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Understanding the  
Institutional Context:

# ASSESSING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN KOSOVO





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**Kosovar Gender Studies Center** (KGSC) [www.kgscenter.net](http://www.kgscenter.net) has been contributing to gender mainstreaming since 2002 and continuously makes efforts to achieve gender equality in Kosovo. It has been pioneering changes to the discriminatory system, social norms, and double standards, and is very active in monitoring public institutions. KGSC mission is to integrate gender-sensitive analysis, programs, and policies in all sectors of Kosovar society by increasing gender awareness and focus on gender issues, developing gender studies and ensuring the inclusion of gender-sensitive policies through research, policy development, advocacy, and lobbying.

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# LIST OF ACRONYMS

AGE	Agency for Gender Equality
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CoE	Council of Europe
CSP	Chief State Prosecutor
DV	Domestic Violence
EULEX	European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GE	Gender Equality
GEO	Gender Equality Officers
IC	Istanbul Convention
KCSS	Kosovar Center for Security Studies
KGSC	Kosovar Gender Studies Center
KJC	Kosovo Judicial Council
KP	Kosovo Police
KPC	Kosovo Prosecutorial Council
MCMDV	Municipal Coordination Mechanisms against Domestic Violence
MFLT	Ministry of Finance, Labour and Transfers
MLSW	Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare
Moj	Ministry of Justice
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MP	Member of Parliament
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
SWC	Social Work Center
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
VAAO	Victims Advocacy and Assistance Office
VAW	Violence against Women



# KEY FINDINGS

The following key findings are derived from six in-depth interviews conducted with Gender Equality Officers (GEOs), as well as insights gathered from a survey involving 51 public institution representatives. The survey participants consisted of municipal officials, parliament members, representatives of KJC and KPC, Kosovo Police, Social Work Centers, and relevant MLSW representatives.

## **The in-depth interview key findings are summarized below:**

1. Perceptions and Causes of Gender-Based Violence:
  - Gender-based violence is perceived as a violation of fundamental human rights
  - Common causes of gender-based violence in Kosovo include:
    - Domestic violence within close family units (psychological, physical, and economic abuse)
    - Patriarchal societal structure and traditional cultural values
    - Shifting attitudes during the post-war transitional period
    - Lack of public's education on women's rights
    - Women's economic vulnerability and dependence on spouses
    - Influence of substance abuse by perpetrators
2. Frequency of Encountering GBV Cases and Reporting Ease:
  - Varying perspectives on the frequency of gender-based violence cases reported among municipalities, ranging from moderate to high levels of GBV
  - Difficulties in persuading survivors to report GBV cases due to:
    - Fear of consequences and reactions from perpetrators
    - Lack of awareness about reporting procedures
  - Confidentiality is considered important, but often compromised due to:
    - Informal discussions about cases outside of work
    - Lack of anonymity in a collective mentality society
3. Obstacles Faced by Survivors of GBV:
  - Concerns about societal stigma and negative consequences
  - Difficulty proving violence, especially psychological abuse
  - Fear of social exclusion and inability to reintegrate
  - Safety concerns for children and family harmony
  - Lack of confidence in the justice system and fair treatment
  - Financial dependence on perpetrators leading to return after reporting
4. Needs for Effective MCMDV Implementation:
  - Adequate staffing and reduced turnover
  - Improved infrastructure, including police vehicles
  - Enhanced financial support, both nationally and municipally
  - Strengthened cooperation among key stakeholders, especially the judicial system

- Availability of suitable shelters, addressing restrictions for entry
- Foster the potential for empowering MCMDVs with decision-making power and enable better cooperation among MCMDVs institutions

#### 5. Strategies recommended for preventing gender-based violence:

- Training staff on existing conventions and raising awareness among key stakeholders
- Community training to recognize and report GBV incidents
- Rehabilitation and support for perpetrators to address root causes
- Collaboration with vocational training centers and employment offices
- Free vocational training programs for survivors to enhance employability
- Financial support and assistance for a certain period
- Improving the judicial system for prompt handling and fair punishment
- Active engagement of all key stakeholders to ensure effective implementation of laws

### **The survey key findings are summarized below:**

#### 1. Demographic Information of the Survey Respondents:

- Municipality representatives accounted for 65% of the respondents, followed by Social Work Center representatives (14%) and Kosovo Police officers (8%).
- Men constituted 35% of the respondents, while women represented 65%.
- The majority of respondents had attained a Bachelor's degree (49%), followed by a Master's degree (43%), and a smaller percentage had completed a PhD or equivalent (4%).

#### 2. Perception, Level, and Causes of Gender-Based Violence in Kosovo:

- The majority of respondents (51%) perceived the level of gender-based violence (GBV) in Kosovo as moderate, while 41% considered it high, and only 8% believed it was very high.
- Poverty and economic insecurity (31%), lack of education and awareness (28%), cultural attitudes towards gender roles (23%), and weak law enforcement and judicial systems (18%) were identified as the main causes of GBV.

#### 3. The Frequency of Encountering GBV Cases, Survivors' Reporting Ease, and Confidentiality Beliefs:

- Most respondents reported encountering GBV cases occasionally (39%) or rarely (37%), while a notable proportion (24%) encountered them frequently.
- Survivors typically report GBV cases at the police station (96%) rather than the Center of Social Work (4%).
- Reporting cases of GBV was perceived as very difficult by a significant portion of respondents (35%), somewhat difficult by 33%, somewhat easy by 22%, and very easy by only 2%.
- A majority of respondents (51%) viewed the reporting channels for GBV cases as somewhat confidential, while 31% considered them very confidential.



#### 4. Obstacles Faced by Survivors of GBV:

- Lack of legal representation (51%) and social stigma (24%) were identified as the primary challenges faced by survivors of GBV.
- Limited access to support services (16%), fear of retaliation (4%), and insufficient evidence (4%) were also mentioned as obstacles.

#### 5. Municipalities' Needs to Effectively Implement MCMDVs:

- While 63% of respondents reported the presence of early warning mechanisms, 37% indicated their absence, highlighting the need for greater attention to establishing effective systems.
- The Municipal Coordination Mechanism was perceived as very effective by 33% of respondents, somewhat effective by 31%, and ineffective by 10%.
- Challenges faced by the Municipal Coordination Mechanism included lack of resources and funding (41%), limited cooperation and coordination among stakeholders (10%), and insufficient training and capacity building (14%).

#### 6. Strategies for Preventing GBV in Kosovo:

- Most respondents (61%) believed that there is inadequate support available for GBV survivors in their municipality or institution.
- Public institutions in Kosovo were perceived to address GBV moderately well by 65% of respondents.
- While 61% of respondents were aware of existing policies or research related to preventing GBV, 39% were not aware.
- Strengthening law enforcement and judicial systems (20%), providing support services for survivors (19%), promoting gender equality and women's empowerment (21%), and increasing education and awareness (20%) were identified as important steps to prevent GBV.

# INTRODUCTION

Gender-based violence (GBV) has been the subject of extensive discussions in recent years. It refers to acts of violence specifically targeted at individuals based on their gender or violence that disproportionately affects individuals of a specific gender, with women usually being disproportionately affected as compared to their male counterparts. Violence against women is recognized as a violation of their human rights and is a form of discrimination. It encompasses various forms of harm, such as physical, sexual, psychological, economic, or general suffering [1].

Physical violence in the context of gender-based violence leads to physical harm, distress, and health issues, and in severe cases, it can even result in loss of life. Examples of physical violence include acts such as beating, strangling, pushing, and the use of weapons. According to data from the European Union, 31% of women have encountered one or more incidents of physical violence since reaching the age of 15 [2].

Sexual violence within the realm of gender-based violence encompasses non-consensual sexual acts, attempts to coerce, or engage in sexual acts, acts of trafficking, and any actions that violate a person's sexual autonomy without their consent. It is estimated that approximately one in 20 women (5%) in EU countries has experienced rape since the age of 15. [3]

Psychological violence involves abusive behaviors that inflict psychological harm, such as control, coercion, economic violence, and blackmail. Within the European Union, 43% of women have experienced some form of psychological violence perpetrated by an intimate partner [4].

Economic violence refers to any action or conduct that inflicts financial or economic harm upon an individual. It can manifest in various ways, such as causing damage to one's property, imposing limitations on accessing financial resources, education, or employment opportunities, or failing to fulfill financial obligations like alimony. [5]

Gender-based violence, which was already a significant global crisis prior to the pandemic, has become more severe since the outbreak of COVID-19. The implementation of lockdowns and other restrictions on movement has resulted in many women being trapped with their abusers, isolated from social contacts and support systems. The increased economic uncertainty has further limited women's ability to escape abusive situations [6].

[1] European Commission. Gender-based Violence (GBV) by definition. Accessible at: [https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality/gender-based-violence/what-gender-based-violence\\_en](https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality/gender-based-violence/what-gender-based-violence_en)

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid.

[5] European Institute for Gender Equality. Economic violence by definition. Accessible at: [https://eige.europa.eu/publications-resources/thesaurus/terms/1229?language\\_content\\_entity=en](https://eige.europa.eu/publications-resources/thesaurus/terms/1229?language_content_entity=en)

[6] UN Women. Gender-Based Violence: Women and Girls at Risk. Available at: [https://www.unwomen.org/en/hq/complex-page/covid-19-rebuilding-for-resilience/gender-based-violence?gclid=CjwKCAjwvpCkRhB4EiwAuiJLMh5c7iVsjOrmis5J5jNRSj7V8B28EtO649qY3Nle5zhPT3iaK7QppRoCnKwQAvD\\_BwE](https://www.unwomen.org/en/hq/complex-page/covid-19-rebuilding-for-resilience/gender-based-violence?gclid=CjwKCAjwvpCkRhB4EiwAuiJLMh5c7iVsjOrmis5J5jNRSj7V8B28EtO649qY3Nle5zhPT3iaK7QppRoCnKwQAvD_BwE)

Considering the wide-reaching impact of gender-based violence on the psychological, physical, and economic well-being of women, it is crucial to examine the responses of governments and key stakeholders in various countries. Their efforts are essential not only in addressing and reducing GBV as a widespread issue, but also in ensuring that women affected by GBV receive the necessary support and protection they require.

As such, the objective of this research is to gain insights into the perceptions of stakeholders in Kosovo regarding gender-based violence and gender. The study will assess the extent of awareness, understanding, and attitudes towards GBV and gender among those responsible for its prevention. It will also identify any barriers or opportunities that may impact the effectiveness of GBV prevention efforts.

Furthermore, the study aims to comprehend the situation of the target group and collect accurate data to foster an informed society that recognizes violence and discrimination against women as human rights violations. The focus of the study will be on public institutions at both local and central levels, including the legislative and executive branches, the judiciary, law enforcement agencies, and independent public bodies and their boards.

This study will serve as a foundation for Kosovar Gender Studies Center (KGSC) and Solidar Suisse to contribute to GBV prevention in Kosovo. The goal is to develop or implement early warning mechanisms and provide support services for survivors. This study is expected to provide practical recommendations that promote the notion that violence against women constitutes a violation of human rights and encourage citizens to act against it.

The following sections will begin by presenting an extensive literature review encompassing government documents, academic literature, and reports from NGOs and international organizations. This review focuses on existing policies and research pertaining to the prevention of gender-based violence in Kosovo.

Subsequently, the key findings and data analysis are presented, derived from primary data collection methods including semi-structured interviews and surveys. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with officers responsible for violence and gender equality in the municipalities of Prishtina, Prizren, Mitrovica, Gjakova, Kamenica, and Gjilan. Additionally, surveys were administered to a larger sample of officers for violence and gender equality throughout Kosovo, as well as a broader range of participants, including officers from the Kosovo Police, officers from the Department of Social and Family Policies from Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MLSW), representatives from the Agency for Gender Equality (AGE), the Kosovo Judicial Council (KJC), the Kosovo Prosecutorial Council (KPC), other municipal officers or assembly members, Members of the Parliament (MPs) of Kosovo, and professionals from Social Work Centers. These surveys aimed to assess the perceived prevalence of gender-based violence within Kosovo from representatives/employees of key public institutions.

Lastly, based on the findings derived from desk research and primary data, the report concludes with a set of recommendations aligned with the research outcomes.

## A Review of Literature

Violence against women is the predominant form of domestic violence in Kosovo, as supported by gender research statistics and court monitoring data. In over 95% of cases, men are the perpetrators of violence against women or girls. Furthermore, more than 90% of domestic violence cases analyzed in court hearings indicate that the offenders were fully aware of their actions, implying criminal responsibility in most instances [7].

Despite the perpetrators being found guilty of violence by the judges, the sentencing has often been conditional or accompanied by fines. This suggests a leniency in the imposed penalties. Alongside domestic violence, there has been a noticeable increase in reported cases of sexual violence in the past year. According to a report by the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX), 107 instances of sexual violence were reported in Kosovo in 2021, compared to 60 cases in 2020 [8]. Unfortunately, the institutional response to this escalating trend appears to be disproportionate.

### International and National Legal Framework

As early as 1992, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) acknowledged that gender-based violence is a type of discrimination that obstructs women's pursuit of equality [9]. CEDAW places significant emphasis on the responsibility of states to prevent gender-based violence, as well as to investigate and penalize such acts. According to CEDAW, states bear the responsibility for addressing instances of gender-based violence that occur within their jurisdiction, including any failures or omissions by their judicial, legislative, or executive branches. Moreover, the Convention stresses the importance of all states establishing a legal system that is effective and accessible in addressing all forms of gender-based violence.

The most recent international instrument addressing gender-based violence is the Istanbul Convention. Its primary objective is to establish comprehensive national strategies for combating all forms of gender-based violence and implementing preventive measures, as well as providing protection and support for survivors. The Convention also highlights the crucial need to end impunity for perpetrators on a global scale, emphasizing the importance of prompt and effective prosecution [10].

The Convention serves as a multi-purpose treaty, encompassing criminal law, human rights, and gender equality. It effectively criminalizes all forms of gender-based violence,

[7] Kosova Women's Network. Deferment of Gender-Based Violence Cases by the Judicial System. (2022). Accessible at: <https://womensnetwork.org/deferment-of-gender-based-violence-cases-by-the-judicial-system/>

[8] Ibid.

[9] Committee for the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women, General Recommendation 19 (2011). Accessible at: <https://d2t1lspzrijt2.cloudfront.net/wp-content/uploads/ARTICLES-19.pdf>

[10] Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (CETS No. 210).

including psychological and physical abuse, rape and sexual violence, stalking, female genital mutilation, forced sterilization and abortion, and forced marriage.

In the case of the Republic of Kosovo, CEDAW's principles are firmly incorporated into its Constitution through Article 22 which cites a myriad of international agreements and instruments which in case of conflict "have priority over provisions of laws and other acts of public institutions". In other words, Kosovo is bound by the obligations outlined in CEDAW to ensure an effective and accessible legal framework to combat gender-based violence [11]. Moreover, as of 2020, the Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo included the Istanbul Convention (amendment no. 26) to the list of international instruments through constitutional amendments. As a result, even though Kosovo is not a ratifying state of the Istanbul Convention or a member of the Council of Europe, the Convention is directly applicable in the legal framework of Kosovo and takes precedence over other laws and regulations [12].

In line with Istanbul Convention provisions, in 2019, the National Coordinator against Domestic Violence, in collaboration with UN Women, initiated an integrated database to track cases of domestic violence, accessible to relevant institutions across various sectors. This database facilitates cooperation among ministries and institutions, including the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), Ministry of Finance, Labor and Transfer (MFLT), Kosovo Judicial Council (KJC), Kosovo Prosecutorial Council (KPC), and Kosovo Police (KP). Six institutions, such as the police, social services, Victims Advocacy and Assistance Office, shelters, the Office of the Chief State Prosecutor (CSP), and courts currently use the database, with plans for translation into English [13].

The database aims to provide anonymized statistics, following the victim's journey through the judicial system and support services. The process involves data entry by the Kosovo Police, information on assistance from support services, and completion of criminal offenses related to the case by the police, prosecutors, and courts. However, some challenges remain, as judges do not consistently compile real-time data. Although the database offers valuable information, the EU delegation was only provided with overall data on the total number of domestic violence cases, lacking specific details on victim access to support services and justice, thus hindering comprehensive analysis of the system's effectiveness across sectors and the National Coordinator's regular extraction of comprehensive statistics. [14]

The Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo upholds gender equality as a core principle, ensuring its protection at the domestic level. Gender-based violence is recognized as a form of discrimination under Article 4 of the Law on Gender Equality. According to the Law on Gender Equality in Kosovo, it is mandatory for both public and private entities to incorporate the principle of gender equality and integration when planning, budgeting,

[11] Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo (2008). Accessible at: [www.kryeministriks.net/repository/docs/Constitution1Kosovo.pdf](http://www.kryeministriks.net/repository/docs/Constitution1Kosovo.pdf)

[12] The Istanbul Convention in the Verdict Courts in Kosovo. KGSC. (2022). Accessible at: [https://kli-ks.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/The-Istanbul-Convention-in-the-verdicts-of-courts-in-Kosovo\\_ENG.pdf](https://kli-ks.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/The-Istanbul-Convention-in-the-verdicts-of-courts-in-Kosovo_ENG.pdf)

[13] Council of Europe (CoE). Assessment of the alignment of Kosovo\*'s laws, policies and other measures with the standards of the Istanbul Convention. Accessible at: <https://rm.coe.int/kosovo-assessment-report-istanbul-convention-eng/1680a9203e>

[14] Ditto.

and implementing policies and programs. This requirement extends to areas such as childbirth and compensation. Additionally, the law explicitly prohibits harassment and sexual harassment in all contexts [15].

The Kosovo Law on Protection from Domestic Violence defines domestic violence within civil proceedings and establishes the criteria for granting protection measures through protection orders. It further defines protection measures to be taken toward the victim and calls for psycho-social treatment to perpetrators of domestic violence.[16] Moreover, certain forms of domestic violence and specific types of gender-based violence are criminalized under the Kosovo Criminal Code, encompassing offenses such as rape, sexual assault, and abuse [17].

Table 1: Key Legal Provisions and Kosovo Efforts on GE and GBV  
Source: Author's own compilation based on legal documents and references listed in this report

Key Points and Efforts	Description
Istanbul Convention (Chapter I)	Outlines general principles for a violence-free life, emphasizing gender equality and non-discrimination.
	Integrates a gender perspective into implementation and evaluation.
Istanbul Convention (Scope)	Addresses all forms of violence against women, especially domestic violence disproportionately affecting women.
	Key definitions in Article 3 clarify concepts related to violence against women, gender-based violence, and domestic violence.
Istanbul Convention (Violence Motivated by Gender)	Violence addressed by the convention is primarily motivated by the victim's gender, resulting from unequal power relations between women and men.
Kosovo Policies and Legislation	Aligned with the Istanbul Convention, including the National Strategy on the Protection against Domestic Violence and Violence against Women (2022-2026).
Criminalization Efforts in Kosovo	Amendments to the Criminal Code (2019) and the Law on Gender Equality (2015) aimed at criminalizing various forms of violence.
Legal Framework on Domestic Violence	Covered by the Law on the Protection against Domestic Violence and the Criminal Code.
	Limitations exist in the Criminal Code's categorization and harmonization, impacting recognition of individual rights for women and girls experiencing violence.
Draft Law on Domestic Violence	Aims to replace the Law on the Protection against Domestic Violence, expanding scope and adopting a gender-sensitive perspective.

Legal Framework on War-Time Sexual Violence	Addresses war-time sexual violence against civilians through the Law on the Status and the Rights of Sexual Violence Victims of the War (2014).
	Provides reparation and recognition to survivors of sexual abuse and rape during the war period in Kosovo.
Legal Framework on Extra-Marital Union	Defined as a "factual relationship" characterized by a joint life of stability and continuation under Article 39 of the Law on Family.
	Individuals are considered in an extra-marital union if eligible to marry but not legally married, cohabiting openly as a married couple under Article 40.
Criminal Code and Domestic Violence	Article 248 of the Criminal Code defines domestic violence, including physical, psychological, sexual, or economic violence, as per Article 2, 1.2 of the Law on the Protection against Domestic Violence.
Family Members and Domestic Relationships	Article 113 of the Criminal Code defines "family member" as the parent, adoptive parent, child, adopted child, brother, sister, sibling, or other blood relative they live with.
	"Domestic relationship" includes couples who were engaged, married, in an extra-marital union, or had a child together.
Coverage of Domestic Violence Laws	The Law on the Protection against Domestic Violence and Article 248 of the Criminal Code do not cover violence among couples who never cohabited.
Emphasis on Prevention and Support	Article 1 of the Law on the Protection against Domestic Violence emphasizes preventing domestic violence and addressing the needs of children, elders, and disabled persons.
National Strategy on Domestic Violence and Violence against Women (2022-2026)	Focuses on prevention, protection, support, and integrated policies.
Other Related Strategies	Kosovo Programme for Gender Equality (2020-2024) and the Strategy on the Rule of Law (2022-2026) touch on the prosecution aspect but lack detailed measures.
Multi-Agency Cooperation	Various mechanisms at central and municipal levels promote multi-agency cooperation, including the Inter-Ministerial Coordination Group against Domestic Violence.
	Functioning impacted by vacancies in the National Coordinator position.
Municipal Coordination Mechanisms	Established in some municipalities and expanding scope to cover violence against women beyond domestic violence.
	Inter-Ministerial Coordination Group lacks clearly defined duties and resources, hindering continuous and coordinated policy-making for all forms of violence covered by the convention.
Integrated Database on Domestic Violence	Launched in 2019, coordinated by the National Coordinator against Domestic Violence and supported by UN Women.

## Existing Research on Gender-Based Violence in Kosovo

The most prevalent type of gender-based violence experienced by survivors in Kosovo is domestic violence, which significantly affects many individuals. Most survivors belong to this category and have a familial relationship with the perpetrator. Many postulate that this phenomenon and its acceptance stems back to Albanian common law, a provision that granted husbands the right to inflict violence upon their wives. This included various forms of violence, ranging from verbal abuse to even causing harm or death, with no legal repercussions. Furthermore, fathers were also known to resort to brutal violence against their own children [18]. Given this was the norm, cases of domestic violence were internalized and rarely reported.

Although there is no official centralized database for tracking gender-based violence in Kosovo, available statistics through police reports indicate that in 2022, there were more than 2,700 reported cases of domestic violence, and out of these cases, 2,289 survivors were identified as women. In the first two months of 2023, there have already been 320 reported cases of domestic violence involving women [19].

A study by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) conducted in 2019 estimates that approximately 64% of the women surveyed perceive violence from partners, acquaintances, or strangers as common, with 27% considering it highly prevalent. More than half (54%) of all women report experiencing psychological, physical, or sexual violence from an intimate partner since the age of 15, and almost one-third (29%) have encountered sexual harassment. Around 14% of women indicate experiencing physical or sexual violence from either a partner or a non-partner (excluding psychological violence). Among those who have had previous partners, roughly 18% report encountering physical and/or sexual violence, while 9% of those with current partners claim current partner violence [20].

Another study aimed to evaluate GBV in Kosovo during the COVID-19 pandemic, recognizing that the implementation of quarantine measures intensified the situation for women who were confined to their homes and at a greater risk of experiencing violence. It highlights that during the first seven months of the pandemic, domestic violence cases experienced an 11% increase. Most survivors, accounting for 80% of cases, were women, while the perpetrators were mainly male family members, including spouses, former spouses, cohabiting partners, fathers, and brothers [21].

The reasons behind the increase in GBV during the pandemic have been also researched in a similar study. Based on a survey conducted between July 27 and August 23, 2020, with 908 respondents, the study identified the primary factors contributing to domestic violence during the pandemic. These included stress (18.9%), socioeconomic

[18] Maçastena A. Gender-Based Violence in Kosovo. UNHCR. (2022).

[19] Balkan Insight. Share Your Experience: Domestic Violence in Kosovo (2023). Accessible at: <https://balkaninsight.com/2023/03/13/share-your-experience-domestic-violence-in-kosovo/>

[20] Well-being and Safety of Women in Kosovo. OSCE Mission (2019).

[21] Limani M. and Limani M. Gender-Based Violence in Kosovo during the COVID-19 Pandemic. (2022). European Journal of Social Sciences. Accessible at: [https://revistia.org/files/articles/ejss\\_v5\\_i2\\_22/Limani.pdf](https://revistia.org/files/articles/ejss_v5_i2_22/Limani.pdf)



and the lack of physical space for quarantine within the household or apartment (4.4%). Additionally, an analysis of statistical data from the Kosovo police revealed a 19.75% increase in domestic violence cases during the quarantine period from March to June 2020 [22].

Another report conducted by the Kosovar Center for Security Studies (KCSS) highlights a rise in reported cases of GBV in the past year, as well as an increase in requests for court-issued protection orders by victims. However, victims of GBV often encounter obstacles when reporting their cases, such as limited awareness about their rights and available support services, societal stigma, lack of trust in state institutions, and threats from their abusers. The report recognizes that breaches in confidentiality, bureaucratic processes, and lengthy legal proceedings contribute to a discouraging environment for reporting domestic violence cases. The presence of traditional norms and attempts at family mediation between abusers and survivors further complicate the reporting of GBV and the subsequent institutional response [23].

## **Functionality of Local Early Warning Mechanisms and Services Provided for the Victim Support in Kosovo**

In order to address and deal with incidents of domestic violence (DV) and violence against women (VAW), an organized, collaborative, and comprehensive approach is required from the responsible government and local institutions. Currently, the Municipal Coordination Mechanisms against Domestic Violence (MCMDVs) serve as the local-level structures aimed at providing a coordinated response to DV under the authority of local authorities. As of March 2023, 33 MCMDVs have been established, covering the majority of municipalities in Kosovo. Among these 33 MCMDVs [24], 20 were set up with direct assistance from the OSCE Mission in Kosovo, while the remaining ones received support from the UN Women Office in Kosovo [25].

The MCMDVs have the objective of enhancing collaboration between institutions when dealing with domestic violence cases and improving the local institutional response to such incidents. The MCMDVs consist of representatives from various sectors, including municipal administration, law enforcement agencies, the judiciary, education and health sectors, women's non-governmental organizations, child protection agencies, the Victims Advocacy and Assistance Office (VAAO), the Regional Employment Office, religious communities, and other relevant partners.

[22] Gallopeni B. and Kamberi F. COVID-19 and Quarantine: Indicators of Domestic Violence in Kosovo. *Traektoriâ Nauki - Path of Science*. (2020).

[23] Based-Line Report on Gender-Based Violence in Kosovo: Community and Stakeholder Perceptions. Kosovo Center for Security Studies. (2022). Accessible at: [https://okss.org/images/uploads/files/Baseline\\_Assessment\\_Eng\\_%281%29.pdf](https://okss.org/images/uploads/files/Baseline_Assessment_Eng_%281%29.pdf)

[24] OSCE. Guidelines for Effective Performance of Municipal Coordination Mechanisms Against Domestic Violence. (2023). The municipalities with MCMDVs are: Gjakovë/Dakovica, Gjiilan/Gnjilane, Glogoc/Glogovac, Gračanica/Gračanicë, Hani i Elezit/Elez Han, Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje, Istog/Istok, Kaçanik/Kaçanik, Klinë/Klina, Klokot/Kllkot and Parteš/Partesh, Leposavić/Leposaviq, Lipjan/Lipljan, Malishevë/Mališevo, Mamuşa/Mamushë/Mamuša, Mitrovica/Mitrovicë North, Mitrovicë/Mitrovica South, Obilić/Obiliq, Pejë/Peć, Prishtinë/Priştina, Prizren, Shtime/Štimlje, Skenderaj/Srbica, Suharekë/Suva Reka, Viti/Vitina, Zvečan/Zveçan, Zubin Potok, Kamenicë/Kamenica, Vushtri/Vuçitër. In March 2023, the Mission supported the establishment of two MCMDVs, in Novo Brdo/Novobërdë and Ranilug/Ranillug municipalities.

[25] OSCE. Guidelines for Effective Performance of Municipal Coordination Mechanisms Against Domestic Violence. (2023). Accessible at: <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/8/0/543843.pdf>

The development of guidelines for MCMDVs is an important initial step towards establishing a structured and coordinated approach, ensuring consistent data collection and reporting practices, and standardizing training and capacity-building efforts for MCMDV members.

Other than the recently established MCMDVs, survivors of domestic violence in Kosovo in theory have access to various protective measures. The Law on Protection from Domestic Violence defines three types of Protection Orders, which include Protection Orders, Emergency Protection Orders issued by Courts, and Temporary Emergency Protection Orders issued by the Kosovo Police outside of regular court working hours. The Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for protection from domestic violence outline the legal roles and responsibilities of institutions such as the Kosovo Police, Prosecution, Victim's Advocates, Social Work Centers, and Shelters in safeguarding domestic violence survivors. However, research indicates that these institutions frequently struggle to effectively implement the provisions outlined in both the Law on Protection from Domestic Violence and the SOPs [26].

The MCMDVs are closely tied to Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for Protection against Domestic Violence and the respective Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that establishes each MCMDV. The SOPs outline the standardized protocols and guidelines for addressing domestic violence, while the MCMDVs bring together representatives from various sectors, including municipal administration, law enforcement, judiciary, education, health, NGOs, child protection agencies, and more. Each institution within the MCMDV has a sectoral responsibility based on the SOPs, ensuring a coordinated and comprehensive institutional policy response to domestic violence. These mechanisms facilitate inter-institutional cooperation and provide a platform for regular meetings and collaboration among stakeholders, contributing to an effective and holistic approach in addressing domestic violence cases [27].

Overall, there are a myriad of actors involved in monitoring and providing victim support to survivors of gender-based violence. Some of the main institutional mechanisms include the Inter-ministerial Coordination Group Against Domestic Violence, National Coordinator against Domestic Violence, Agency for Gender Equality, municipal offices, Kosovo Police, the Police Inspectorate, Victim Advocacy and Assistance Office, State Prosecutor, Courts, Centers for Social Work, and relevant ministries. Additionally, non-governmental support partners include non-governmental organizations and shelters [28].

For example, in Kosovo, there are nine shelters specifically designed to offer a secure

[26] Qosaj Mustafa A. dhe Morina. D (2018). Accessing Justice for Victims of Gender Based Violence in Kosovo: Ending Impunity for Perpetrators. Accessible at:

[https://www.kipred.org/repository/docs/Accessing\\_Justice\\_for\\_Victims\\_of\\_Gender\\_Based\\_Violence\\_in\\_Kosovo\\_Ending\\_Impunity\\_for\\_Pe\\_rpetrators\\_820425.pdf](https://www.kipred.org/repository/docs/Accessing_Justice_for_Victims_of_Gender_Based_Violence_in_Kosovo_Ending_Impunity_for_Pe_rpetrators_820425.pdf)

[27] Ibid.

[28] Ministry of Justice. National Strategy on Protection Against Domestic Violence and Violence Against Women 2022-2026. (2022). Accessible at: <https://krveministri.rks.gov.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/ENG-Strategjia-Kombetare-per-Mbrojtje-nega-Dhuna-ne-Familje-dhe-Dhuna-ndaj-Grave-2022-2026.pdf>

and temporary living environment for survivors of domestic violence. The shelters have a designated capacity to accommodate women for a duration of up to six months [29]. The Agency for Gender Equality, operating within the Office of the Prime Minister, has outlined institutional mechanisms in the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for Protection from Domestic Violence. These mechanisms include shelters as non-governmental partners who play a direct role in protecting survivors of domestic violence. The SOP describes their responsibilities at four stages of response to domestic violence cases: identification, referral, protection, and reintegration/rehabilitation. According to the SOP, shelters have a crucial role in both protecting survivors and assisting in their reintegration and rehabilitation into society. They are required to provide a safe haven for survivors of domestic violence, along with additional services such as clothing, food, healthcare and medication, counseling and psychosocial support, and legal assistance [30].

Lastly, Kosovo has also drafted a National Strategy on Protection against Domestic Violence and Violence against Women for the 2022-2026 time-period to include pillars of IC. The Strategy is grounded in several guiding principles. It aims to progress towards a gender transformative approach and maintains a zero-tolerance stance against violence targeting women and domestic violence. The strategy adopts a human rights-based perspective and recognizes the importance of addressing gender discrimination alongside other forms of discrimination. It values and respects diversity and encourages inter-institutional coordination and cooperation. The strategy emphasizes the need to monitor progress, allocate sufficient funding, and budget effectively for strategy implementation. It places survivors at the center and ensures a victim-centered approach. The principles of due diligence and accountability are upheld throughout the strategy's implementation. It adopts a crosscutting and cross-sectoral approach to tackle violence against women and domestic violence. Additionally, the strategy recognizes victim compensation as a crucial element in securing full justice, facilitating recovery, and enabling successful reintegration of survivors affected by domestic violence and violence against women [31].

## Existing Gaps in Literature and the Study's Contribution

Considering recent developments and the establishment of the MCMDVs, it is crucial to gain insights into the perspectives of officers responsible for addressing violence and promoting gender equality in different municipalities. Understanding their views on the existing MCMDVs, the challenges they encounter, and their overall opinions on gender-based violence in Kosovo is of great importance.

Furthermore, obtaining the opinions of key individuals appointed in key institutions, including ministries and judicial bodies, is essential to assess the effectiveness of

[29] Ibid

[30] OSCE. Shelters for Victims of Domestic Violence in Kosovo. (2019). Accessible at: [https://www.osce.org/files/Report%20on%20Shelters%20for%20Victims%20of%20domestic%20violence%20in%20Kosovo\\_eng.pdf](https://www.osce.org/files/Report%20on%20Shelters%20for%20Victims%20of%20domestic%20violence%20in%20Kosovo_eng.pdf)

[31] Ministry of Justice. National Strategy on Protection Against Domestic Violence and Violence Against Women 2022-2026. (2022). Accessible at: <https://krveministri.rks-gov.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/ENG-Strategjia-Kombetare-per-Mbrojtje-nega-Dhuna-ne-Familje-dhe-Dhuna-ndaj-Grave-2022-2026.pdf>

MCMDV implementation. Since no existing data currently captures the viewpoints of officers for violence and gender equality and other relevant stakeholders when it comes to gender-based violence matters and policies, conducting a study on this subject would be valuable in identifying implementation gaps and collecting primary data. Ultimately, the key findings resulting from this study can be used to enhance the effectiveness of the MCMDVs by providing valuable insights and addressing the identified areas of improvement.

## METHODOLOGY

This study employed a rigorous mixed-method approach to gain a comprehensive understanding of the perceptions and needs of public institutions in Kosovo regarding gender-based violence, as well as to identify potential strategies for prevention and support. The research design encompassed desk research, interviews, and surveys, ensuring a comprehensive analysis of the issue. The key components of the methodology included:

### **Desk research:**

- A comprehensive review of existing policies and research related to preventing gender-based violence in Kosovo, including government documents, academic literature, and reports from NGOs and international organizations.

### **Interviews:**

- Semi-structured interviews with officers for gender equality in the municipalities of Prishtina, Prizren, Mitrovica, Gjakova, Kamenica, and Gjilan.

### **Survey:**

- Conducted a survey targeting:
  - Gender equality officers in Kosovo as well as other relevant officers working in related fields in the realm of human rights and municipal assembly members;
  - Representatives and/or judges, prosecutors, police officers who are part of the Kosovo Judicial Council, Kosovo Prosecutorial Council, Kosovo Police;
  - Relevant officers from the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MLSW), and MPs who are members of the Committee for Human Rights of the Parliament, Gender Equality, Missing Persons and Petitions.

# IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW FINDINGS

This section of the report sheds light on the valuable insights gained through interviews conducted with Gender Equality Officers from Prishtina, Gjilan, Kamenica, Gjakova, Mitrovica and Prizren. The officers' perspectives were explored in the following key areas:

1. Perception and Causes of Gender-Based Violence in Kosovo
2. The frequency of encountering GBV cases and officers' experiences with GBV survivors in terms of their reporting ease and beliefs about confidentiality
3. Obstacles faced by survivors who report GBV
4. The municipalities' needs for effective implementation of Municipal Coordination Mechanisms against Domestic Violence (MCMDVs)
5. Effective strategies for preventing GBV in Kosovo, drawing from the best practices observed in these municipalities.

## Perception and Causes of Gender-Based Violence in Kosovo

The interviewees reached a unanimous consensus regarding the nature of gender-based violence as a violation of fundamental human rights. They expressed the belief that by promoting equal treatment between women and men in society, it would be possible to eliminate or, at the very least, minimize such violence.

The officers also identified common causes attributed to GBV. They concurred that domestic violence, primarily occurring within close family units, was the predominant form of GBV in Kosovo. This violence was observed to manifest in various ways, including psychological, physical, and economic forms of abuse. To quote:

*"Gender-based violence in Kosovo mainly manifests through physical, psychological and economic violence. Husbands see that their spouse is financially dependent on them, which gives way to isolate them and deprive them of financial means, isolating them from society, knowing very well that women cannot escape that reality" (Interviewee from Gjakova).*

Key factors contributing to this issue were identified as Kosovo's patriarchal societal structure, shifting attitudes during the post-war transitional period, a lack of public education on women's rights, traditions and embedded cultural values, women's economic vulnerability and dependence on their spouses, living in extended families, high unemployment rate, and the influence of substance abuse by husbands. To quote:

*"There are many factors that contribute to GBV in Kosovo. For example, living in an extended family with in-laws is one of the reasons. Women might not be able to express their opinion freely and sometimes their opinion does not even matter. Other times, the husband might be using substances or might lack the education necessary to understand the equality of rights" (Interviewee from Mitrovica).*

*“Men in many areas of the country still consider women to be their property. So in their mind, when they are exerting violence, they are doing nothing wrong” (Interviewee from Prishtina).*

*“I think a big problem is also reliance on traditions and family units that should not be broken. Women are culturally grown up to believe that family is divine, and the concept of single-parent homes is inexistent” (Interviewee from Prizren).*

## The Frequency of Encountering GBV Cases, Survivors' Reporting Ease, and Confidentiality Beliefs

In general, there were varying perspectives regarding the frequency of encountering cases of gender-based violence among municipalities, as well as the level of belief in the system's ability to ensure anonymity and confidentiality for survivors.

A consensus was reached among the interviewees that, in principle, officials and other stakeholders make efforts to raise community awareness about reporting GBV cases. They engage in fieldwork and conduct trainings to motivate people to come forward and report the incident to the police. However, some interviewees acknowledged that despite their personal interactions with survivors of domestic violence, they face difficulties in persuading these women to report the perpetrators to the police. The survivors often experience fear and reluctance to take such action. Others are not even aware where to report these incidents. To quote:

*“I have had so many unofficial conversations with women who have fallen victims to gender-based violence. So many times, I have tried to convince them to make an official report, but they rarely do. Reasons behind why that is are many but mostly they fear the consequences, scared of how the husband will react, so they put up with it” (Interviewee from Mitrovica).*

*“We have cases that often show up to our office to just ask for advice regarding reporting steps. So many women are unaware of what steps to follow when reporting a case of gender-based violence. So we try to advise them accordingly and encourage them to report these cases” (Interviewee from Prishtina).*

Furthermore, interviewees pointed out that it is understood by women that confidentiality is crucial in handling these sensitive cases and discussions about them should not extend beyond work. Nevertheless, due to the collective mentality prevalent in Kosovo, some interviewees mentioned that maintaining anonymity is seldom achieved in practice. Information tends to spread through informal channels, unintentionally compromising the victim's confidentiality. The individuals who file the reports unintentionally discuss the cases of the day with friends, leading to the breach of the victim's anonymity. To quote:

*"In principle, we all know that anonymity of the victim is crucial especially in these sensitive cases. However, I think it is rarely applied. The moment an official that was involved in the case goes out of work, they will tell their friends about the case at work and how they had no idea this woman had such a horrible family life. They do not do it on purpose, I think. It is just part of our culture to talk about everything and as a result compromise anonymity" (Interviewee from Gjilan).*

Furthermore, an interviewee also pointed out the possibility of exposing individuals who commit acts of violence, although such exposure was deemed appropriate only in severe circumstances. The purpose behind this approach is to promote awareness, instill a sense of fear towards the legal system, and challenge societal biases. To quote:

*"I think we should also have a different approach when it comes to maintaining confidentiality. While in principle I agree that confidentiality should be maintained, I also think that for less severe cases where the victim is not hurt by being exposed, we should expose the cases. In the process we will raise awareness of the population and make everyone aware that they have a perpetrator among their family and/or friend group" (Interviewee from Kamenica).*

## Obstacles Faced by Survivors of GBV

The gender equality officers have further identified several obstacles faced by survivors of gender-based violence. One significant concern is the fear of societal stigma. Survivors worry about the negative consequences that may arise when it becomes known that they have experienced gender-based violence. This fear of judgment and potential ostracization can prevent survivors from seeking help or reporting the violence they have endured. Additionally, survivors often struggle with the inability to prove certain forms of violence, particularly psychological abuse that lacks tangible evidence. This difficulty in providing concrete proof can further complicate their pursuit of justice and support.

Another obstacle faced by survivors is the fear of social exclusion and the inability to reintegrate into their communities. Survivors worry about being ostracized or excluded if their experiences of gender-based violence become public knowledge. The fear of being shunned or stigmatized can make it challenging for survivors to seek support and rebuild their lives after the trauma they have endured. Additionally, survivors are often concerned about the safety of their children and maintaining family harmony. They fear potential repercussions from their partners, which could jeopardize the well-being of their children and disrupt family relationships. These safety concerns can create a complex dilemma for survivors, as they must consider the well-being of their children alongside their own safety.

Survivors of gender-based violence also express a lack of confidence in the justice system. They fear that their cases will be treated unfairly by the courts or the justice

system, leading to a lack of trust in obtaining justice and a feeling that their efforts will be futile. This lack of trust can deter survivors from seeking legal recourse or engaging with the justice system altogether. Furthermore, survivors often experience a lack of appropriate treatment by the justice system, including early closing of cases, unfair treatment, and lenient sentences for the perpetrators. Such experiences can deepen survivors' feelings of injustice and undermine their faith in the system meant to protect them.

Lastly, financial dependence on the perpetrator poses a significant obstacle for survivors. Many survivors face difficulties in financially supporting themselves, which often leads them to return to the same perpetrator after initially reporting the abuse. The lack of financial independence and resources can make it challenging for survivors to break free from abusive situations and establish a new life free from violence. Financial support and resources are essential in empowering survivors to leave abusive relationships and rebuild their lives. Overall, these obstacles contribute to the challenges faced by survivors of gender-based violence, making it harder for them to seek help, find safety, and achieve justice. As one interviewee stated:

*"In this country, you must have a very strong character to withstand the obstacles after reporting gender-based violence. Especially if you do not have any financial independence, not only will you go back to the same perpetrator, but it will be hard to reintegrate in society." (Interviewee from Mitrovica).*

Another one stated:

*"We see cases of domestic violence being treated unfairly by the justice system. Perpetrators that go free or with minimal sentences for example. So yes, of course women are discouraged to report such incidents because they too might get treated unfairly." (Interviewees from Prizren).*

## Municipalities' Needs to Effectively Implement MCMDVs

Further, the gender equality officers revealed a range of needs that are essential for the effective implementation of Municipal Coordination Mechanisms against Domestic Violence (MCMDV) in their respective municipalities.

Firstly, the issue of adequate staffing and reduced turnover emerged as a critical concern. Many municipalities face a lack of sufficient staff or experience a high turnover rate, leading to confusion regarding ongoing projects, conventions adopted by the Republic of Kosovo, and existing obstacles faced by the municipality. The instability and inconsistency within the staff undermine the smooth functioning of MCMDV and hinders the provision of comprehensive support to survivors.

Another theme that emerged is the need for improved infrastructure, particularly in terms of police vehicles. The gender equality officers highlighted a shortage of



infrastructure, such as an insufficient number of police cars, which hampers their ability to respond promptly and apprehend perpetrators during ongoing crimes. The lack of adequate resources and infrastructure not only compromises the enforcement of laws but also jeopardizes the safety and protection of survivors.

Financial support was identified as a significant requirement for effective implementation. The interviewees emphasized the lack of financial support, both at the national and municipal levels. Although a national fund for MCMDV implementation was proposed, no concrete action has been taken to establish this fund. As a result, officers primarily rely on international or national donors and constantly seek funds to fulfill their activities. This reliance on external funding sources diverts their time and energy from training and addressing violence, hindering their overall effectiveness.

Strengthened cooperation among key stakeholders emerged as another crucial theme. Except for the municipalities of Gjiilan and Prizren, there is a lack of cooperation between MCMDV stakeholders. The judicial system, including courts and prosecutors, was specifically highlighted as uncooperative, undermining the overall effectiveness of the support and protection chain for survivors. The lack of collaboration and coordination among stakeholders hampers the comprehensive response to domestic violence and impedes the progress towards eradicating this issue.

Lastly, the availability of suitable shelters for survivors was a pressing concern raised by the officers. They emphasized the need for proper shelters that can accommodate the diverse needs of survivors. However, several challenges were identified, such as restrictions on women who have sons over 12 years old in shelters, which exclude many survivors unwilling to leave their children behind. Additionally, inadequate shelter infrastructure was mentioned, highlighting the suboptimal living conditions for survivors. Despite receiving funds for shelter renovations, the implementation of these improvements has been delayed. To address the last point, this is what the officer from Gjiilan said on the matter:

*"We have shelters, but they are not ideal. Women who have boys 12 years old are not even allowed in the shelter. I partly understand the reasoning as this is also done to protect the children living in the shelter, especially the girls. However, we cannot deny women entry to these shelters just because they are parents of older boys. Clearly, they cannot give them away, a 12-year-old child is not capable of living on the streets. So victims (survivors) are indirectly denied entry then and have to resort to going back to the perpetrator's house" (Interviewee from Gjiilan).*

Another one claimed:

*"We lack decision making power and we have limited funds because there is no national fund in place or municipal officers for that matter (in most municipalities) to finance the MCMDV. We also need better cooperation between institutions I think, especially between the judiciary bodies and the rest. The judicial system has the highest decision-making power here, the rest of us not comparably as much" (Interviewee from Prishtina).*

# Strategies for Preventing GBV in Kosovo - Best Practices

Gender Equality Officers further highlighted several key strategies to help prevent the occurrence of gender-based violence. One important issue raised by the officers is the need for comprehensive training. They emphasized the importance of training both new and existing staff members who work with gender-based violence, ensuring that they are knowledgeable about existing conventions such as the Istanbul Convention adopted in Kosovo. The officers stressed that this training is crucial to raise awareness and understanding of these conventions among key stakeholders, enabling them to effectively respond to domestic violence cases.

Another significant issue mentioned by the officers is the rehabilitation and support for perpetrators of violence. They recommended providing assistance and training for perpetrators, including psychological consultations, to address the root causes of violence and prevent its recurrence. By focusing on rehabilitating perpetrators, it is believed that the cycle of violence can be broken, leading to safer environments for survivors.

The officers also emphasized the importance of collaboration with vocational training centers and employment offices. They pointed out that some municipalities have already made efforts in this regard, such as Gjakova, Mitrovica, Prishtina, Prizren, and Gjilan. By engaging with these entities, municipalities can provide employment opportunities for survivors, empowering them to escape from abusive situations and become self-sufficient.

Financial support emerged as another critical issue identified by the officers. They highlighted the need for providing financial assistance for a certain period to help survivors rebuild their lives. Initiatives such as covering rent for six months, supporting kindergarten costs for children, and providing permanent shelter for survivors of sexual violence have been implemented in some municipalities. The officers stressed that this financial support, combined with vocational training, can enable survivors to reintegrate into society, regain independence, and break free from the cycle of violence.

Improving the judicial system was also underscored as a pressing issue. The officers expressed the need for prompt handling of gender-based violence cases and appropriate punishment for perpetrators. They emphasized the importance of a fair and efficient judicial process to provide justice for survivors and ensure that perpetrators are held accountable for their actions.

Lastly, the officers stressed the significance of active engagement by all key stakeholders. They observed that despite the existence of laws and protective mechanisms, they are often inadequately implemented. The officers called for timely and dedicated efforts from all stakeholders to fulfill their duties and responsibilities,

ultimately facilitating the effective implementation of laws and creating a more equitable and supportive society. Below are some quotes to reinforce findings of this section:

*“We also need to work with the perpetrators. Addressing the perpetrator’s intentions is crucial to arriving at the root cause of why gender-based violence occurred in the first place. Perpetrators should be sent to rehabilitating centers or attend therapy sessions to understand why they behave the way they do”*  
(Interviewee from Prizren).

*“We need an improvement of the judicial system so there is adequate sentencing for the perpetrators. We need to have higher engagement of women across all industries so that we see them as role models, so that they are empowered and help to empower the rest who may not be as lucky”* (Interviewee from Gjakova).

## SURVEY FINDINGS

This section presents the findings derived from a comprehensive survey conducted among various stakeholders involved in addressing gender-based violence (GBV) in Kosovo. The survey encompassed individuals representing a range of roles. By capturing their perspectives and insights, this report aims to shed light on the current state of GBV response, identify challenges faced by different institutions, and provide recommendations for strengthening their efforts in combating GBV and supporting survivors.

### Demographic Information of the Survey Respondents

The completion of surveys on GBV awareness, prevalence, and institutional needs in Kosovo reveals the participation of various stakeholders in addressing this critical issue. Municipality representatives, including human rights coordinators, gender equality officers, and municipal assembly members, accounted for a significant portion of the respondents, representing 65% of the survey participants. Social Work Center representatives constituted 14% of the respondents, while Kosovo Police officers accounted for 8%. Judges and prosecutors from the Kosovo Judicial Council and the Kosovo Prosecutorial Council contributed 4% each. The MPs of the Committee for Human Rights of the Parliament, as well as representatives from the Agency for Gender Equality (AGE) and the Department of Social and Family Policies of the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MLSW), each comprised 2% of the surveys. These findings demonstrate the active involvement of diverse stakeholders in addressing GBV and highlight their acknowledgment of the issue's importance and the need to understand institutional requirements in Kosovo.

Table 2 Representative break down by institution

Institution	%
Department of Social and Family Policies of MLSW	2%
Agency for Gender Equality	2%
Kosovo Judicial Council	4%
Kosovo Prosecutorial Council	4%
Municipality	65%
Parliament of Kosovo	2%
Kosovo Police	8%
Social Work Center	14%
Total	100%

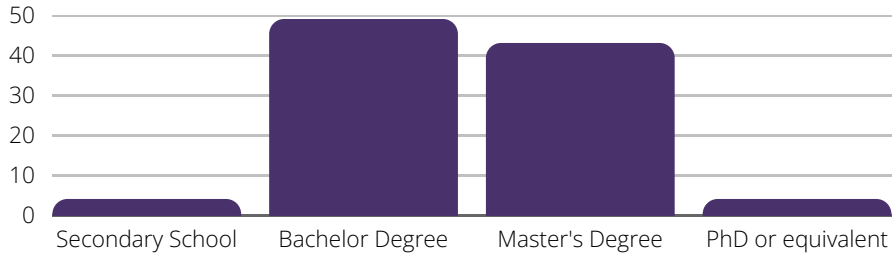
Out of a total of 51 respondents, 35% were men, while 65% were women. These results indicate a slightly higher representation of women among the survey participants, accounting for the majority of respondents.

Figure 1 Gender of the respondents



The figure below illustrates the highest level of education completed by the respondents, presented in terms of percentages. It is evident that the majority of respondents, comprising 49%, had attained a Bachelor's degree, indicating a substantial proportion of individuals with undergraduate education. Additionally, 43% of the respondents had completed a Master's degree, reflecting a significant presence of individuals with advanced degrees. A smaller segment, constituting 4%, had achieved a PhD or an equivalent level of education, signifying a limited but notable group of highly educated respondents. Only 4% of the participants had completed their education at the secondary school level. These results underscore the overall high educational qualifications of the respondents, with a notable emphasis on Bachelor's and Master's degrees, reinforcing the expertise and credibility of the survey findings.

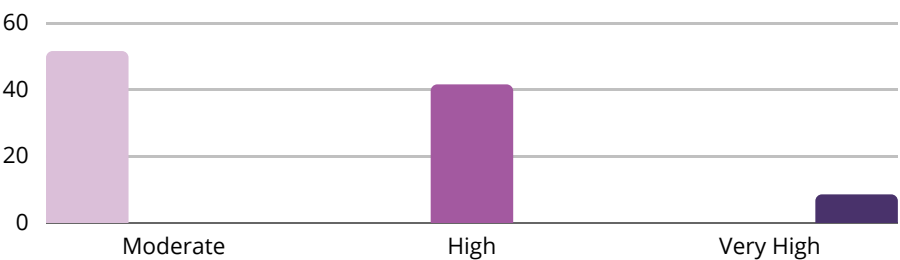
Figure 2 Completed level of education of the respondents



## Perception, Level, and Causes of Gender-Based Violence in Kosovo

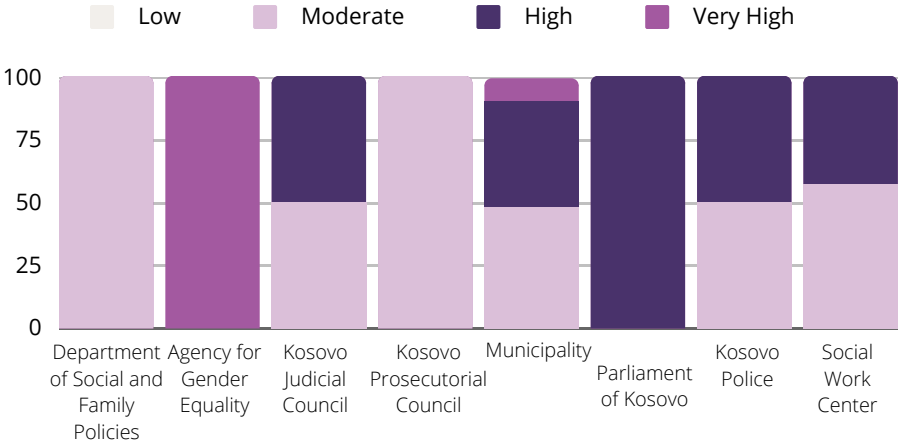
The survey participants were asked to rate the level of gender-based violence in Kosovo. The majority of respondents (51%) perceived the level of GBV as moderate, while 41% considered it to be high. Only a small percentage (8%) believed that the level of GBV in Kosovo was very high.

Figure 3 Level of gender-based violence in Kosovo



The figure below presents a comprehensive assessment of the level of gender-based violence (GBV) in Kosovo based on the responses of various institutions and organizations. The representatives from the Department of Social and Family Policies within the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare unanimously perceive the level of GBV as moderate (100%). The representatives of the Agency for Gender Equality rate the level as very high (100%). Half of the representatives from the Kosovo Judicial Council and the Kosovo Police consider the level as moderate (50%), while the other half rates it as high (50%). Similarly, Social Work Center representatives perceive the level as both moderate (57%) and high (43%). All representatives from the Kosovo Prosecutorial Council report a moderate level of GBV (100%). The municipality representatives show a mixed perception, with ratings of moderate (48%), high (42%), and very high (9%) levels of GBV. Finally, all representatives from the Parliament of Kosovo rate the level of GBV as high. These variations highlight the importance of collaboration and coordination among institutions to effectively address gender-based violence in Kosovo and work towards its prevention and elimination.

Figure 4 Level of gender-based violence as perceived by different institutions



The participants' responses shed light on the main causes of gender-based violence (GBV) in Kosovo. Poverty and economic insecurity emerged as the most frequently mentioned factor, with 31% of respondents identifying it as a significant cause. This suggests that the financial vulnerability experienced by certain individuals or households contributes to the prevalence of GBV. Lack of education and awareness was another prominent cause, as highlighted by 28% of participants. This indicates that a lack of knowledge and understanding about gender equality and women's rights may perpetuate harmful behaviors and attitudes. Cultural attitudes towards gender roles were also identified as a contributing factor, with 23% of respondents emphasizing its influence on GBV. This suggests that deeply ingrained societal norms and expectations regarding gender can contribute to the perpetuation of violence. Additionally, 18% of participants identified weak law enforcement and judicial systems as a cause of GBV, highlighting the importance of an effective legal framework and enforcement mechanisms in addressing and preventing such violence. These findings underscore the need for comprehensive approaches that address the underlying socio-economic factors, promote education and awareness, challenge harmful cultural norms, and strengthen the legal response to effectively combat gender-based violence in Kosovo.

Figure 5 Main Causes of Gender-Based Violence in Kosovo



# The Frequency of Encountering GBV Cases, Survivors' Reporting Ease, and Confidentiality Beliefs

The survey responses regarding the frequency of encountering gender-based violence (GBV) cases in participants' work shed light on the prevalence of GBV in their respective contexts. The majority of respondents reported encountering GBV cases occasionally (39%) or rarely (37%), indicating that such incidents are not consistently prevalent. However, a notable proportion (24%) reported encountering GBV frequently, suggesting a higher occurrence of such cases in their work environments. Regarding the initial reporting address for survivors of gender-based violence, the majority of respondents (96%) indicated that survivors typically report their cases at the police station. Only a small percentage (4%) reported that survivors initially seek help from the Center of Social Work.

Figure 6 Frequency of Encountering Gender-Based Violence

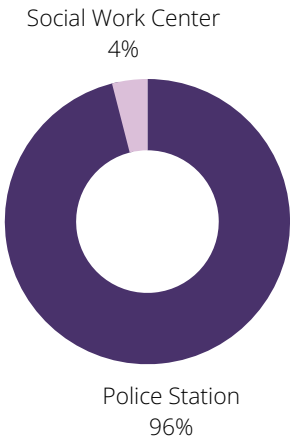
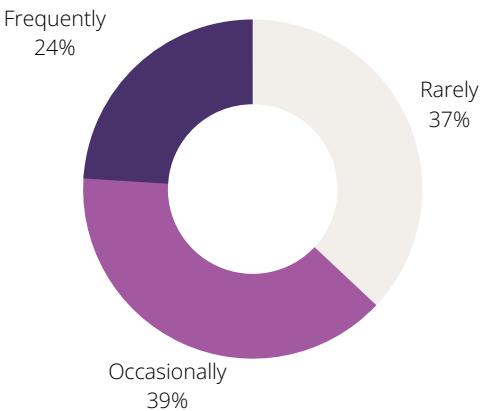
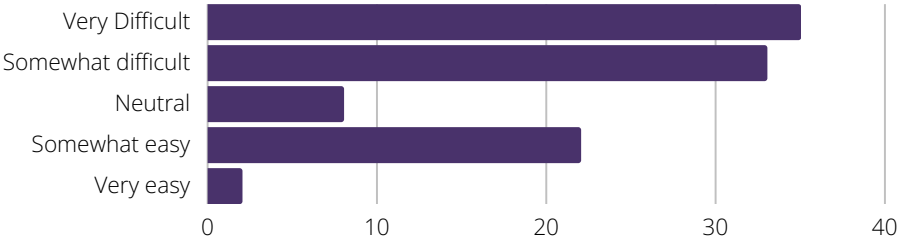


Figure 7 Primary reporting channels of gender-based violence

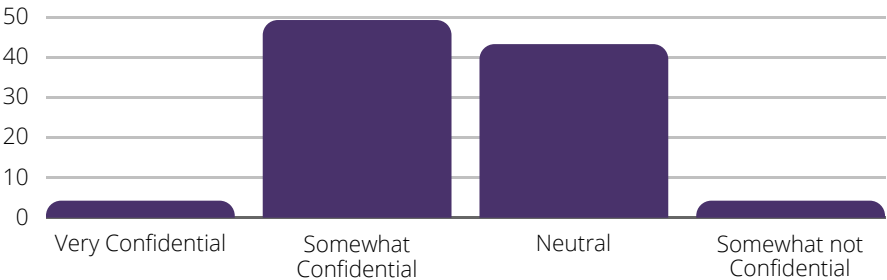
The respondents perceive survivors of gender-based violence to face significant challenges when it comes to reporting their cases. A substantial portion of respondents (35%) described the process as very difficult, suggesting that survivors encounter considerable barriers and obstacles when attempting to report incidents of gender-based violence. An additional 33% of respondents viewed reporting as somewhat difficult, further highlighting the complexities involved. Conversely, only a small percentage of respondents (2%) perceived reporting as very easy, indicating that few individuals believe survivors have a straightforward experience in accessing reporting mechanisms. The remaining respondents fell into the categories of somewhat easy (22%) and neutral (8%). These findings shed light on the perceived difficulties survivors face in reporting gender-based violence and underscore the importance of enhancing accessibility, efficiency, and support systems to ensure that survivors are able to report their experiences effectively and receive the necessary assistance and protection.

Figure 8 Ease of reporting gender-based violence cases



The respondents had mixed perceptions regarding the confidentiality of reporting channels for gender-based violence cases. While a notable percentage of respondents (31%) considered the reporting channels to be very confidential, a larger proportion (51%) viewed them as somewhat confidential, indicating a level of trust in the system. However, it is concerning that a considerable number of respondents (10%) perceived the reporting channels to be somewhat non-confidential, suggesting a potential lack of trust and concerns about privacy. Additionally, a small percentage of respondents (8%) expressed a neutral stance on the matter, possibly indicating a lack of awareness or uncertainty regarding the level of confidentiality provided by these channels. These findings highlight the importance of continuously evaluating and strengthening the confidentiality measures of reporting channels to ensure the protection and privacy of survivors of gender-based violence.

Figure 9 Confidentiality of reporting channels for gender-based violence cases

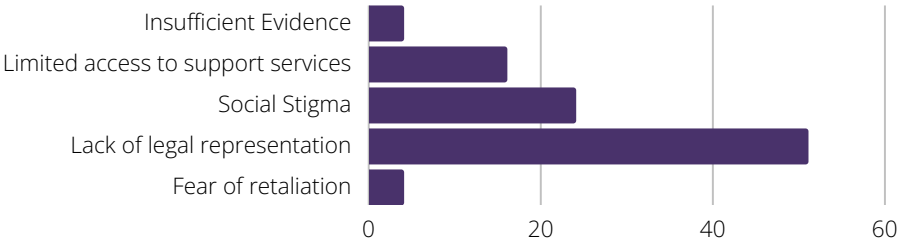




# Obstacles Faced by Survivors of GBV

The survey also sought to identify the obstacles or challenges faced by survivors when seeking justice for gender-based violence. The most prevalent challenge reported by respondents was the lack of legal representation, with 51% of the cases highlighting this obstacle. This indicates a significant barrier to accessing justice, as survivors may struggle to navigate the legal system and advocate for their rights without adequate support. Social stigma was identified as another major challenge, with 24% of cases citing its impact. This highlights the pervasive societal attitudes and norms that often discourage survivors from coming forward and seeking justice due to fear of judgment or victim-blaming. Limited access to support services was identified as an obstacle by 16% of cases, emphasizing the importance of ensuring that comprehensive and easily accessible support services are available for survivors throughout the justice-seeking process. Additionally, a small percentage of cases (4%) mentioned fear of retaliation and insufficient evidence as further challenges faced by survivors. These findings underscore the need for comprehensive legal reforms, increased awareness and education to combat social stigma, and improved access to support services to address the multifaceted challenges that survivors encounter when seeking justice for gender-based violence.

Figure 10 Obstacles and challenges that gender-based violence survivors face when seeking justice



## Municipalities' Needs to Effectively Implement MCMDVs

The data indicates that 63% of the respondents report the presence of early warning mechanisms to prevent gender-based violence in their municipality or institution, while 37% indicate the absence of such mechanisms. This suggests that a significant proportion of respondents recognize the importance of proactive measures to prevent gender-based violence and have implemented early warning systems. However, the substantial percentage of respondents without these mechanisms highlights the need for greater attention and investment in establishing effective early warning systems to prevent incidents of gender-based violence. The respondents who confirmed the existence of early warning mechanisms in their institutions described them in a variety of ways. However, some common themes emerged, including the importance of collaboration, coordination, and awareness.

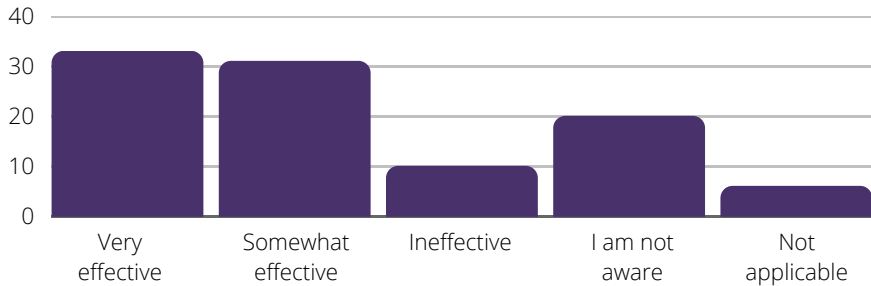
Collaboration between different institutions is essential for identifying and responding to early warning signs of gender-based violence. This includes collaboration between government agencies, such as the police, social services, and the courts, as well as collaboration with non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Coordination of efforts across different institutions is also important. This means having clear roles and responsibilities for each institution, as well as regular communication and information sharing. Raising awareness of gender-based violence and early warning signs among the public and among professionals who work with women and girls is another important aspect of early warning mechanisms. This can be done through education campaigns, training programs, and other outreach initiatives.

Below are some specific examples of early warning mechanisms that were mentioned by respondents:

- **Municipal mechanisms against domestic violence:** These mechanisms typically involve a group of stakeholders from different institutions, such as the police, social services, the courts, and NGOs. They meet regularly to discuss cases of domestic violence and to coordinate their response.
- **Police mechanisms:** Some police stations have developed specialized units to deal with domestic violence and gender-based violence. These units may have officers who are trained to identify and respond to early warning signs of violence.
- **Social work mechanisms:** Social workers may be involved in early warning mechanisms by providing support to women and girls who are at risk of gender-based violence. They may also work to raise awareness of gender-based violence in their communities.
- **NGO mechanisms:** NGOs often play a vital role in early warning mechanisms by providing direct services to women and girls who are at risk of or have experienced gender-based violence. They may also work to raise awareness and advocate for change.

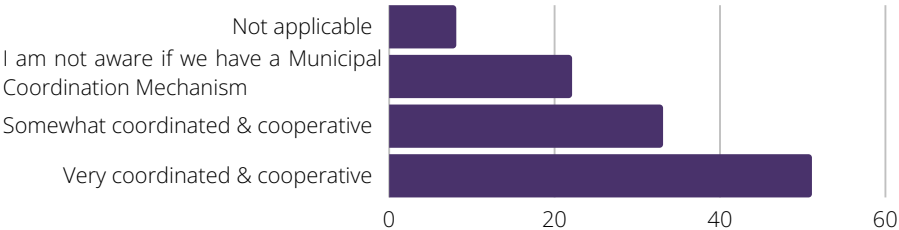
The evaluation of the effectiveness of the MCMDVs in respondents' municipalities reveals that 33% perceive it as very effective, and an additional 31% consider it somewhat effective. However, 10% of the respondents find it ineffective. Furthermore, 20% claim not to be aware of the mechanism, and 6% find it not applicable to their institution. These findings suggest that while a considerable portion of respondents view the Municipal Coordination Mechanism positively, there is room for improvement to enhance its overall effectiveness, raise awareness among stakeholders, and ensure that all relevant parties are engaged in its implementation.

Figure 11 Perceived Effectiveness of MCMDVs



The evaluation of the coordination and cooperation of the Municipal Coordination Mechanism in respondents' municipalities shows that 37% perceive it as very coordinated and cooperative, while an additional 33% view it as somewhat coordinated and cooperative. However, 22% indicate that they are not aware if such a mechanism exists in their municipality. Additionally, 8% find it not applicable. These results highlight the need for increased awareness and transparency regarding the Municipal Coordination Mechanism to foster better coordination and cooperation among stakeholders. Efforts should be made to ensure that all relevant parties are well-informed and actively engaged in the coordination process.

Figure 12 Coordination and cooperation of MCMDVs



The main challenges faced by the Municipal Coordination Mechanism in respondents' municipalities include a lack of resources and funding (41%), limited cooperation, communication, and coordination among stakeholders (10%), and resistance to change or implementation (4%). Insufficient training and capacity building (14%) also emerge as significant challenges. The findings suggest that addressing resource constraints, improving stakeholder collaboration, and providing adequate training and capacity building opportunities are crucial for overcoming these challenges and enhancing the effectiveness of the Municipal Coordination Mechanism. These findings underscore the importance of addressing resource constraints, fostering collaboration, and providing necessary training and information to ensure the successful functioning of the Municipal Coordination Mechanism in tackling gender-based violence in Kosovo.

Table 3 Main challenges that the Municipal Coordination Mechanism in your Municipality faces

Main challenges that the Municipal Coordination Mechanism faces	
Lack of resources and funding	41%
Lack of cooperation, communication, and coordination among stakeholders	10%
Resistance to change or implementation	4%
Insufficient training and capacity building	14%
I am not aware if we have a Municipal Coordination Mechanism	4%
Not applicable	22%
Other	6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

The data reveals that 49% of the respondents believe there are best practices within their Municipal Coordination Mechanism that can be replicated in other contexts. However, 10% state that there are no replicable best practices, and 37% indicate a lack of knowledge about such practices. These findings emphasize the importance of sharing successful strategies and experiences across Municipal Coordination Mechanisms to foster learning and improve the effectiveness of interventions to prevent gender-based violence. Efforts should be made to identify and disseminate these best practices to benefit other municipalities and institutions.

The respondents who mentioned best practices within their Municipal Coordination Mechanisms (MCMDVs) highlighted a variety of areas of what they consider such practices, including:

- **Inter-institutional cooperation:** Many respondents emphasized the importance of cooperation between different institutions, such as the police, social services, and the courts. This cooperation can help to ensure that cases of gender-based violence are handled effectively and that survivors receive the support they need.
- **Coordination:** Some respondents mentioned the importance of coordination of efforts across different institutions. This includes having clear roles and responsibilities for each institution, as well as regular communication and information sharing.
- **Awareness raising:** A number of respondents highlighted the importance of raising awareness of gender-based violence among the public and among professionals who work with women and girls. This can be done through education campaigns, training programs, and other outreach initiatives.
- **Training:** Some respondents mentioned the importance of training for staff of MCMDVs and other stakeholders. This training can help to improve understanding of gender-based violence and to develop skills for responding effectively to cases of violence.

Below are some specific examples of best practices that were mentioned by respondents:

- Regular bi-monthly meetings of MCMDV members: This allows members to discuss cases of gender-based violence and to coordinate their response.
- Drawing up an Action Plan based on the National Strategy and the Istanbul Convention: This helps to ensure that MCMDVs are working in a coordinated and strategic manner.
- Awareness campaigns for the public: These campaigns can help to raise awareness of gender-based violence and to encourage people to report cases of violence.
- Cooperation with centers for professional skills and social work centers: This can help to provide survivors of gender-based violence with the support they need, such as job training and counseling.
- Conversations, constant communication, and discussions in rural areas: This can help to raise awareness of gender-based violence in rural communities and to challenge harmful gender norms.

The overwhelming majority of respondents (86%) believe that additional capacity building training is needed for the Municipal Coordination Mechanisms, their municipality, or institution. This indicates a strong recognition of the importance of continuous learning and skill development to enhance the capacity of the mechanisms and related entities. The high percentage suggests that there is a perceived need for further training to address potential gaps in knowledge, skills, and resources, reinforcing the importance of investing in capacity building initiatives to strengthen the overall response to gender-based violence.

The following are the top three training topics that are needed for the Municipal Coordination Mechanisms according to the respondents:

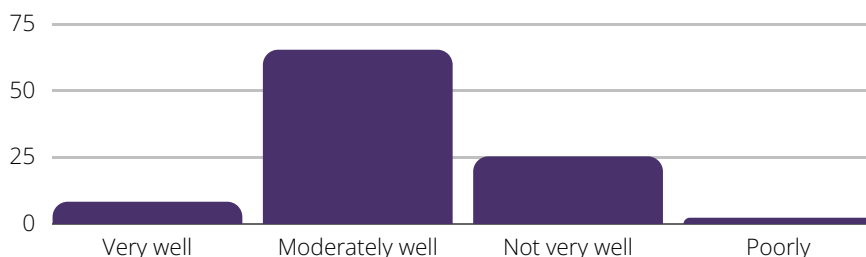
- Prevention, addressing, and adequate treatment of gender-based violence. This includes training on the different types of gender-based violence, how to identify and assess cases, and how to provide effective support to survivors.
- The Istanbul Convention and its implementation in practice. The Istanbul Convention is the first legally binding international instrument that comprehensively addresses violence against women and domestic violence. Training on the Convention would help MCMs to better understand and implement its provisions.
- Rehabilitation of perpetrators of domestic violence. This is a relatively new area of work, but it is important to address the root causes of violence in order to prevent it from happening in the first place. Training on perpetrator rehabilitation would help MCMs to develop effective programs and interventions.

# Strategies for Preventing GBV in Kosovo

The findings reveal that 61% of the respondents do not believe that there is adequate support available for survivors of gender-based violence in their municipality or institution. This indicates a significant gap in the support services provided to survivors. The high percentage suggests that there is a pressing need to improve the support infrastructure and ensure that survivors receive the necessary assistance. Addressing this issue is crucial for creating a safe and supportive environment for individuals affected by gender-based violence.

According to the data, public institutions in Kosovo are perceived to be addressing gender-based violence moderately well, as indicated by 65% of the respondents. However, 25% believe that the institutions are not addressing it very well, and 2% perceive their efforts to be poor. These results highlight the need for continued improvement in the response of public institutions to gender-based violence. While a majority acknowledge the moderate progress, there is still room for enhancing the effectiveness and impact of their interventions.

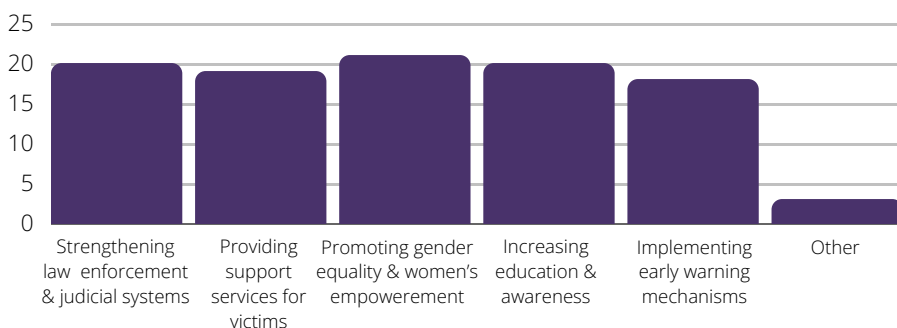
Figure 13 Addressing of GBV



On the other hand, 61% of the respondents are aware of existing policies or research related to preventing gender-based violence in Kosovo, while 39% are not aware. This suggests that a significant portion of the respondents is knowledgeable about the existing frameworks and initiatives in place. However, the relatively high percentage of respondents unaware of such policies indicates a need for increased awareness and dissemination of information regarding the existing measures for preventing gender-based violence.

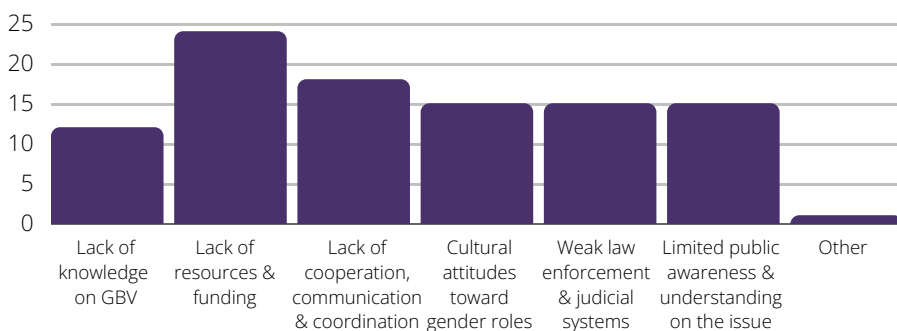
In terms of additional steps to prevent gender-based violence in Kosovo, the respondents identified several key actions. Strengthening law enforcement and judicial systems (20%) and providing support services for survivors (19%) were perceived as important measures. Promoting gender equality and women's empowerment (21%) and increasing education and awareness (20%) were also endorsed as significant strategies. The diversity of responses suggests a multi-faceted approach is required, addressing various aspects of prevention to effectively tackle gender-based violence.

Figure 14 Steps to prevent GBV



The main challenges faced by public institutions in preventing gender-based violence in Kosovo, according to the respondents, include a lack of resources and funding (24%) and a lack of cooperation, communication, and coordination among stakeholders (18%). Other challenges mentioned include cultural attitudes towards gender roles (15%), weak law enforcement and judicial systems (15%), and limited public awareness and understanding of the issue (15%). These findings underscore the need for improved resource allocation, collaboration, and targeted efforts to address cultural norms and raise awareness about gender-based violence.

Figure 15 Main challenges faced by public institutions in preventing gender-based violence



The respondents' perspectives on the most effective ways to prevent gender-based violence in Kosovo provide valuable insights into their priorities and beliefs. According to the survey findings, education and awareness raising campaigns were considered the most effective strategy, with 24% of respondents endorsing this approach. Strengthening law enforcement and judicial systems, as well as providing support services for survivors, both received similar levels of support at 19% and 20% respectively. Implementing early warning mechanisms and promoting gender equality and women's empowerment were also seen as important strategies, each receiving 17% and 20% of respondents' support. These results highlight the multi-faceted nature of addressing gender-based violence, with respondents recognizing the importance of both preventive measures, such as education and awareness, and systemic changes,

including strengthening legal and support systems. This underscores the need for a comprehensive and holistic approach that combines awareness raising, institutional reforms, and support services to effectively prevent and address gender-based violence in Kosovo.

Table 4 Most effective ways to prevent gender-based violence

Most effective ways to prevent gender-based violence in Kosovo	
Education and awareness raising campaigns	24%
Strengthening law enforcement and judicial systems	19%
Providing support services for survivors	20%
Implementing early warning mechanisms	17%
Promoting gender equality and women's empowerment	20%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

The survey findings provide a comprehensive understanding of the current state of gender-based violence (GBV) in Kosovo and the challenges faced by various stakeholders in addressing this critical issue. The active involvement of diverse institutions and organizations underscores the collective recognition of the importance of combating GBV and the need to understand institutional requirements. The findings reveal a mixed perception regarding the level of GBV, with the majority considering it as moderate but acknowledging its presence. Poverty and economic insecurity, lack of education and awareness, cultural attitudes, and weak law enforcement and judicial systems were identified as significant causes of GBV, highlighting the complex and interconnected nature of this issue. The survey also highlighted the obstacles faced by survivors when seeking justice, emphasizing the importance of legal representation, addressing social stigma, and improving access to support services. The challenges faced by the Municipal Coordination Mechanism underscore the need for adequate resources, improved collaboration, and capacity building. Lastly, the respondents' endorsement of education and awareness campaigns, strengthening of law enforcement and judicial systems, provision of support services, early warning mechanisms, and promotion of gender equality and empowerment as effective strategies to prevent GBV reflects the multifaceted and comprehensive approach required to address this issue successfully.



# CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In conclusion, the interviews with gender equality officers in Kosovo municipalities have provided valuable insights into the perceptions of support for gender-based violence (GBV) survivors and the institutional response to GBV cases. While there are areas of convergence in their understanding of GBV as a violation of human rights and the need for improved support services, there are also divergences in their perspectives on the causes, encounters with cases, and effectiveness of institutional responses.

The officers recognize the multifaceted nature of GBV and its prevalence in Kosovo. They highlight the impact of patriarchal societal norms, economic conditions, and the transitional nature of the country on the occurrence of GBV. Their encounters with GBV cases vary, with reports of frequent encounters with physical and psychological violence, as well as challenges in reporting and involving the police. Confidentiality of reporting channels is a concern, as survivors fear societal judgment and the breaking of anonymity by officers. Seeking justice for GBV is hindered by challenges such as societal stigma, financial dependence, and inadequate treatment of cases by the judicial system.

To prevent GBV in Kosovo, the representatives emphasize the importance of awareness-raising campaigns, education, and empowerment. They call for addressing the root causes of violence, reskilling women for integration, and implementing the law effectively. However, challenges faced by public institutions include the need to change mentalities, improve financing and coordination, and provide long-term care for survivors.

The interviews also shed light on early warning mechanisms and capacity building needs. While preventive campaigns and community collaboration are mentioned as effective strategies, challenges exist in addressing psychological violence, maintaining confidentiality, and enhancing coordination within the Municipal Coordination Mechanisms against Domestic Violence. The representatives call for additional capacity building training and to share best practices, such as financial support, vocational training partnerships, and continuous community campaigns.

In terms of support for GBV survivors, there is a recognition of existing services but also a need for improvement. The limitations of domestic violence shelters, including the exclusion of older boys, are highlighted, along with the necessity of reskilling programs. Financial support and improving the condition of shelters are also identified as crucial.

The comprehensive survey conducted among stakeholders involved in addressing gender-based violence (GBV) in Kosovo has provided further perceptions into the current state of GBV response and the challenges faced by different institutions. The findings highlight the ongoing prevalence of GBV in Kosovo, with a majority of

respondents perceiving the level of violence as moderate. Poverty and economic insecurity emerged as significant causes of GBV, emphasizing the intersectional nature of the issue. It is crucial to address these socio-economic factors to effectively combat GBV.

The survey also revealed the importance of law enforcement in addressing GBV, as the majority of survivors initially report their cases at the police station. However, challenges such as fear of retaliation and limited access to support services hinder survivors' pursuit of justice. Ensuring the confidentiality of reporting channels is a crucial aspect that needs to be addressed to encourage survivors to come forward and seek help.

In conclusion, the perceptions of support for GBV survivors and the institutional response to GBV cases in Kosovo reflect both areas of convergence and divergence. It is evident that comprehensive and tailored approaches are required to address the unique challenges faced by different municipalities. By fostering collaboration, sharing best practices, and implementing targeted interventions, Kosovo can work towards more effective prevention, support, and protection for GBV survivors. It is clear that comprehensive approaches are needed to combat GBV in Kosovo. These approaches should include awareness-raising campaigns, addressing the underlying socio-economic factors, strengthening institutional responses, and providing support services that prioritize survivor safety and access to justice. By understanding the current institutional context of GBV and utilizing these findings, policymakers and stakeholders can develop effective strategies and interventions to address this pressing issue in Kosovo.

Thus, the recommendations below aim to strengthen the response to GBV at various levels, from policy implementation to service provision and community engagement. By adopting these measures, local and national institutions, law enforcement agencies, and CSOs can contribute to a more effective and comprehensive approach to addressing GBV in Kosovo.

### **Recommendations for National Institutions:**

- Strengthen the implementation of existing laws and conventions related to GBV through comprehensive training programs for officials and stakeholders.
- Allocate sufficient financial resources to support GBV prevention, intervention, and support programs.
- Improve coordination and cooperation between local and national institutions to ensure a cohesive and integrated response to GBV.

### **Recommendations for Local Institutions:**

- Establish and strengthen specialized units within institutions to handle GBV cases effectively and sensitively.
- Enhance data collection and analysis systems to gather accurate and comprehensive information on GBV cases for evidence-based policymaking.

- Conduct regular evaluations and assessments of institutional practices and policies to identify gaps and areas for improvement.

### **Recommendations for Law Enforcement Institutions:**

- Provide specialized training to law enforcement officers on GBV, including recognizing different forms of violence, understanding trauma-informed approaches, and promoting survivor-centered responses.
- Establish protocols and guidelines for responding to GBV cases, ensuring that officers are well-equipped to handle these cases with sensitivity and professionalism.
- Enhance cooperation between law enforcement institutions and other support services, such as shelters, healthcare providers, and legal aid organizations, to provide comprehensive support to GBV survivors.
- Develop mechanisms to ensure the confidentiality and safety of GBV survivors during the reporting and investigation process.
- Promote community engagement and dialogue to build trust between law enforcement institutions and the communities they serve.

### **Recommendations for Civil Society Organizations (CSOs):**

- Strengthen partnerships between CSOs and government institutions to advocate for policy changes, allocate resources, and improve services for GBV survivors.
- Provide support and capacity-building programs for CSOs working on GBV issues, including training on service provision, awareness-raising, and advocacy.
- Conduct community-based awareness campaigns to challenge social norms that perpetuate GBV and promote gender equality.
- Establish helplines and support hotlines for GBV survivors, ensuring accessibility and confidentiality.
- Collaborate with other CSOs and stakeholders to share best practices, lessons learned, and resources to improve collective efforts in addressing GBV.

### **Recommendations for Strengthening Shelters and Support Services and Enhancing Coordination:**

- Expand and strengthen the network of shelters for GBV survivors, ensuring adequate geographical coverage and accessibility to all individuals in need.
- Develop comprehensive support programs within shelters that address the holistic needs of GBV survivors, including medical care, psychological support, legal assistance, and vocational training for economic empowerment.
- Collaborate with local healthcare providers and legal aid organizations to provide survivor-centered medical attention, forensic examination, and legal assistance.
- Improve access and use of the 2019 established national database where shelters and support service providers can report and analyze data on GBV cases, enabling better coordination, resource allocation, and evidence-based policymaking.
- Conduct regular joint training and capacity-building initiatives for shelter staff, law enforcement officers, and other service providers to enhance coordination and improve the overall response to GBV cases.

## **Recommendations for Strengthening Municipal Coordination Mechanisms against Domestic Violence and Enhance Coordination and Cooperation:**

- Foster collaboration among MCMDVs, local government institutions, law enforcement agencies, and CSOs.
- Establish regular meetings and information-sharing mechanisms.
- Partner with community leaders and organizations for community engagement.
- Ensure that local government institutions, law enforcement agencies, and CSOs are informed and involved in the work and activities of Mechanisms.

## **Improve Capacity and Resources:**

- Provide ongoing capacity-building training for MCMDV members.
- Local government institutions/mayor allocate and/or plan adequate resources and funding to support prevention and support programs.
- Strengthen the staffing capacity of MCMDVs.

## **Enhance Awareness and Prevention Efforts:**

- Conduct public awareness campaigns on GBV and available support services.
- Promote prevention action/measures/strategies through targeted outreach programs in educational institutions and community settings.
- Integrate GBV prevention education into the curriculum.

## **Ensure Confidentiality and Support for Survivors:**

- Establish and maintain strict protocols for confidentiality.
- Improve access to safe accommodation, including shelters, considering diverse needs.
- Enhance survivor support services, including counseling, legal assistance, and economic empowerment programs.

## **Monitor and Evaluate Effectiveness:**

- Develop mechanisms for regular monitoring and evaluation of MCMDV activities.
- Establish feedback mechanisms to gather input from survivors and community members.
- Conduct research and studies on GBV trends and program impact.

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