org* [online]. [2025-12-11]. Available at: <<https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/ccpr.pdf>>.

¹⁷ Law No. 03/L-047, on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Communities and their Members in Kosovo. 2008. Art. 1, 2, 4, 8, 9, 11. In: *gzk.rks-gov.net* [online]. [2025-11-12]. Available at: <<https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDetail.aspx?ActID=2531&langid=2>>.

¹⁸ Merovci, Ekrem. Communities return to Kosovo. Interviewed on May 5, 2024 in Vushtrri, Kosovo.

¹⁹ Republic of Kosovo Government. *Strategy for Communities and Return 2014–2018*. Pristina: 2013. p. 4. In: *refworld.org* [online]. [2025-11-12]. Available at: <<https://www.refworld.org/docid/5b4306654.html>>.

²⁰ Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo. Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo, 2008. Article 22. In: *gzk.rks-gov.net* [online]. [2025-11-12]. Available at: <<https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDetail.aspx?ActID=3702>>.

three to the Bosniak community, two to the Turkish community, and one to the Gorani community.²¹

The Assembly's Presidency, which is made up by the the speaker as well as five Deputy Speakers, is another level of representation. Three are designated from the biggest legislative faction, and one each from the Serb ethnic minority and the remaining non-majority communities.²² Also, a minimum of one deputy head Chairperson of each legislative committee has to come from a community that is not the same as the Chairperson's.²³ This makes sure that people from all communities are involved in all Assembly committees. The Committee on the Interests and Rights of Communities is one of the Assembly's permanent committees. It is made up of a third coming from the largest community as a whole, a single third of the Serb ethnic group, and a third from other communities that are not the majority. This committee is particularly important to the legislative process because it looks at every proposed law to see how it can affect the fundamental liberties of communities.²⁴

Kosovo has set up special rules designed to safeguard the rights of communities that aren't in the majority whenever it involves passing, changing, or voiding laws that affect them directly. A designated majority is needed to acquire these laws to be passed. This means that two-third of the total Representatives of Parliament must agree with the decision, as well as two-thirds of MPs who represent communities that are not the majority. This protection is meant to make certain that minority opinions are not ignored when it comes to important issues that affect their identity.²⁵

These "essential laws" cover very important issues like public holidays, national symbols, freedom of religion, education, and other basic rights.²⁶ It is important to note that these kinds of laws cannot be put to a public vote. This makes sure that the voices of communities that are not in the majority are heard in decisions that affect their lives, without having to follow what the majority wants. These kinds of statutory and constitutional protections are uncommon not solely in the region of the Western Balkans but also in other parts of the world. Kosovo's approach is one of a kind in that it includes everyone.

Kosovo set up the Consultative Council for Communities on 2008 to make it easier for minorities to take part. This group connects non-majority communities with the President of Kosovo and gives them framed feedback upon regulations that affect them. The Council additionally possesses its very own budget, which pays for projects that meet the distinctive requirements of these communities. Article sixty of the Constitution says that the Council is a place where government institutions and groups that are not in the majority can talk to each other all the time. It lets these groups give quick feedback on proposed laws and policies and even suggest their own ideas. There are five members representing the Kosovo Serbian community, three from the Kosovo Bosniak community, three from the Kosovo Turkish community, and two members each from the Kosovo

²¹ Ibid., art. 64.

²² BAJRAMI, A. *Constitutional System of the Republic of Kosovo*. Pristina: 2018, p. 233.

²³ Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo Regulations. 2022. Art. 11 and 12. In: *gzk.rks-gov.net* [online]. [2025-11-12]. Available at: <<https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDocumentDetail.aspx?ActID=61266>>.

²⁴ BAJRAMI, A. *Constitutional System of the Republic of Kosovo*, p. 233.

²⁵ SUSURI, H. *Constitutional Law in Kosovo*. Prishtina: 2015. pp. 301-302.

²⁶ Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo. Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo, 2008. Article 81.

Ashkali, Kosovo Egyptian, Kosovo Roma, Kosovo Gorani, K/Montenegrin, and K/Croatian communities. Two-thirds of the constituents are chosen directly by the communities they belong to, and the other third come from important state institutions like the President's Office, the Office of the Prime Minister, the Ministry for Communities, and the Administrative Office of the Chairman of the Assembly.²⁷

Kosovo shows that it wants to be a multicultural and democratic society by using these inclusive structures. The systems currently in place not solely guarantee the rights of minority groups, but they also get them involved in defining future developments of the country, which leads to a more fair and collaborative form of government.

IV. 1 MINORITY COMMUNITY REPRESENTATION IN GOVERNMENT

People think that having ethnic minorities involved in government is a good thing because it makes the decision-making process more stable and gives people a sense of ownership. This is thought to make the government more stable overall. Including ethnic minorities within the governing body is an important part of its democratic system along with stability, which is based on a strong constitutional and regulatory landscape. The written constitutional provisions of the country, which was approved in 2008, sets up a regulatory framework to protect the rights of minority groups and encourage them to get involved in government. Article 96 of the Constitution says that non-majority groups in Kosovo should have a fair amount of a representation within the Assembly. This includes seats set aside for Kosovo Serbs and other groups that aren't the majority. The loan protection of ethnic minorities (2004) includes specific rules to make sure that these groups are actively involved in public and political matters.²⁸ The Department of the Language Commissioner and the Department of Community Affairs were set up to help represent non-majority communities and make sure that policies and laws are followed for community rights. The European Union contributed as well with the Brussels Agreement (2013), that aims to improve interrelations between different ethnic groups and help Serbian communities become part of Kosovo's government.

The constitutional provisions stipulates that leastwise two ministers must come from ethnic population which are in minority within National Parliament. This is to make sure that minority groups are included in the government. The other minister can't be from a Serbian community. Also, if the government wants to designate over twelve ministers, it must also point out an additional minister from an ethnic group that doesn't have a majority in Kosovo. Before choosing this minister, the government must first talk to the wings and ethnic minority factions that are designated in the Assembly.²⁹ The legally binding constitutional provisions define the basic concepts, obligations, and objectives of the governing Kosovan authority as an executive body that carries out laws passed by the National Assembly. The government is also responsible for other interests that are

²⁷ *Ibid.*, art. 60.

²⁸ Law No. 03/1-047, on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Communities and their Members in Kosovo. 2008. Art. 11. In: *gzk.rks-gov.net* [online]. [2025-11-12]. Available at: <<https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDocumentDetail.aspx?ActID=2531>>.

²⁹ Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo, Art. 96 (2008).

part of its legally binding duties. In addition, the Constitution clearly states how ethnic minorities can be involved in the government by giving them reserved seats. The constitutional clause that reserves no less than two seats in the governing body for ethnic minorities makes it clear that they will be represented in the government. This clause is not in the constitutions of other nations in the region.

The goal of having a minimum of a couple of ethnic minority ministers is not a restriction that the government can't choose additional ministers if government mandate bearers wants them to. In a society with many different ethnic groups, this threshold designated representation of ethnic minority groups is an example of "wide-ranging governance" and is an important part of democracy. In addition to these clauses, the constitutional provisions set forth that the government must set aside at least two positions for the ministers who belong to the Kosovo Serbian minority and another two for representatives of other ethnic minorities. If the executive has a total of 12 ministerial portfolios, it adds the two additional positions for vice ministers coming from minority groups.³⁰ So, it's clear that the law merely retains ministerial positions but also guarantees that ethnic minorities who reside in Kosovo will have certain deputy minister positions.

It is very important for the government agencies and Independent Institutions in Kosovo to hire people from minority groups to make sure that everyone is fairly and fully represented in public institutions. The Kosovo Constitution³¹ and the Law on the Public Service³² assert that all citizens, no matter what their ethnic background is, have the same right to serve within public organizations and the government workforce. Creating processes that guarantee a certain percentage of job openings for people from non-majority populations is an important part of this approach. For instance, depending upon the ethnic origins of the people who live there, current laws and policies require public institutions to make sure that no less than 10 percent of their employees come from non-majority communities. Even with these elements, possible biases, a shortage of institutional ability, and problems with putting laws and regulations into practice still make it hard to properly and effectively represent minorities. Still, for these groups to fully participate in Kosovo's public services, institutional rules, training, and awareness-raising must all keep getting better.

It is obvious that Kosovo possesses a good legal system for including people from different ethnic groups in government institutions. However, all these legal requirements should be carried out even more.

V. KOSOVO'S LOCAL MECHANISMS FOR PROTECTING THE EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR MINORITIES

A wide range of laws, including important international human rights treaties, protect fundamental freedoms, particularly those of minority groups.³³ These international

³⁰ Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo, Art. 96.2 (2008).

³¹ *Ibid.*, art. 61-62.

³² Law No. 08/L-197, for Public Officials, 2023, Art. 7.1. In: *gzk.rks-gov.net* [online]. [2025-11-12]. Available at: <<https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDetail.aspx?ActID=81430>>.

³³ Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo, Art. 22 (2008).

agreements apply directly to Kosovan context and supersede domestic law.³⁴ The third chapter of the Kosovo constitutional framework also safeguards the human rights of ethnic minorities by setting up different institutions to make sure these rights are protected and promoted.³⁵

For ethnic groups that are a minority in each municipality, community participation procedures are necessary to make sure that different human rights are respected. These prerogatives include the right to an education, the right not to be discriminated against, the right to practice one's religion, the right to work, the right to get the services one needs, and the right to social welfare. CC (The Community Committees), MOCR (The municipality's Offices for Communities and Return), the Vice Mayor for Local Communities, and the vice president of the Local Assembly designed for ethnic minorities are the main groups in charge of making sure that all communities in Kosovo have equal access to public participation. It is very important that these systems continue to work well to protect basic rights. Kosovo's laws say that its institutions must take steps to promote equal treatment within communities in economic, political, social, and cultural areas. They also make it clear what the vice Chairperson of the Municipal Assembly for Communities' job is.³⁶

According to the Act on Local Self-Government, all local structures must include minorities. This means that at least 10% of the people must come from these communities, as shown by representation. The provisions of the legislation are apparent to the constitutional provisions. Moreover, the Vice Chairperson for Communities in the municipality's legislature must be from a municipality where at least 10% of the inhabitants are comprised of ethnic minorities.³⁷

The constitutional provisions of the Republic of Kosovo are clear and well-defined, guaranteeing the representation of members of ethnic minorities within the structures of local executive power through the position of Deputy Mayor, who must be a representative from these communities. This position is guaranteed to the candidate from non-majority communities who receives the highest number of votes in the local elections, in accordance with applicable electoral regulations.

The paramount function of the Deputy Mayor from non-majority communities is to promote interethnic dialogue and to represent and protect the legitimate rights and interests of these communities at the local level of governance. In cases where the concerns, complaints, or suggestions of non-majority community members are not adequately addressed in accordance with constitutional guarantees and the applicable legal framework, the Deputy Mayor has the right to pursue institutional and legal channels for their resolution, including referring such matters to the highest judicial instances of the Republic of Kosovo.³⁸

³⁴ Ibid., art. 19.

³⁵ Ibid., art. 57-62.

³⁶ MANOJLOVIC, M., VUCKOVIC, B. *Integrimi i shqiptarëve: Një kërkesë e vjetër. Radio Evropa e Lirë [Integration of Albanians in the Institutions of Serbia: An Old Demand Over a Decade.]*. Radio Free Europe. June 2024. In: *evropaelire.org* [online]. [2025-11-12]. Available at: <<https://www.evropaelire.org/a/integrimi-i-shqiptarëve-ne-institucionet-e-serbise-/33098149.html>>.

³⁷ Law No. 03/L-040, on Local Self-Governance. Prishtina, 2008, Art. 54 and 61. In: *gzk.rks-gov.net* [online]. [2025-11-12]. Available at: <<https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDetail.aspx?ActID=2530>>.

³⁸ Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo, Art. 62.

These measures aim to ensure respect and guarantee of minority rights in full accordance with the constitutional provisions set forth in Chapters Two and Three. One of the key mechanisms that effectively serves this purpose is the Office for Communities, which is responsible for advancing minority rights as well as addressing the needs of refugees, internally displaced persons, returnees, and their reintegration into society. For any matters related to minority communities, this office plays a crucial role in providing advisory input to both the municipal legislative and executive authorities.³⁹

On the other hand, the Communities Committee serves as an additional mechanism for the safe keeping of non-majority communities, ensuring the alignment of local policies with the rights of minorities as guaranteed by legal provisions. Among its primary responsibilities is to advise the municipal legislative body on the measures to be undertaken for the protection of the rights of ethnic communities, including the promotion of linguistic rights, as well as cultural and religious characteristics.⁴⁰ This unique human rights protection mechanism is composed of representatives from the municipal legislative body as well as representatives of various ethnic communities residing within the municipality. The members are primarily selected based on the preferences of the minority communities and are subject to final approval by the municipal legislative authority.⁴¹ All municipalities in Kosovo have established these mechanisms for the protection of non-majority community rights, in consistence with the legal provisions of the act on protection of the freedoms of ethnic minorities. Furthermore, an affirmative approach has been applied by establishing such mechanisms even in the areas where the concentration of minority populations falls under the percentage benchmark defined by legal provisions. In some municipalities, these mechanisms have been significantly strengthened and function as effective facilitators in fulfilling the rights and legal interests of citizens belonging to non-majority communities.⁴² Nevertheless, in certain municipalities, these mechanisms require further support and stimulation to adequately meet the needs of the citizens they are intended to serve.⁴³

IV.1 The association of Serb majority municipalities and minority rights

During the ongoing dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia regarding the normalization of relations, mediated by the international community, the establishment of the Association of Serb-majority Municipalities has been proposed. This entity is intended to en-

³⁹ The Ministry for Returns and Communities. Terms of Reference for the MOCR. April 21, 2011. In: *dokumen.tips* [online]. [2025-12-11]. Available at: <<https://dokumen.tips/documents/zyra-komunale-pr-komunitete-dhe-kthim-termat-e-referenc-pr-zyrat-komunale.html?page=1>>.

⁴⁰ Law No. 03/L-040, on Local Self-governance. Prishtina, 2008, Art. 53.

⁴¹ Administrative Instruction No. 05/2020 on the Procedure for Competencies, Establishment, and Composition of Committees in the Municipality. Art. 8 and 9. In: *gzk.rks-gov.net* [online]. [2025-11-12]. Available at: <<https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDetail.aspx?ActID=36161>>.

⁴² Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. *Assessment of the Establishment, Functionality, and Performance of Municipal Mechanisms for Community Participation and Representation*. October 2021. p. 16. In: *osce.org* [online]. [2025-11-12]. Available at: <<https://www.osce.org/sq/mission-in-kosovo/499822>>.

⁴³ Law No. 03/L-040, on Local Self-governance. Prishtina 2008, art. 54 and 61. In: *gzk.rks-gov.net* [online]. [2025-11-12]. Available at: <<https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDetail.aspx?ActID=2530>>.

hance the competencies, rights, and administrative capacities of the Serb community within the territory of the Republic of Kosovo. Even though agreements on the creation of this association have been signed on multiple occasions (beginning in 2013, encompassing three separate agreements), they have yet to be implemented. Kosovo's authorities have expressed concerns that the creation of such a structure may jeopardize the unitary character of the state by introducing an asymmetrical model of governance in municipalities with Serbian majority, potentially resulting to the "Bosnification" of Kosovo. Conversely, Serbian authorities repeatedly stated that the establishment of the Association constitutes a prerequisite for the normalization of bilateral relations. At the same time, they continue to reject the implementation of several previously signed agreements addressing the daily needs of citizens, thus undermining the broader normalization process.

The establishment of the Association of Serb-majority Municipalities remains one of the most sensitive and contested issues in the dialogue and overall relations between Kosovo and Serbia. The creation of such an association was initially envisaged in the Ahtisaari Plan⁴⁴ and was subsequently reaffirmed in the 2013 Brussels Agreement.⁴⁵ This agreement aims to facilitate the normalization of relations between the two states by implementing best practices for ensuring the rights of non-majority communities. These rights are already guaranteed to minority groups under the Constitution and applicable laws of the Republic of Kosovo.

The Kosovo–Serbia dialogue, mediated by the European Union and supported by the United States, has facilitated the conclusion of several agreements,⁴⁶ including the 2015 Agreement on General Principles.⁴⁷ This agreement was met with strong opposition from political parties and segments of civil society in Kosovo, particularly regarding the provisions related to the Association of Serb-majority Municipalities. The objections centered on the scope of the association's competencies and the proposed method of its establishment. Serbia's demand during the dialogue was the creation of an association with executive powers—an arrangement that fundamentally contradicts the constitutional order of the Republic of Kosovo and, as such, remains unacceptable to Kosovo.

The Association, in principle, could serve a positive role if the Serb community utilizes it to strengthen its rights within the Republic of Kosovo. However, when viewed through the lens of past experiences, the Serb community in Kosovo has often been manipulated and instrumentalized by the Serbian government and its political structures for purposes aimed at destabilizing and undermining the institutions of the Republic of Kosovo. The

⁴⁴ United Nation Security Council: *Comprehensive proposal for the Kosovo status settlement*. Art. 6 and 26, March 2007. In: *reliefweb.int* [online]. [2025-11-12]. Available at: <<https://reliefweb.int/report/serbia/comprehensive-proposal-kosovo-status-settlement-s2007168add1>>.

⁴⁵ United Nation: *Agreement of Principles on the Normalization of Relations (Brussels Agreement)*. 19 April 2013, Brussels. In: *peacemaker.un.org* [online]. [2025-11-12]. Available at: <<https://peacemaker.un.org/en/node/9756>>.

⁴⁶ The Diplomatic Service of the EU. *Pristina-Belgrade Dialogue*. 05 March 2025. In: *eeas.europa.eu* [online]. [2025-11-12]. Available at: <https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/belgrade-pristina-dialogue_en>.

⁴⁷ Government of the Republic of Kosovo. *Summary of the Brussels Agreement Package*. 27 August 2015. In: *dialogue-info.com* [online]. [2025-11-12]. Available at: <<https://dialogue-info.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Brief-summary-of-the-Brussels-Agreement-Package-27-August-2015.pdf>>.

Brussels Agreement⁴⁸ clearly stipulates the establishment of the Association, grounding it within the constitutional framework of Kosovo. As such, it is deemed acceptable and may be implemented as a legitimate mechanism to further enhance the rights of the Kosovo Serb ethnic minority in Kosovo.

The institutions of Kosovo proposed a draft statute for the Association of Serb-majority Municipalities, which was subsequently subjected to constitutional review and declared unconstitutional in a significant number of its provisions by the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Kosovo.⁴⁹ In its ruling, the Court concluded that the general principles of the Association were not fully in accordance with the spirit of the Constitution and, as such, the draft was deemed unconstitutional.⁵⁰ This decision triggered political resistance from most political parties, civil society actors, and the broader public. The proposal for the Association was reintroduced through a draft proposal prepared by the European Union in 2023,⁵¹ which aims to establish an entity that would ensure an enhanced level of rights for the Serb community within the constitutional order of Kosovo.

On the other hand, the Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo, particularly in Chapters 2, 3, and 10, clearly defines the rights of underrepresented groups, with special emphasis on the competencies of local government.⁵² According to the Law on Local Self-Government of Kosovo, which is based on the Comprehensive Proposal for the Kosovo Status Settlement (Ahtisaari Plan), municipalities in Kosovo enjoy broad competences in areas such as education, healthcare, urban planning, culture, and environmental protection.⁵³ Municipalities with most minority communities, including the Serb community, are entitled to: the official use of their language, the preservation of cultural heritage, education in their mother tongue, and the establishment of inter-municipal and international cooperation in accordance with the law. Moreover, at the central level, non-majority communities are guaranteed representation in both the legislative and executive branches of government.

In a comparative analysis of Kosovo's legal framework and the European Charter of Local Self-Government⁵⁴, it becomes evident that the rights of minority communities

⁴⁸ Albanian Post. *Çka thotë letra e Federica Mogherini-t për Asociacionin që Kurti po e përmend kaq shpesh?* [What does Federica Mogherini's letter regarding the Association state, which Kurti so frequently refers to?]. 31 March 2023. In: *albanianpost.com* [online]. [2025-11-12]. Available at: <<https://albanianpost.com/cka-thote-letra-e-federica-mogherini-t-per-asociacionin-qe-kurti-po-e-permend-kaq-shpesh/>>.

⁴⁹ Constitutional Court of Republic of Kosovo. *Judgment in Case No. KO 130/15*. Pristina, 23 December 2015. In: *gjk-ks.org* [online]. [2025-11-12]. Available at: <https://gjk-ks.org/wp-content/uploads/vendimet/gjk_ko_130_15_ang.pdf>.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 23, (136).

⁵¹ The Diplomatic Service of the European Union. *Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue: Agreement on the path to normalization between Kosovo and Serbia*. 27 February 2023, Brussels. In: *eeas.europa.eu* [online]. [2025-11-12]. Available at: <https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/belgrade-pristina-dialogue-agreement-path-normalisation-between-kosovo-and-serbia_en>.

⁵² Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo. Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo, 2008. Chapters 2, 3 and 10. In: *gzk.rks-gov.ne* [online]. [2025-11-12]. Available at: <<https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDetail.aspx?ActID=3702>>.

⁵³ Law No. 03/L-040, on Local Self-governance. Prishtina 2008, Art. 19, 20, 21, 22, and 23. In: *gzk.rks-gov.ne* [online]. [2025-11-12]. Available at: <<https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDetail.aspx?ActID=2530>>.

⁵⁴ Council of Europe. *Additional Protocol to the European Charter of Local Self-Government on the right to participate in the affairs of a local authority*. Utrecht, 16 November 2009. In: *rm.coe.int* [online]. [2025-11-12]. Available at: <<https://rm.coe.int/european-charter-for-local-self-government-english-version-pdf-a6-59-p/16807198a3>>.

to participate in decision-making are more advanced in Kosovo, surpassing the standards set by this Council of Europe instrument. Moreover, the European Charter of Local Self-Government has direct applicability in Kosovo, as it is incorporated into the country's constitutional and legal provisions.⁵⁵

Nevertheless, the Association of Serb-majority Municipalities, as outlined in the proposed versions, envisions a higher level of political and administrative coordination, including: additional competencies in education, healthcare, and local economic development; joint institutional representation on matters affecting the Serb community; and the establishment of a “governing council” and organizational structures composed of representatives from the member municipalities.⁵⁶ According to the draft statute proposed by the European Union in 2023, the Association will not possess independent executive or legislative powers but will operate in accordance with the Constitution of Kosovo and under the supervision of local authorities.⁵⁷

Representatives of the Serb List (Kosovo Serb political Party) and officials of the Serbian government have consistently stated that the establishment of the Association is essential to provide protection of the K/Serb rights in Kosovo. According to them, without such an organizational structure, Kosovo Serbs will not be able to effectively exercise their rights, particularly in Serb-majority regions. As Petar Petković, Director of the Office for Kosovo in the Government of Serbia, asserted, “The Association is the only institutional mechanism for protecting the collective rights of Serbs in Kosovo.”

On the other hand, representatives of Kosovo's institutions and a segment of public opinion argue that the establishment of the Association in its proposed form may endanger the functionality of the state and create an entity with features resembling the “Republika Srpska” in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Furthermore, such a structure must be fully consistent with the constitutional and legal provisions of the Republic of Kosovo.⁵⁸ Kosovo's Prime Minister Albin Kurti has stated that “a monoethnic association is unacceptable” and emphasized that the ethnic minority freedom and rights are already safeguarded by law and the Constitution.

A group of British Members of Parliament from various political parties has addressed a letter to the UK Foreign Secretary, Mr. David Lammy, expressing their deep concern regarding the actions of Serbian President Aleksandar Vučić, who, among other objectives, aims to destabilize the Balkan region, with particular emphasis on Kosovo and Bosnia and Herzegovina. According to the letter, these actions are being carried out in coordination with Vladimir Putin, as part of a broader effort to divert international attention

⁵⁵ Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo. Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo. Prishtina 2008, Art. 123.3. In: *gzk.rks-gov.ne* [online]. [2025-11-12]. Available at: <<https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDetail.aspx?ActID=3702>>.

⁵⁶ The dialogue. Association of Municipalities of Serb Majority Community. In: *dialogue-info.com* [online]. [2025-11-12]. Available at: <<https://dialogue-info.com/association-community-of-serb-majority-municipalities/>>.

⁵⁷ Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Kosovo. *Association of Municipalities in the Republic of Kosovo in which the Kosovo Serb Community is in the Majority*. Prishtina, January 2023, pg. 19. In: *library.fes.de* [online]. [2025-11-12]. Available at: <<https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/kosovo/19981.pdf>>.

⁵⁸ Limaj, Fatmir-President of Nisma Socialdemokrate (Political party) “Minority communities rights in Kosovo.” Interviewed on May 5, 2024 in Prishtina, Kosovo.

from Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. The letter has been signed by 26 British parliamentarians.⁵⁹

The current legal system of Kosovo provides a strong foundation for the individual and collective protection of communities; however, its practical implementation has often been inadequate and frequently dependent on the willingness of local authorities. The establishment of the Association of Serb-majority Municipalities, if confined within the constitutional framework, could enhance coordination mechanisms among Serb municipalities and mitigate the political marginalization felt by this community. Nevertheless, should the Association be granted independent competencies that exceed the principle of municipal self-governance and create parallel structures to the state, it would represent a dangerous precedent for the functioning of Kosovo's multiethnic statehood. In fact, the deliberate weakening of the Kosovar state through an instrument such as the Association is a central objective of Serbia's foreign policy. In this context, the promotion of the rights of the Serb community in Kosovo serves merely to the primary end: the dismantling of Kosovo's statehood. Any member of the Serb community in Kosovo who opposes this agenda is subject to punitive measures and sanctions imposed by Serbian state institutions.

V. DATA AND METHODS

This paper, from a methodological perspective, relies on empirical data collected over a period in the respective field of research, particularly in settlements with ethnically mixed populations, as well as, to a lesser extent, in monoethnic areas. For the purposes of the study, a "desktop-based" approach was also employed to analyze prior findings, the chronological development, and emerging trends related to the subject under research. The primary method used is the legal-dogmatic one, as the legal framework concerning the rights of non-majority communities is critically examined. Additionally, qualitative methods have yielded valid data through interviews conducted with leading experts in this particular field and representatives of various ethnic communities. On the other hand, quantitative data collected within various communities have revealed significant insights, shedding light on the objective reality in which members of non-majority groups live. The research sample was stratified to enhance the validity of the data. In essence, the paper is predominantly grounded in empirical data and the analysis of primary sources, while the use of descriptive approaches has been deliberately minimized.

VI. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The study is further substantiated by data obtained from 654 respondents throughout five different municipalities in Kosovo (Mitrovica North, Mitrovica South, Fushë Kosovë, Vushtrri, and Obiliq), comprising residents with diverse ethnic, gender, and educational backgrounds.

⁵⁹ Koha. *British MPs demand sanctions against Vucic after his visit to Moscow*. In: *koha.net* [online]. [2025-11-12]. Available at: <<https://www.koha.net/en/rajon/deputetet-britanike-kerkojne-sanksione-ndaj-vuciqit-pasi-vizites-se-tij-ne-moske?>>

Ethnicity of respondents	Respondents No.	Male	Female	Basic level of education	High level of school	University level of education
Roma	98	57	41	65	28	5
Serb	321	214	107	0	183	138
Turkish	63	41	22	0	42	21
Croat	12	3	9	0	5	7
Ashkali	58	32	26	17	39	2
Albanian	102	63	39	0	47	55
Total	654	410	244	82	344	228

Table 2: Structure of respondents

The research was conducted in a highly tense political environment in Kosovo, occasionally accompanied by security-related challenges. Nevertheless, the majority of respondents stated that human rights and the rights of ethnic minorities are well protected by Kosovo’s constitutional and legal framework (527 respondents, or 80.5%). A portion of respondents (127 individuals, or 19.5%) believe that these rights are not adequately safeguarded by the existing legal provisions in Kosovo. Despite the prevailing political and security tensions, the data collected from the field indicate that four-fifths of the respondents believe that the ongoing integration efforts have also had a positive impact on the legal protection of Kosovo citizens belonging to ethnic minorities.

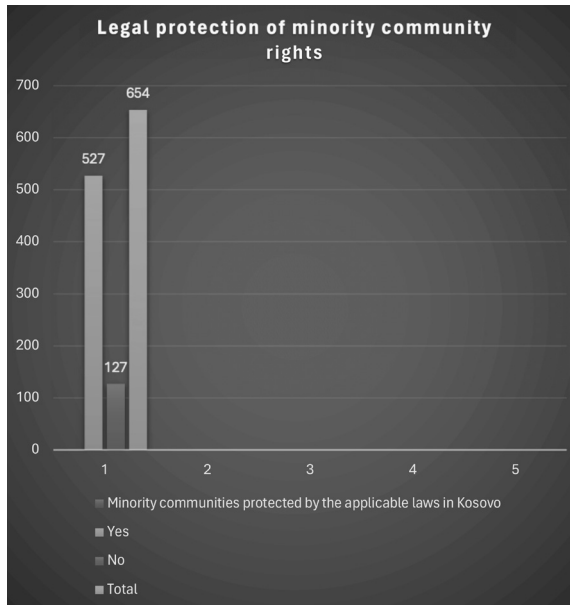


Figure 1: Legal protection of minority communities in Kosovo

The vast majority of respondents, particularly members of ethnic minority communities, were unable to recall any specific laws that protect minority rights in Kosovo (536 respondents, or 82%), despite the fact that most expressed general satisfaction with the legal protection of their rights. Only 118 respondents (18%) were able to partially refer to a few basic laws concerning the protection of minority community rights.

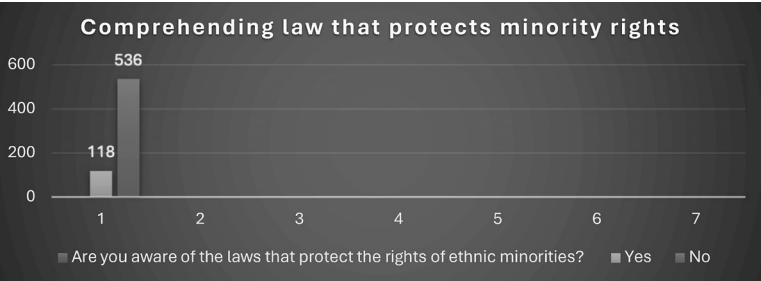


Figure 2: Awareness of human rights legal provisions

Regarding the obligation to uphold and respect the rights of minority communities, the data reveal a rather optimistic trend, despite the broader context of unfavorable political and societal developments. In other words, approximately 215 respondents (33%) believe that the rights of ethnic minorities are not protected to the extent they should be. Conversely, 434 respondents (67%) expressed either full or moderate satisfaction with the respect for and fulfillment of human rights. Despite this positive trend concerning human rights, significant efforts are still needed to reduce dissatisfaction and address negative perceptions related to the protection of the rights of various ethnic communities.

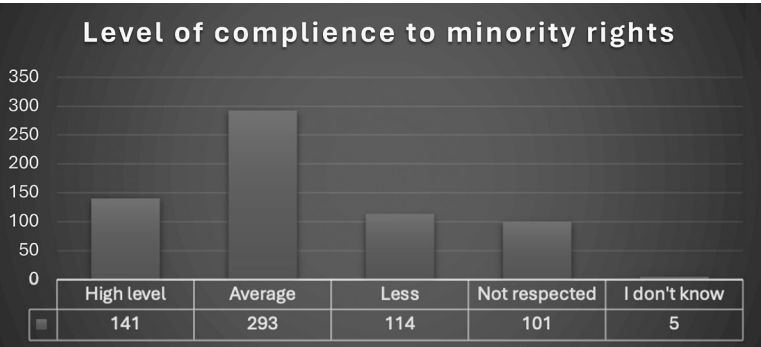


Figure 3: Compliance with minority community’s rights

The data collected reveal an interesting phenomenon, whereby 544 respondents (83%) believe that the rights of ethnic minorities in Kosovo should be further safeguarded through additional legal instruments to ensure the desired level of protection. In con-

trast, only 106 respondents (17%) expressed the view that there is no need for additional instruments or mechanisms to safeguard human rights, particularly ethnic minority rights.



Figure 4: Should an additional legal framework be used to protect minority rights?

It is a well-established fact that human rights in Kosovo, and particularly the rights of ethnic minorities, are embedded in a wide range of constitutional and legal provisions, contributing to the development of a highly advanced legal framework. This legal framework incorporates standards that, in some respects, even exceed those required by international human rights law. However, within the context of Kosovo, there appears to be an exceptional normative approach to human rights, accompanied by comparatively limited practical engagement in the protection, promotion, and respect of these rights. Quantitative and qualitative data indicate that various ethnic communities possess limited knowledge about the rights guaranteed to them by law and the Constitution. Ultimately, the right to know one’s human rights constitutes a right in itself.

CONCLUSION

It is still a continuous process in Kosovo to promote and defend the rights of ethnic minorities, both in terms of rules and in terms of the institutions and mechanisms to put them into action. The study demonstrates that Kosovo’s constitutional and legal protections for minority rights are stronger than the minimum standards specified by international accords and the larger body of international human rights law. The mechanisms that include reserved political representation for ethnic minorities, unequal and expanded administrative powers at the local level, affirmative action measures, and the direct application of international human rights conventions are all clear signs of the effort to create a democratic and multiethnic society. But real qualitative and quantitative data from the field demonstrate that it is still hard to protect and enforce minority rights in Kosovo.

Most of the respondents acknowledged there was a legal framework, but they didn’t know how it worked or how to use it in real life. This lack of information is a major sign

that normative approaches alone won't be enough to promote, protect, and respect the rights of ethnic minorities. Even the best legislative protections won't be able to change Kosovo's society, which is still going through a lot of changes, if ethnic minorities aren't informed and given the tools they need to protect their rights and interests.

Additionally, entities like the Consultative Council for Communities, Municipal Committees for Communities, and reserved seats in Parliament and Government are shown as parts of consensual democracy that include everyone. But these institutions don't work very well and often don't attain the goals they were designed to reach because of political difficulties, misuse, lack of agreement, lack of finances, or bad management. The study demonstrates that institutions generally react instead of acting, which doesn't support actual inclusion and social equality.

The study also highlights an essential aspect of the profound politicization and use of the Serb minority in Kosovo for political purposes. The idea of creating the Association of Serb-majority Municipalities has caused a lot of problems between Kosovo and Serbia. It has brought back concerns over how to balance the rights of groups with the independence and effectiveness of the new state of Kosovo. Self-government is an important part of democratic and pluralistic society, but it must be able to thrive alongside the country's legal and constitutional system. It may make things worse between ethnic groups if someone tried to put up a parallel and uneven government structure. This could shatter the fragile balance that was struck after a violent fight. This study indicates that Serbia has often used improvements to minority rights to make Kosovo less stable instead of trying to improve the life of Serbs.

The data obtained shows that there is a strong agreement among all populations that more tools are needed to preserve and promote human rights. These tools should be focused on enforcement, access to justice, and policy frameworks that are in line with Kosovo's specific needs. So, governmental institutions, civil society, and international actors need to work harder to fill in the gaps that are already there. The research also shows that municipal governance is at a very crucial level for protecting, fulfilling, and respecting the rights of ethnic minorities. The main reason for this is the idea of subsidiarity, which says that local governments are closest to the people. So, it is vitally crucial for local governments to be able to safeguard people's rights, settle legal disputes, and make sure that everyone gets the same quality of service. The mechanism of Deputy Mayor at local level, the Office for Communities at local level, and other advisory groups need to be made stronger and allow more freedom to grow. Kosovo has a lot of work to do to make its democratic institutions stronger, its human rights tools better, and to teach people about safeguarding and supporting the rights of minorities. More resources allocated to education, interethnic dialogue, and fighting discrimination can support the aim of reaching societal equity. In conclusion, Kosovo's political duty to protect and promote the rights of minorities is also a way to ensure long-term stability, peace, and integration into the European Union.