



Kosovo Academy for Public Safety

Faculty of Public Safety

IV INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE

THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON THE  
INTEGRITY OF THE SECTOR OF ORDER AND PUBLIC  
SAFETY

**Conference Book**

16 - 18 November, 2022

Prishtina, Kosovo

Supported by OSCE Mission Kosovo



Akademia e Kosovës për Siguri Publike  
Fakulteti i Sigurisë Publike

KONFERENCA IV SHKENCORE NDËRKOMBËTARE  
NDIKIMI I PANDEMISË COVID-19 NË INTEGRITETIN  
E SEKTORIT TË RENDIT DHE SIGURISË PUBLIKE

**Libri i Konferencës**

16 - 18 nëntor 2022

Prishtinë, Kosovë

Mbështetur nga Misioni i OSBE-së në Kosovë



Akademija Kosova za Javnu Bezbednost

Fakultet Javne Bezbednosti

IV MEĐUNARODNA NAUČNA KONFERENCIJA

UTICAJ PANDEMIJE KOVID-19 NA INTEGRITET  
SEKTORA REDA I JAVNE BEZBEDNOSTI

**Knjiga Konferencije**

16 - 18. novembra 2022

Prishtina, Kosovo

Podržano od Misije OEBS-a na Kosovu

## **Objective of the Conference**

Global challenges, such as pandemics and different human-made or natural disasters and their effects impact the integrity of public safety agencies, oblige societies to increase investment on prevention, and bolster proactive education and training efforts for public safety officers.

Similarly, naturally occurring critical incidents that cause damage on society, such as hurricanes, floods or earthquakes, but also those dealing with modern security threats, such as terrorism, COVID-19 pandemic has also exposed key obstacles on law enforcement. Such impacts include, but are not limited to, communication, human resources management, enforcement of public health restrictions, and increase of crime and/or new criminal modalities. Due to these global challenges, their prevention, recovery stages and the need to exchange expertise in order to face with these threatening challenges for the mankind in the initial phases, the Conference aims to highlight measures for responses to pandemics and other similar extraordinary situations in order to primarily ensure safety, security and welfare of law enforcement officers and the communities they serve.

In this context, research work that was presented at the Conference, including recommendations that emerged, will serve KAPS and its Institute for Research and Development to include recommendations in its study programme in the field of public safety. In addition, research work will assist KAPS to establish new study programmes for prevention and better managing of the public safety and security sector. This will enable an increase in competence of those officers who provide direct public safety initiatives, and also to improve care of existential threats caused by pandemic outbreaks. Commitment of KAPS by focusing on prevention and recovery of the most pressing issues for managers and executives of the public safety agencies and relevant institutions during natural disasters and pandemics will further increase integrity of public safety providers.

## **Purpose of the Conference**

The Conference has brought together researchers in the field of public safety and security from Kosovo, Western Balkans, Europe and elsewhere, with an aim of exchanging local and international experiences and presenting the models of mitigation of pandemics effects and recovery measures from COVID-19. Such models and response undertaken by respective institutions, their concrete experiences, challenges and scientific findings from research, will enhance the participants' practical approaches to prevent transnational common threats, such as what occurred during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Kosovo, more than others, needs to learn from the experiences and results achieved elsewhere and apply such best practices through addressing the COVID-19 pandemic and the challenges dealing with the integrity of public safety agencies in emergency and extraordinary situations.

## Structure of the Conference

The Conference was organized in plenary sessions in Prishtinë/Priština with in-person and hybrid platforms. Professionals presented one of the topics related to impact of pandemic, prevention or undertaken measures for recovery as follows:

- Ethics and integrity of law enforcement officers during emergency situations or the COVID-19 pandemic
- Community policing and challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic
- Probation Service and the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on its integrity
- Correctional Service and the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on its integrity
- Customs and the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on its integrity
- Fire, Rescue and Emergency Services and the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on their integrity
- Impact of COVID-19 pandemic on advancing the technological platforms on Public Safety and Security Training and Education
- Impact of COVID-19 pandemic on increasing the types of crimes
- Impact of COVID-19 pandemic on increasing the Cyber Security crimes, Fake News and the Cyber Crime security in general
- Open Source Intelligence (OSINT) in the Age of COVID-19 pandemic
- Mental Health and Policing during times of crises and pandemics
- Women in Policing and impact of COVID-19 pandemic
- Impact of COVID-19 pandemic on Domestic Violence and challenges on Victim Protection and Interviewing
- Impact of COVID-19 pandemic on Sexual Harassment and challenges on Victim Protection and Interviewing
- Best practices of comprehensive training curriculum development that includes realistic scenarios for managing emergency situations, natural disasters and pandemics

## **Objektivi i Konferencës**

Sfidat globale, siç janë pandemitë dhe fatkeqësitë e ndryshme natyrore dhe efektet e tyre me ndikim në integritetin e agjencive të sigurisë publike, i detyrojnë shoqëritë të rrisin investimet në parandalim dhe të përforcojnë përpjekjet për arsim dhe trajnim proaktiv për zyrtarët e sigurisë publike.

Ngjashëm me incidentet kritike që ndodhin natyrshëm dhe që shkaktojnë dëme në shoqëri, si uraganet, përmbytjet ose tërmetet, por edhe ato që kanë të bëjnë me kërcënimet moderne të sigurisë, siç është terrorizmi, edhe pandemia COVID-19 ka paraqitur pengesa në zbatimin e ligjit. Ndikimet e tilla përfshijnë, por nuk kufizohen vetëm në komunikim, menaxhim të burimeve njerëzore, zbatim të kufizimeve të shëndetit publik dhe rritje të krimit dhe/ose modaliteteve të reja kriminale. Bazuar në këto sfida globale, parandalimin e tyre, fazat e rimëkëmbjes si dhe nevojën për të shkëmbyer ekspertizën për t'u përballur me këto sfida kërcënuese për njerëzimin në fazat fillestare, Konferenca synon të nxjerrë në pah masat për reagimet ndaj pandemive dhe situatave të ngjashme të jashtëzakonshme, në mënyrë që të garantojë në radhë të parë rendin dhe sigurinë si dhe mirëqenien e zyrtarëve të zbatimit të ligjit dhe komuniteteve të cilave ata u shërbejnë.

Në këtë kontekst, puna hulumtuese që u prezantua në Konferencë, përfshirë rekomandimet që kanë dalur, do t'i shërbejnë AKSP-së dhe Institutit të saj për Hulumtim dhe Zhvillim integrimin e rekomandimeve në programin e saj studimor në fushën e sigurisë publike. Për më tepër, puna hulumtuese do t'i ndihmojë AKSP-së që të krijojë edhe programe të reja studimi për parandalim dhe menaxhim më të mirë të sektorit të rendit dhe sigurisë publike. Kjo do të mundësojë rritjen e kompetencës së atyre zyrtarëve që ofrojnë drejtpërdrejt iniciativë në siguri publike si dhe të përmirësojë kujdesin ndaj kërcënimeve ekzistuese të shkaktuara nga shpërthimet pandemike. Përkushtimi i AKSP-së duke u fokusuar në parandalim dhe rimëkëmbje të çështjeve më urgjente për menaxherët dhe drejtuesit e agjencive të sigurisë publike dhe institucioneve relevante gjatë fatkeqësive natyrore dhe pandemive do të rrisë edhe më tepër integritetin e ofruesve të zbatimit të ligjit.

## **Qëllimi i Konferencës**

Konferenca ka mbledhur bashkë studiues në fushën e rendit dhe sigurisë publike nga Kosova, Ballkani Perëndimor, Evropa dhe gjetiu, me qëllim të shkëmbimit të përvojave vendore dhe ndërkombëtare dhe prezantimit të modeleve të zbutjes së efekteve të pandemive si dhe hapat e rimëkëmbjes nga pandemia COVID19. Modelet e tilla dhe përgjigja të ndërrmarra nga institucionet tyre përkatëse, përvojat konkrete të tyre dhe gjetjet shkencore nga hulumtimi, do të ngrisin qasjet praktike të pjesëmarrësve për të parandaluar kërcënimet e përbashkëta transnacionale, si ato të ndodhura gjatë pandemisë COVID-19.

Kosova, më shumë se të tjerët, ka nevojë për të mësuar nga përvojat dhe rezultatet e arritura gjetiu dhe të aplikojë praktikën e tilla më të mira përmes adresimit të pandemisë COVID-19 dhe sfidave që kanë të bëjnë me integritetin e agjencive të zbatimit të ligjit dhe situatave të jashtëzakonshme.

## Struktura e Konferencës

Konferenca u organizua në sesione plenare në Prishtinë fizikisht dhe me platforma hibride. AKSP po kërkon përafërsisht 28 - 30 profesionistë që të prezentojnë një të bërë nga temat që kanë të bëjë me ndikim e pandemisë, parandalimin apo masat e ndërmarra për rimëkembje si në vijim:

- Etika dhe integriteti i zbatuesve të ligjit gjatë situatave emergjente ose pandemisë COVID-19
- Policimi në bashkësi dhe sfidat gjatë pandemisë COVID-19
- Shërbimi sprovues dhe ndikimi i pandemisë COVID-19 në integritetin e tij
- Shërbimi korrektues dhe ndikimi i pandemisë COVID-19 në integritetin e tij
- Dogana dhe ndikimi në i pandemisë COVID-19 në integritetin e saj
- Shërbimet e zjarrfikjes, shpëtimit dhe emergjencave dhe ndikimi i pandemisë COVID-19 në integritetin e tyre
- Ndikimi i pandemisë COVID-19 në avancimin e platformave teknologjike të trajnimit dhe arsimit në rend dhe siguri publike
- Ndikimi i pandemisë COVID-19 në ritjen e e llojeve te krimit
- Ndikimi i pandemisë COVID-19 në rritjen e krimeve kibernetike, lajmeve të rrejshme (Fake Neës si dhe sigurinë kibernetike ne përgjithësi)
- Inteligjenca me Burim të Hapur (OSINT) në epokën e pandemisë COVID-19
- Shëndeti mendor dhe policimi gjatë kohës së krizave dhe pandemive • Gratë në policim dhe ndikimi i pandemisë COVID-19
- Ndikimi i pandemisë COVID-19 në rritjen e rasteve te dhunës në familje dhe sfidat per mbrojtjen dhe intervistimin e viktimave
- Ndikimi i pandemisë COVID-19 në rritjen e rasteve te ngacmimit seksual dhe sfidat per mbrojtjen dhe intervistimin e viktimave
- Praktikrat më të mira të zhvillimit të kurrikulës së trajnimit gjithëpërfshirës që përfshin skenarë realistë per menagjimin e situatave emergjente, fatkeqësive natyrore dhe pandemive.

## **Cilj Konferencije**

Globalni izazovi, kao što su pandemije i razne prirodne katastrofe i njihovi uticajni efekti na integritet agencija za javnu bezbednost, primoravaju društva da povećaju ulaganja u prevenciju i pojačaju proaktivno obrazovanje i napore za obuku službenika javne bezbednosti.

Slično prirodnim kritičnim incidentima koji nanose štetu društvu, kao što su uragani, poplave ili zemljotresi, ali i onima koji se odnose na savremene bezbednosne pretnje kao što je terorizam, pandemija COVID-19 predstavljala je prepreke za sprovođenje zakona. Takvi uticaji uključuju, ali nisu ograničeni na, komunikaciju, upravljanje ljudskim resursima, sprovođenje ograničenja javnog zdravlja i povećan kriminal i/ili nove krivične modalitete. Na osnovu ovih globalnih izazova, njihove prevencije, faza oporavka kao i potrebe za razmjenom stručnosti kako bi se suočili sa ovim izazovima koji prijete čovječanstvu u početnim fazama, Konferencija ima za cilj da istakne mere za odgovor na pandemije i vanredne situacije u sličnim situacijama, kako bi se osiguralo pre svega zakon i red i bezbednost i dobrobit službenika za sprovođenje zakona i zajednica kojima služe.

U tom kontekstu, istraživački radovi koji su bili predstavljeni na Konferenciji, uključujući preporuke koje se mogu pojaviti, poslužiće KAJB-u i njegovom Institutu za istraživanje i razvoj da integriše preporuke u svoj studijski program u oblasti javne bezbednosti. Pored toga, istraživački rad će pomoći KAJB-u da kreira nove studijske programe za prevenciju i bolje upravljanje javnim redom i sektorom bezbednosti. To će omogućiti povećanje kompetentnosti onih službenika koji direktno daju inicijative u javnoj bezbednosti, kao i unapređenje zaštite od postojećih pretnji izazvanih izbijanjem pandemije. Posvećenost KAJB-a da se fokusira na prevenciju i oporavak od najhitnijih pitanja za menadžere i rukovodioce agencija za javnu bezbednost i relevantnih institucija tokom prirodnih katastrofa i pandemija dodatno će poboljšati integritet organa za sprovođenje zakona.

## **Svrha Konferencije**

Konferencija je okupila istraživače iz oblasti javnog reda i bezbednosti sa Kosova, Zapadnog Balkana, Evrope i drugde, sa ciljem razmene domaćih i međunarodnih iskustava i predstavljanja modela za ublažavanje posledica pandemija, kao i koraka za oporavak od pandemije COVID-19. Takvi modeli i odgovori koje preduzimaju njihove institucije, njihova konkretna iskustva i naučni nalazi iz istraživanja, podići će praktične pristupe učesnika u sprečavanju uobičajenih transnacionalnih pretnji, poput onih koje su se desile tokom pandemije COVID-19.

Kosovo, više od drugih, treba da uči iz iskustava i rezultata postignutih na drugim mestima i primenjuje takve najbolje prakse tako što će se baviti pandemijom COVID-19 i izazovima u vezi sa integritetom agencija za sprovođenje zakona i vanrednim situacijama.



## Struktura Konferencije

Konferencija je bila organizovana na plenarnim sednicama u Prištini fizički i sa hibridnim platformama. Profesionalci su predstavili jednu od tema u vezi sa uticajem pandemije, prevencijom ili merama koje su preduzete za oporavak na sledeći način:

- Etika i integritet sprovodioca zakona tokom vanrednih situacija ili pandemije COVID-19
- PolICIJA u zajednici i izazovi tokom pandemije COVID-19
- Probaciona služba i uticaj pandemije COVID-19 na njen integritet
- Korektivna služba i uticaj pandemije COVID-19 na njen integritet
- Carina i uticaj pandemije COVID-19 na njen integritet
- Vatrogasne, spasilačke i hitne službe i uticaj pandemije COVID-19 na njihov integritet
- Uticaj pandemije COVID-19 na unapređenje tehnološke platforme za obuku i obrazovanje u javnom redu i bezbednosti
- Uticaj pandemije COVID-19 na povećanje vrsta kriminala/zločina
- Uticaj pandemije COVID-19 na porast sajber/kibernetskog kriminala, lažnih vesti (lažne vesti i sajber bezbednost uopšte)
- Inteligencija Otvorenog Izvora/resursa (OSINT) u eri pandemije COVID-19
- Mentalno zdravlje i policija u zajednici tokom kriza i pandemija
- Žene u policiji zajednice i uticaj pandemije COVID-19
- Uticaj pandemije COVID-19 na porast slučajeva nasilja u porodici i izazove zaštite i intervjuisanja žrtava
- Uticaj pandemije COVID-19 na porast slučajeva seksualnog uznemiravanja i izazove zaštite i intervjuisanja žrtava
- Najbolje prakse za razvoj sveobuhvatnog kurikuluma obuke koji uključuje realne scenarije za upravljanje vanrednim situacijama, prirodnim katastrofama i pandemijama.

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**Wednesday, 16 November 2022**

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- 07:30 - 09:00 Breakfast for accommodated guests at the hotel
- 09:00 - 09:30 Registration of participants
- 09:30 - 10:00 Opening remarks
- Speaker 1: **Mr. Bardhyl Dobra**, Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs
- Speaker 2: **Mr. Kastriot Jashari**, Acting General Director of KAPS
- Speaker 3: **H.E. Michael Davenport**, Head of OSCE Mission in Kosovo
- Speaker 4: **Mr. Kushtrim Hodaj**, Chief Executive Officer of Police Inspectorate of Kosovo and KAPS Board Member
- Speaker 5: **Colonel Taibe Canolli**, Director of Human Resources Department of the Kosovo Police
- 10:15 - 11:25 **Panel 1:** Introduction to COVID-19 pandemic challenges of public safety training and educational institutions (*10 min for each presentation*)
- Speakers:*
- Prof. Ass. Dr. Ferid Azemi**, Head of Research and Development Institute, KAPS Faculty of Public Safety, Kosovo
- Prof. Dr. Ilirjan Mandro**, Rector, Academy of Security, Albania
- Mr. Berti Koxha**, Chief of Sector at the Directorate of Professional Standards, General Directorate, State Police, Albania
- Ms. Snežana Kadović**, Police Academy, Montenegro and **Mr. Pavle Vratnica**, Police Academy, Montenegro
- Mr. Jim Saunders**, College of Policing, United Kingdom and
- Ms. Lisa Gore, MPA, LLB (Hons)**, College of Policing, United Kingdom
- Mr. John Doone**, Director of International Training Center (SAR)
- Ms. Qëndresë Ramadani**, Kosovo Police Officer/Student at KAPS Faculty of Public Safety
- 11:25 - 11:40 Open discussion/questions and answers
- 13:00 - 13:50 **Panel 2:** Presentations (*10 min for each presentation*)
- COVID-19 pandemic, crime, and policing in Finland - observations based on statistics  
**Vesa Muttilainen, PhD**, Director of Research, University Police College of Finland
- The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the increase in organized crime and terrorism offenses in Southeast Europe  
**Blerim Dajaku, PhD candidate**, Kosovo Embassy in Turkey/Kosovo Police
- Terrorism trend in Kosovo during the COVID-19 pandemic  
**Lieutenant Colonel Fatos Haziri, PhD**, Kosovo Police
- The impact of Covid-19 on Human Security in the context of Human Rights  
**Mustafa Yayla, Doç. Dr.**, Institute of Security Sciences, Turkish National Police Academy (TNPA), Ankara, Turkey (*online*)
- The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Crime models-the case of Albania  
**Ms. Luljeta Ismajlukaj**, Security Attaché, Albania
- 13:50 - 14:05 Open discussion/questions and answers

- 14:20 - 15:10 **Panel 3: Presentations (10 min for each presentation)**
- Domestic abuse in South Wales during COVID-19 and our ongoing response to violence against women and girls  
**Mr. Mark Lewis**, South Wales Police, UK
- Case study on exploitation of the darknet mechanisms that perpetrators use for personal data and exploit vulnerable persons  
**Mr. Edward Anderson**, Director of the Department for Security and Public Safety, OSCE Mission in Kosovo
- Women in policing and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic  
**Ms. Flora Macula**, Former UN WOMEN Head of Office, Kosovo
- The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the increase in cases of domestic violence and challenges for protection and interviewing victims  
**Gentianë Morina, PhD candidate**, Faculty of Security-Skopje, St. Kliment Ohridski University, North Macedonia
- The Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the increase of domestic violence cases  
**Fatlind Azizi, MA student**, University “Hasan Prishtina” in Prishtinë/Priština, Kosovo
- 15:10 - 15:25 Open discussion/questions and answers
- 15:25 - 16:15 **Panel 4: Presentations (10 min for each presentation)**
- Functioning of the security system in conditions of emergency (interpretation of the Report on the Functioning of the Security System of the Republic of North Macedonia in Conditions of Emergency and Crisis - Case Study)  
**Prof. Dr. Nikola Dujovski**, Dean, Faculty of Security-Skopje, St. Kliment Ohridski University, North Macedonia  
**Prof. Dr. Snežana Mojsoska**, Vice Dean, Faculty of Security-Skopje, St. Kliment Ohridski University, North Macedonia
- Criminological analysis of criminal offenses committed by Kosovo Police officers during the COVID-19 pandemic in the period 2020-2021  
**Mr. Adrianit Ibrahim**, Police Inspectorate of Kosovo
- Customs and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on its integrity  
**Mr. Mentor Gashi**, Kosovo Customs
- COVID-19 Pandemic and the correctional institutions in Kosovo  
**Nebih Halili, LLM**, Kosovo Correctional Service, Kosovo
- Probation Service and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on its integrity  
**Adem Shala, MA**, Kosovo Probation Service, Kosovo
- 16:15 - 16:30 Discussion and closing of day one

07:30 - 09:30 Breakfast for accommodated guests at the hotel

09:30 - 10:10 **Panel 5:** Presentations (*10 min for each presentation*)

Public preparedness for a pandemic disaster: a comparison between the Kosovo Emergency Management Agency and Utah, USA

**John Fisher, PhD**, Utah Valley University, USA (*online*)

**Colonel Muhaedin Bela, PhD**, Ministry of Defence, North Macedonia

**Ms. Zijavere Keqmezi Rexhepi**, Kosovo Customs, Kosovo

Lessons of pandemic response in the context of Public Safety and Security

**Prof. Vinod Menon**, Regional Director for Asia of The International Emergency Management Society (TIEMS), Belgium (*online*)

Professional Education on Public Safety and Security during COVID-19 Pandemic. Experiences of the Main School of Fire Service in advancing the technological platforms

**Major Pawel Gromek DSc. Eng.**, Main School of Fire Service, Poland (*online*)

Integrated communication in a crisis situation: Data-information and data reduction in a crisis situation (lessons learned in the situation with COVID-19/the case of Kosovo)

**Dr. Sc. Nehat Koçinaj**, Emergency Management Agency, Kosovo

10:10 - 10:25 Open discussion/questions and answers

10:40 - 11:20 **Panel 6:** Presentations (*10 min for each presentation*)

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the growth of cybercrimes and cyber security

**Prof. Assoc. Dr. Bejtush Gashi**, KAPS Faculty of Public Safety of Kosovo and South-East European University of North Macedonia

**Mr. Sc. Colonel Ejup Maqedonci**, Kosovo Security Force, Kosovo

Online Grooming and COVID-19 Pandemic

**Prof. Ass. Dr. Ferid Azemi**, Head of Research and Development Institute of KAPS, Kosovo

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the rise of cybercrime and fake news

**Kenan Idrizaj, PhD candidate**, Kosovo Police, Kosovo

Cybercrime risks and their security effects during the COVID-19 pandemic period, Turkey's example

**Dita Çapraz, PhD candidate**, Turkish National Police Academy (TNPA), Ankara, Turkey

11:20 - 11:35 Open discussion/questions and answers

- 11:35 - 12:15 **Panel 7: Presentations** (*10 min for each presentation*)
- The Courts in the face of the COVID-19 Crisis: an Analysis of the measures adopted by the Kosovo Judicial System  
**Prof. Assoc. Dr. Vilard Bytyqi**, KAPS Faculty of Public Safety and Kosovo Judicial Council (KJC) member, Kosovo
- Challenges in building partnerships during the COVID-19 Pandemic: Fostering Intercultural Relationships between students of KAPS and Utah Valley University (UVU)  
**Chris Lindquist, PhD**, Utah Valley University, USA  
**Nichole Berge, PhD**, Utah Valley University, USA
- The negative impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic Process on Family Relations  
**Mr. İbrahim Ataç, Sen. Lec.**, Institute of Security Sciences, Turkish National Police Academy (TNPA), Ankara, Turkey (*online*)
- Challenges of medical staff treating law enforcement during the COVID -19 pandemic  
**Ms. Jane Krzysiak**, Health Institution in Chicago, USA (*online*)
- 12:15 - 12:30 Open discussion/questions and answers
- 12:30 - 13:30 Lunch provided for all participants by OMiK and KAPS
- 13:30 - 14:15 Visit to the Kosovo Academy for Public Safety, Vushtrri/Vučitrn (*Transportation provided by KAPS and OMiK*)
- 14:15 - 14:20 Group photo (in front of KAPS Main Building)
- 14:20 - 14:25 Welcome speech (*Steve Bennett Learning Centre - Second Floor*)  
**Mr. Kastriot Jashari**, Acting General Director of KAPS, Kosovo
- 14:25 - 14:45 KAPS Mission, vision, and way ahead  
**Mr. Skender Agaj**, KAPS External Relations Officer, Kosovo
- 14:45 - 15:00 Training of police cadets during the COVID-19 pandemic (2020-2021) and challenges  
**Colonel Agron Nezaj**, Director of Mandatory Training of the Kosovo Police / resident at KAPS, Kosovo
- 15:00 - 17:00 KAPS campus walk  
57<sup>th</sup> Kosovo Police Cadet Generation  
Visiting Fire-Arms Training Simulator (FATS) system  
Visiting the new building of the KAPS Faculty of Public Safety  
OSCE showroom corner
- 17:30 Departure from KAPS to Hotel Emerald (*Transportation provided by KAPS and OMiK*)

**Friday, 18 November 2022**

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07:30 - 09:30 Breakfast for accommodated guests at the hotel

09:30 - 10:30 Closing remarks and future collaboration

**Mr. Edward Anderson**, Director of the Department for Security and Public Safety (DSPS), OMiK

**Mr. Kastriot Jashari**, Acting General Director of KAPS

**Ms. Shpresa Muharremi**, KAPS Advisory Unit, DSPS/OMiK

**Mr. Avni Istrefi**, Head of Division for External Relations, KAPS

**Mr. Skender Agaj**, External Relations Officer, KAPS

**Mr. Bylent Ribari**, Program Assistant, DSPS/OMiK

**12:00** Check out from Hotel Emerald (*OMiK and KAPS will provide transportation from the Hotel to Airport*)

- 09:00 - 09:30 Regjistrimi i pjesëmarrësve
- 09:30 - 10:00 Fjalimet hapëse
- Folësi 1: **Z. Bardhyl Dobra**, Zëvendësministër i Punëve të Brendshme
- Folësi 2: **Z. Kastriot Jashari**, Zëvendësues i Drejtorit të Përgjithshëm të AKSP
- Folësi 3: **Sh. T. Michael Davenport**, Udhëheqës i Misionit të OSBE-së në Kosovë
- Folësi 4: **Z. Kushtrim Hodaj**, Kryeshef Ekzekutiv i Inspektoratit Policor të Kosovës dhe anëtar i Bordit të AKSP-së
- Folësi 5: **Kolonele Taibe Canolli**, Drejtoreshë e Departamentit të Burimeve Njerëzore në Policinë e Kosovës
- 10:15 - 11:25 **Paneli 1:** Njoftim me sfidat e pandemisë COVID-19 të institucioneve të trajnimit dhe arsimit të sigurisë publike (*10 min. për secilin prezentim*)
- Folësit:
- Prof. Ass. Dr. Ferid Azemi**, Udhëheqës i Institutit të Hulumentit dhe Zhvillimit, Fakulteti i Sigurisë Publike të AKSP, Kosovë
- Prof. Dr. Ilirjan Mandro**, Rektor, Akademia e Sigurisë, Shqipëri
- Z. Berti Koxha**, Shef Sektori në Drejtorinë e Standarteve Profesionale, Drejtoria e Përgjithshme, Policia e Shtetit, Shqipëri
- Znj. Snežana Kadović**, Akademia Policore, Mali i Zi **dhe**
- Z. Pavle Vratnica**, Akademia Policore, Mali i Zi
- Z. Jim Saunders**, Kolegji i Policimit, Mbretëri e Bashkuar **dhe**
- Znj. Lisa Gore, MPA, LLB (Hons)**, Kolegji i Policimit, Mbretëri e Bashkuar
- Z. John Doone**, Drejtor i Qendrës Ndërkombëtare të Trajnimit (SAR)
- Znj. Qëndresë Ramadani**, Zyrtare e Policisë së Kosovës / Studente në Fakultetin e Sigurisë Publike të AKSP-së, Kosovë
- 11:25 - 11:20 Diskutim i hapur/pyetje dhe përgjigje
- 13:00 - 13:50 **Paneli 2:** Prezentimet (*10 min. për secilin prezentim*)
- Pandemia COVID-19, krimi dhe policimi në Finlandë - observimet bazuar në statistika
- Vesa Mutttilainen, PhD**, Drejtor i Hulumentit, Kolegji Universitar Policor i Finlandës
- Ndikimi i pandemisë COVID-19 në rritjen e veprave penale të krimit të organizuar dhe terrorizmit në Evropën Juglindore
- Blerim Dajaku, kandidat doktore**, Ambasada e Kosovës në Turqi/Policia e Kosovës
- Trendi i terrorizmit në Kosovë gjatë pandemisë COVID-19
- Nënkolonel Fatos Haziri, PhD**, Policia e Kosovës, Kosovë
- Ndikimi i pandemisë COVID-19 në sigurinë njerëzore në kontekst të drejtave të njeriut
- Mustafa Yayla, Doç. Dr.**, Instituti i Shkencave të Sigurisë, Akademia Kombëtare Policore e Turqisë, Ankara, Turqi (*online*)
- Ndikimi i pandemisë COVID-19 në modelet e krimit - rasti i Shqipërisë
- Znj. Luljeta Ismajlukaj**, Attaché e Sigurisë, Shqipëri
- 13:50 - 14:05 Diskutim i hapur/pyetje dhe përgjigje



14:20 - 15:10 **Paneli 3:** Prezentimet (10 min. për secilin prezentim)

Abuzimi në familje në Uellsin Jugor gjatë COVID-19 dhe përgjigjja jonë e vazhdueshme ndaj dhunës ndaj grave dhe vajzave

**Z. Mark Lewis**, Policia e Uellsit Jugor, MB

Rast studimor për shfrytëzimin e mekanizmave të dark net (rrjetit të errët) që autorët përdorin për të dhëna personale dhe shfrytëzojnë persona të cenusshëm

**Z. Edward Anderson**, Drejtor i Departamentit për Rend dhe Siguri Publike, OSBE Misioni në Kosovë

Gratë në policim dhe ndikimi i pandemisë COVID-19

**Znj. Flora Macula**, Ish Udhëheqëse e Zyrës së UN WOMEN, Kosovë

Ndikimi i pandemisë COVID-19 në rritjen e rasteve të dhunës në familje dhe sfidat për mbrojtjen dhe intervistimin e viktimave

**Gentianë Morina, kandidate doktore**, Fakulteti i Sigurisë - Shkup, Universiteti Shën Kliment Ohridski, Maqedoni e Veriut

Ndikimi i pandemisë COVID-19 në rritjen e rasteve të dhunës në familje

**Fatlind Azizi, student MA**, Universiteti "Hasan Prishtina" në Prishtinë, Kosovë

15:10 - 15:25 Diskutim i hapur/pyetje dhe përgjigje

15:25 - 16:15 **Paneli 4:** Prezentimet (10 min. për secilin prezentim)

Funksionimi i sistemit të sigurisë në kushte emergjente (interpretimi i Raportit për funksionimin e sistemit të sigurisë së Republikës së Maqedonisë së Veriut në kushte emergjente dhe krize - Rast studimor)

**Prof. Dr. Nikola Dujovski**, Dekan, Fakulteti i Sigurisë - Shkup, Universiteti Shën Kliment Ohridski, Maqedoni e Veriut

**Prof. Dr. Snežana Mojsoska**, Prodekane, Fakulteti i Sigurisë - Shkup, Universiteti Shën Kliment Ohridski, Maqedoni e Veriut

Analizë kriminologjike e veprave penale të kryera nga zyrtarët e Policisë së Kosovës gjatë pandemisë COVID-19 në periudhën 2020-2021

**Z. Adrianit Ibrahim**, Inspektorati Policor i Kosovës, Kosovë

Dogana dhe ndikimi i pandemisë COVID-19 në integritetin e saj

**Z. Mentor Gashi**, Dogana e Kosovës, Kosovë

Pandemia COVID-19 dhe institucionet korrektuese të Kosovës

**Nebih Halili, LLM**, Shërbimi Korrektues i Kosovës, Kosovë

Shërbimi Sprovues dhe ndikimi i pandemisë COVID-19 në integritetin e tij

**Adem Shala, MA**, Shërbimi Sprovues i Kosovës, Kosovë

16:15 - 16:30 Dikutime dhe përmbyllja e ditës së parë

09:30 - 10:10 **Paneli 5:** Prezentimet (10 min. për secilin prezentim)

Gatishmëria publike për një fatkeqësi pandemike: krahasim ndërmjet Menaxhimit të Emergjencave në Kosovë dhe Utah, SHBA

**John Fisher, PhD**, Universiteti Utah Valley, SHBA (*online*)

**Kolonel Muhamedin Bela, PhD**, Ministria e Mbrojtjes, Maqedoni e Veriut

**Znj. Zijavere Keqmezi Rexhepi**, Dogana e Kosovës, Kosovë

Mësimet e përgjigjes ndaj pandemisë në kontekst të rendit dhe sigurisë publike

**Prof. Vinod Menon**, Drejtor Regional për Azi i Shoqatës Ndërkombëtare për Menaxhim Emergjent (TIEMS), Belgjikë (*online*)

Arsimimi profesional për rend dhe siguri publike gjatë pandemisë COVID-19. Përvojat e Shkollës Kryesore të Shërbimit të Zjarrfikjes në avancimin e platformave teknologjike

**Major Pawel Gromek DSc. Eng.**, Shkolla Kryesore e Shërbimit të Zjarrfikjes, Poloni (*online*)

Komunikimi i integruar në gjendje krize: Të dhënat-informatat dhe zvogëlimi i humbjeve në një situatë krize (mësimet e mësuara në situatë me COVID-19/rasti i Kosovës)

**Dr. Sc. Nehat Koçinaj**, Agjencia e Menaxhimit të Emergjencave, Kosovë

10:10 - 10:25 Diskutim i hapur/pyetje dhe përgjigje

10:40 - 11:20 **Paneli 6:** Prezentimet (10 min. për secilin prezentim)

Ndikimi i pandemisë COVID-19 në rritjen e krimeve kibernetike dhe sigurisë kibernetike

**Prof. Assoc. Dr. Bejtush Gashi**, Fakulteti i Sigurisë Publike të AKSP-së dhe Universiteti i Evropës Jug-Lindore të Maqedonisë së Veriut

**Mr. Sc. Kolonel Ejup Maqedonci**, Forca e Sigurisë së Kosovës, Kosovë

**Tema 2:** Mashtrimet online dhe pandemia COVID-19

**Prof. Ass. Dr. Ferid Azemi**, Udhëheqës i Institutit të Hulumtimit dhe Zhvillimit të AKSP-së, Kosovë

Ndikimi i pandemisë COVID-19 në rritjen e krimeve kibernetike dhe lajmeve të rreme

**Kenan Idrizaj, kandidat doktore**, Policia e Kosovës, Kosovë

Rreziqet e krimeve kibernetike dhe efektet e tyre të sigurisë gjatë periudhës së pandemisë COVID-19, shembulli i Turqisë

**Dita Çapraz, kandidate doktore**, Akademia Kombëtare Policore e Turqisë (AKPT), Ankara, Turqi

11:20 - 11:35 Diskutim i hapur/pyetje dhe përgjigje

- 11:35 - 12:15 **Paneli 7: Prezentimet (10 min. për secilin prezentim)**
- Gjykatat përballë krizës COVID-19: analizë e masave të miratuara nga sistemi gjyqësor i Kosovës  
**Prof. Asoc. Dr. Vilard Bytyqi**, Fakulteti i Sigurisë Publike të AKSP-së dhe Anëtar i Këshillit Gjyqësor të Kosovës (KGJK), Kosovë
- Sfidat në ndërtimin e partneriteteve gjatë pandemisë COVID-19: Nxitja e marrëdhënieve ndërkulturore midis studentëve të AKSP-së dhe Universitetit Utah Valley (UVU)  
**Chris Lindquist, PhD**, Universiteti Utah Valley, SHBA (*online*)  
**Nichole Berge, PhD**, Universiteti Utah Valley, SHBA (*online*)
- Ndikimi negativ i procesit të pandemisë COVID-19 në marrëdhëniet familjare  
**İbrahim Ataç**, Ligërues i lartë, Instituti i Shkencave të Sigurisë, Akademia Kombëtare Policore e turqisë, Ankara, Turqi (*online*)
- Sfidat e personelit mjekësor që kanë trajtuar zbatuesit e ligjit gjatë pandemisë COVID -19  
**Znj. Jane Krzysiak**, Institucioni Shëndetësor në Chicago, SHBA (*online*)
- 12:15 - 12:30 Diskutim i hapur/pyetje dhe përgjigje
- 13:30 - 14:15 Vizitë në Akademinë e Kosovës për Siguri Publike, Vushtrri (*Transporti ofrohet nga AKSP dhe MONK*)
- 14:15 - 14:20 Foto grupi (*përpara Ndërtesës Kryesore të AKSP-së*)
- 14:20 - 14:25 Fjalim mirëseardhës (*Qendra Mësimore Steve Bennett - kati i dytë*)  
**Z. Kastriot Jashari**, Zëvendësues i Drejtorit të Përgjithshëm të AKSP-së
- 14:25 - 14:45 Misioni, vizioni dhe rruga përpara e AKSP-së  
**Z. Skender Agaj**, Zyrtar për Marrëdhënie me Jashtë në AKSP, Kosovë
- 14:45 - 15:00 Trajnimi i kadetëve policorë gjatë pandemisë COVID-19 (2020-2021) dhe sfidat  
**Kolonel Agron Nezaj**, Drejtor i Trajnimeve Mandatore të Policisë së Kosovës/rezident në AKSP, Kosovë
- 15:00 - 17:00 Ecje në kampusin e AKSP-së  
Gjenerata e 57-të e kadetëve të Policisë së Kosovës  
Vizitë e sistemit të Simulatorit të Trajnimit të Armëve të Zjarrit (FATS)  
Vizitë e ndërtesës së re të Fakultetit të Sigurisë Publike të AKSP-së  
Këndi promovues i OSBE-së
- 17:30 Largimi nga AKSP për në hotel Emerald (*Transporti ofrohet nga AKSP dhe MONK*)

**E premte, 18 nëntor 2022**

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09:30 - 10:30 Fjalimet përmyllëse dhe bashkëpunimi në të ardhmen  
**Z. Edward Anderson**, Drejtor i Departamentit për Rend dhe Siguri Publike (DRSP), MOnK  
**Z. Kastriot Jashari**, Zëvendësues i Drejtorit të Përgjithshëm të AKSP-së  
**Znj. Shpresa Muharremi**, Njësia Këshilluese e AKSP-së, DRSP/MOnK  
**Z. Avni Istrefi**, Udhëheqës i Divizionit për Marrëdhënie me Jashtë, AKSP  
**Z. Skender Agaj**, Zyrtar për Marrëdhënie me Jashtë, AKSP  
**Z. Bylent Ribari**, Asistent Programi, DRSP/MOnK

**12:00** Check out (dalja) nga Hotel Emerald (*MOnK dhe AKSP do të ofrojnë transportin nga Hoteli për në Aeroport*)

# THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON THE INCREASE IN CRIMINAL OFFENSES OF ORGANIZED CRIME AND TERRORISM IN SOUTHEAST EUROPE

Blerim DAJAKU<sup>1</sup>

*The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has radically changed countries everywhere, based on the geopolitical, socio-economic and conflictual aspects, causing deep impacts on the increasing trends of criminal offenses of organized crime and international terrorism with long-term effects. Organized crime and terrorist groups have taken advantage of the changing circumstances during the pandemic.*

*Since the beginning of this crisis, law enforcement agencies have monitored these developments to help the member states of Southeast Europe understand and address these emerging phenomena. During the pandemic, the local authorities were also faced with various cases that, in the name of fighting the pandemic, endangered the privacy of the citizen and their human rights were violated based on the protection of personal data, risking the privacy by the use of online platforms, information security in health care systems. However, two aspects remain challenging for the security situation in Southeast Europe that will involve different periods.*

*In the short term, criminal activities and those prepared by terrorist groups will continue to exploit the situation and various crime schemes may become more sophisticated. The use of new technologies and online activities in organized crime and terrorism will accelerate even further.*

*While in the long run, a sustained economic downturn can cause organized crime and terrorism to flourish. Economically deprived individuals may be increasingly vulnerable to recruitment by organized crime groups and terrorism.*

*This study aims to analyze the phenomenon of organized crime and terrorism in South-Eastern Europe by highlighting the difficulties of policing, negative and positive sides, case statistics and comparisons between South-Eastern countries.*

**Keywords:** COVID-19, prevention, police, organized crime, terrorism

## Introduction

Considering the health and economic crisis created by the COVID-19 pandemic, a question arises regarding the effects, direct or indirect, it may have on criminal strategies and in particular whether the pandemic is opening new scenarios for organized crime.

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<sup>1</sup> Ph.D. (c), Police Liaison Officer at the Embassy of the Republic of Kosovo in Ankara; e-mail: blerim.dajakubd@gmail.com

South-East Europe continues to face serious law enforcement challenges from criminal networks operating in the region and mostly involved in the trafficking of controlled substances, firearms and persons, emigrant smuggling, drug use, corruption, flows of illegal financial and terrorism.

With the aim of getting a clearer picture of the situation, law enforcement agencies in the countries of Southeast Europe have been closely monitoring the role of organized crime during the pandemic, gathering information and discussing findings with a number of key partners.

It should be mentioned that the police was the main actor in the fight against organized crime and terrorism, since police officials investigate most of the criminal offenses related to these phenomena. In this aspect, the police also had their own challenges facing these factors;

- health condition as a result of infection with COVID-19;
- lack of staff in the performance of duties;
- logistics problems.

The preliminary results of their activities, which were later presented in their annual reports including the years 2020 and 2021, show a worrying scenario, where organized crime and extremist groups aiming for terrorist acts have been able to fully exploit the opportunities created by the COVID-19 crisis.

The countries that make up the geographical position of SEE are often considered problematic places for organized crime and terrorism, but if a detailed study is done based on the criminal offenses that have occurred in this region, then we can say that the comparison with other countries in Western Europe, Central or with other countries in Central Asia and South Africa in terms of extremism, it turns out that SEE has a current peace and cannot be called a country of origin of terrorist acts, including the period of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The region itself represents a small market for illegal goods and services, and some of the criminal groups from SEE have realized that other regions offer greater wealth.

This paper will discuss the problem areas of organized crime and terrorism at the states level in SEE, however this paper does not pretend to be comprehensive.

Unable to examine everything, the study focuses mainly on a few countries in SEE. These countries were selected because they encounter all types and types of groups involved in criminal activities, extremist activities that lead to acts of terrorism, various criminal markets, the nature of international crime connections, as well as the evolution of activities carried out in countries foreigners from criminal groups from SEE.

However, we must not forget that in most foreign countries where these groups operate, the dominant criminal element remains local criminal gangs.

Based on periodic reports during the COVID-19 pandemic by law enforcement agencies from SEE countries, it was learned that organized crime groups were focused on three main points of interest, with each progressively presenting a different level of challenge. for both government and law enforcement response: new opportunities and markets, infiltration in the legal economy, and territorial control.

The data provided for the drafting of this paper are comprehensive, including official data from the national police of the state to SER, data from other relevant institutions, independent and specialized agencies, various NGOs, but also data from open sources, including various researches from local and international organizations

## **1. Organized crime and terrorism**

Organized crime poses a serious threat to domestic and international security. As in Kosovo, also in other countries of South-Eastern Europe, organized crime groups are expanding their network more and more both inside and outside the borders with different types of crimes combined with ever greater danger for national security. In the context of the analysis presented here, 'government-type' organized crime groups are understood to be criminal groups that aspire to exercise security governance in the areas they control<sup>2</sup>.

The pandemic crisis has changed the dynamics of supply, demand and prices of illegal drugs in the market, changes that will be greater as the crisis continues. Information from law enforcement agencies highlights that there was manipulation of the quality of drugs during the COVID-19 pandemic and in some cases more expensive drugs in Montenegro, Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. An increase in under 14s giving drugs has also been reported<sup>3</sup>

As Europol reported in its baseline assessment, the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic appeared to have little immediate impact on wholesale drug trafficking. Drugs continued to be seized upon arrival in shipping containers at key entry points into South East Europe, in some cases in unprecedented quantities. Due to the decline in the export of essential chemicals and precursors usually imported from China and used in the production of synthetic drugs, the production of these drugs slowed down, but did not stop.<sup>3</sup>

The same situation applies to violent extremism and radicalism that leads to terrorism. Organized crime groups are characterized by their ability to quickly adapt to new conditions and circumstances, finding space for realizing large profits, exerting influence on the institutions and legal order of the state, including the countries of South-Eastern Europe. As a result, for example,

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<sup>2</sup> Aziani, A., Favarin, S., dhe Campedelli, G.M., "Qeverisja e Sigurisë- Kontrolli i mafias mbi krimet e zakonshme" Revista hulumtuese ne delikuece dhe krime, vol. 57, No. 4 (2019), faqe. 444-492.

cocaine prices were reported to have risen by 25%, underscoring the impact the crackdowns were having on drug imports into Europe.<sup>3</sup>

According to a report published by the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime in March 2020, it is known that the pandemic has caused a decrease in the activities of some organized criminal groups, while offering them new opportunities in other areas.<sup>4</sup>

Counterfeiting and fraud directly related to the COVID-19 pandemic has also been detected, and similar cases are found in Southeast Europe. Law enforcement agencies in several Southeastern European countries had information that some dealers were using forged certificates, commercial vehicles and corporate vests, impersonating the staff of Internet providers who were supposed to be tasked with installing fiber optics to distribute drugs.

## **2. Organized crime and terrorism in Bosnia and Herzegovina**

Bosnia and Herzegovina has a slightly unique political structure compared to other states in the SEE region, with a trio presidency consisting of a Bosniak, a Serb and a Croat, who act as heads of state on a rotating basis. Although leaders have vowed to fight crime, during the time of the COVID-19 pandemic they lacked the ability.

Bosnia and Herzegovina serves as a country of origin, transit point and destination, although to a lesser extent, for human trafficking, which is mainly trafficked for sexual exploitation and forced labor. This country is also a transit point for victims of Chinese, Indian and Turkish origin, as well as victims from the Middle East and the Gulf countries trying to enter Europe. Within the country, Bosnian women and girls are trafficked for sexual exploitation in private residences and motels. In 2019, there were 61 people, 36 of them under the age of 18. In 2020, 70 people were victims of trafficking, while 35 were under the age of 18.

In particular, marginalized Roma and other children are forced to beg, sexually exploited and forced to do domestic work.

The number of foreign victims of human trafficking within BiH is low, but cases have been recorded in which the victims were from Afghanistan, Cuba, Gambia, Libya and Sri Lanka. Furthermore, BiH is a known transit country for converted weapons.

The criminal market for cocaine in BiH is less valuable and widespread than other drug markets. However, during 2020, more groups entered the market and created stronger links between crime

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<sup>3</sup> po aty

<sup>4</sup> "Krimi dhe ngjitja: Ndikimi i një pandemie në krimin e organizuar". Iniciativa Globale. 26-03-2020



groups in Republika Srpska, with links to criminal organizations in Serbia and Montenegro and drug traffickers from Latin America.

Organized crime actors originating from Kosovo, Croatia and Serbia, and to a lesser extent from Montenegro and Albania, are known to be hiding and operating in BiH. They tried to regain their influence, even using the forms of orders, cargo transport and online payments. In addition, suspected Middle Easterners have significant influence over the country's crime markets. In addition, corruption levels are high and many suspects enjoy protection from individuals in the state apparatus.

During the pandemic, the activities of extremists were monitored. A year ago, in 2019, Bosnia and Herzegovina repatriated two of its citizens who were members of ISIS in Syria. While in 2020, the court decided to sentence them to 3.5 years. Proceedings against five other defendants are ongoing. In 2020, the BiH Court sentenced an FTF, also repatriated from Syria in 2019, to four years in prison, while acquitting the only BiH national prosecuted up to date for fighting in Donbas.

### **3. Organized crime and terrorism in Bulgaria**

Bulgaria is a country of origin for victims of human trafficking who are sent to and exploited in Western Europe. Several types of criminal structures operate within the market, each with a distinct modus operandi, but no single criminal actor has a monopoly.

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, many victims of trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation have returned home to Bulgaria. In general, human smuggling networks based in Bulgaria provide transit logistics for smuggling migrants from Turkey to Serbia or Romania. During the pandemic, corruption became a significant factor in human smuggling, with border officials facilitating the market and organizing smuggling channels. Although arms trafficking is not extensive, Bulgaria is an important transit country for Turkish-made gas pistols trafficked to Western Europe, where they are converted into live ammunition. During 2020 there were 74 cases of human trafficking, while in 2021 there were 53 cases.

Corruption is a significant factor in human smuggling, with border officials facilitating the market and organizing smuggling channels.

Arms trafficking is not extensive, Bulgaria is an important transit country for Turkish-made gas pistols trafficked to Western Europe, where they are converted into live ammunition.

Irregular migrants apprehended in Bulgaria during the period 2020-2021 were as follows: irregular entry in 2020 was 510 migrants, while in 2021 there were 1,386 migrants; irregular exit of migrants from Bulgaria in 2020 was 924, while in 2021 there were 1,097 migrants. As for the irregular stay

in the Bulgarian territory in 2020, there were 2,053 migrants, while in 2021 there were 8,316 migrants. The number of new arrivals represents an increase of 205% compared to the previous year.

Sources indicate more than 70% of heroin in Western and Central Europe transits the Balkan route, with most of the drug passing through Bulgaria, although the amounts moved through the country are likely to have decreased somewhat following the COVID lockdowns -19.

No cases of terrorism occurred during 2019, but it should be noted that in December 2019, the Pazardzhik District Court sentenced the Islamic preacher Ahmed Mussa and 13 of his followers within the Roma Muslim community to prison for propagandizing religious hatred and inciting war in support of ISIS.

In 2020, the court indicted a student who planned to commit a terrorist act in the city of Plovdiv

#### **4. Organized crime and terrorism in Greece**

Greece is primarily a transit country for people smuggling and one of the most important smuggling centers in the world. With the closure of the Balkan route, the most used smuggling route now starts in Turkey, runs through Greece and crosses the Mediterranean to Italy.

Greece is a destination country for illegal weapons from Bulgaria, Albania, the Republic of North Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro. Firearms were also trafficked to Greece from North Africa and the Levant via air, sea and land corridors. These illegal weapons are often unloaded in Gavdos, having been trafficked from Libya, Lebanon, Israel and Egypt. Shipments of weapons found on ships transiting Greek territorial waters have been confiscated, and there are also reports of weapons being packaged together with legal products and sent via private courier companies from Crete to other Greek islands.

Local groups are also reported to control arms smuggling markets and local mafia-style groups known as the Night Godfathers own local businesses, usually nightclubs or establishments linked to the tourism industry, who run the criminal network from their properties. and at the same time have access to weapons, which many violent fights between mafia-style groups have involved the use of firearms.

Even in terms of drug transportation and sale, Greece plays a transit role. Residents consume some of the drug, while the rest is processed and sold.

In May 2021, the Greek Coast Guard published a video showing a practice that is quite common in Latin America. Their vulnerability and susceptibility to exploitation has intensified during the COVID-19 pandemic, with an increase in the number of unaccompanied children being smuggled into Greece.

In 2021, a total of 9,157 refugees and migrants arrived in Greece. This marks a 31.7% decrease compared to 15,696 in 2020, mainly due to increased delays, border militarization and restrictions stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Terrorism and extremism in Greece during 2019 was present on its territory. On March 22, two unidentified assailants on a motorcycle threw a grenade that exploded in front of a police guard cabin outside the consular section of the Russian Embassy resulting in minor damage. A group called the FAI/IRF Revenge Cell Mikhail Zhlobitski later claimed responsibility for the attack on an anti-establishment website. In November 2019, about 10 perpetrators entered the offices of the far-right political party Golden Dawn and set off an improvised explosive device that caused fire and property damage. No organization has claimed responsibility for the attack. Greece experienced small-scale riots carried out mainly by local anarchists who often acted in solidarity with imprisoned terrorists. Examples of these incidents included vandalizing government buildings, private residences of Greek politicians and foreign missions with paint and leaflets. In 2020, the police arrested a 27-year-old Syrian citizen, who had been operating in Athens for some time and was part of ISIS.

## **5. Organized crime and terrorism in Kosovo**

Kosovo continues to be a transit country for some types of serious and organized crimes, while now there is a growing tendency to be a destination country for some types of these crimes, such as drugs, but also for some cases of migrant smuggling of human trafficking.

Kosovo continues to be used as a transit country by drug traffickers of various types, where most of the narcotics are destined for the foreign market, mainly destined for the countries of Western Europe, Austria, Germany and Switzerland. The origin of narcotics from which organized criminal groups from Kosovo are supplied remains almost the same, with Turkey continuing to be the main country of supply of heroin, while Albania for other narcotics, such as cocaine and cannabis.

In relation to drug trafficking cases, during 2020 a total of 1,005 new cases were initiated, while in 2021 the police initiated a total of 726 new cases<sup>5</sup>.

In addition to engaging in the prevention of the spread of the coronavirus in the Republic of Kosovo and continuing to fulfill all tasks, the police had continued to provide 24-hour security at

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<sup>5</sup> Raporti vjetor i punës së Policisë së Kosovës për vitin 2021, faqe 15.

123 static points of buildings of special importance: diplomatic, governmental, police, ministerial, of which 24 static points of buildings of Orthodox cultural and religious heritage.<sup>6</sup>

In terms of the fight against arms smuggling during 2020, the police confiscated 1,135 firearms of various types and 32,747 amounts of ammunition of various calibers were confiscated<sup>7</sup>.

During the pandemic, 64 cases were registered in the field of combating human trafficking, a total of 104 suspects were arrested. During the pandemic period based on 2021, in the field of combating human trafficking, 131 cases were registered, a total of 182 suspects were arrested and 78 criminal charges were filed against 147 suspects and 34 misdemeanor charges against 75 persons. 43 victims were identified and 39 victims of trafficking were assisted.

The amount of money that smugglers benefit from migrants is 200 to 300 euros for crossing a country, while about 1,800 to 3,500 euros to the European country where their destination is. Kosovo is the only country in SEE that is outside the Schengen area of free travel, therefore the smuggling of Kosovar migrants to EU countries, with the aim of migration, is still happening, but with a much lower number than in past periods.

Cybercrime threats are considered among the biggest security and privacy challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic. Based on international reports, Kosovo is the first in Southeast Europe in terms of internet usage with 1.72 million internet users or 97% of the total population. The most frequent cybercrimes in Kosovo during the period of the COVID-19 pandemic are: computer access, misuse of bank or credit cards, misuse of children in pornography, threats, harassment, fraud, identity and access device theft, false presentation as an official person.

Corruption affects the misuse of taxpayers' money, but also substandard services, unequal treatment of citizens and businesses, illegal enrichment of public officials and deterioration of citizens' well-being. Thus, in 2020, cases against corruption and wealth were handled, 183 cases were registered, 128 suspects were arrested and 127 criminal charges were filed against 289 suspects.

Likewise, in 2021, money laundering cases were handled - 3 cases and 2 other cases; other offenses related to forgery and fraud, 49 cases were registered and 1 case was registered for vote corruption.

Progress was made in the fight against terrorism during 2019, 2020 and 2021. In 2020, the police investigated 40 cases, of which 7 new cases and 33 transferred cases. They arrested 3 people, and 7 criminal charges were filed against 22 people. 2 operations were undertaken, where 3 operational plans were realized. The data of persons who are suspected to have been, are or are planning to

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<sup>6</sup> Raporti vjetor i punës së Policisë së Kosovës për vitin 2020, faqe 12.

<sup>7</sup> Raporti vjetor i punës së Policisë së Kosovës për vitin 2020, faqe 11.

join terrorist organizations are continuously updated.<sup>8</sup> While in 2021, 35 cases were treated, of which 13 new cases and 22 transferred cases. 14 people were arrested and 14 criminal charges were filed against 17 people. Also, during this year, 2 operational plans were implemented: "Return II", this plan was implemented by returning 11 Kosovar people from the conflict zone, of which 6 men, 1 woman and 4 children, and "Refugee", which was implemented in cooperation with officials from the MIA and other institutions, who have received and treated about 1,300 people from Afghanistan. These people have entered the Republic of Kosovo, then in an organized manner, most of them have traveled to other countries, while about 500 of them are still in Kosovo.<sup>9</sup>

## **6. Organized crime and terrorism in Croatia**

Croatia appears to be primarily a transit country for human trafficking, although it has become a source and destination country since 2013. Women and girls are particularly at risk of sexual exploitation, both within and across Europe. Foreign criminal actors dominate the human smuggling market in Croatia, but locals are also involved.

The Croatian arms trafficking market is transnational in nature, although limited. Available information suggests that several small criminal groups with flexible organizational structures dominate the Croatian drug market.

During an operation aboard a container ship in the port of Ploce in November 2021, Croatian police divers found approximately 61 kilograms of cocaine in a metal box attached to a magnet at the bottom of a ship from Ecuador or Peru.

In this respect, investigation statistics prove that in 2020 a total of 2,484 drug cases were handled, including types of drugs, while in 2021 the Croatian police handled 2,089 cases, but there was a decrease in drug cases of -15.9%.<sup>10</sup>

In the fight against corruption, the Croatian police in 2020 investigated 538 cases and sent criminal reports to the prosecutor's office, while in 2021 there were 847 cases, i.e. an increase of 63.5% more.

In cases of human trafficking for prostitution in 2020, 10 cases were handled, while in 2021, 14 cases.

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<sup>8</sup> Raporti vjetor i punës së Policisë së Kosovës për vitin 2020, faqe 17.

<sup>9</sup> Raporti vjetor i punës së Policisë së Kosovës për vitin 2021, faqe 16.

<sup>10</sup> Raporti vjetor i policisë kroate 2021, [https://mup.gov.hr/UserDocsImages/statistika/2021/Web\\_engleski-I-XI-2021](https://mup.gov.hr/UserDocsImages/statistika/2021/Web_engleski-I-XI-2021)

Cybercrimes During the pandemic, Croatian institutions, including the population, faced cybercrime attacks. In 2020, the police investigated 908 cases, while in 2021, 1463 cases with an increase of 61.1%.<sup>11</sup>

Criminal groups engage in most illegal markets, but around 70% of all known criminal networks focus primarily on drug trafficking, people smuggling, and tax and customs evasion. Regarding the reported criminal offenses related to terrorism, including radicalism and extremism cases, according to the Croatian police, in 2020, 57 cases were handled, while in 2021 there were only 32 cases, so there was a decrease in cases of -43.9 %.

## **7. Organized crime and terrorism in North Macedonia**

North Macedonia is a transit point and destination country for women and children trafficked for prostitution and forced labor.

Furthermore, throughout the country, migrants and refugees traveling informally and/or assisted by smugglers are vulnerable to trafficking, especially women and unaccompanied minors. Organized crime groups are becoming increasingly sophisticated, and law enforcement often accepts bribes to facilitate the criminal market.

North Macedonia is a transit and destination country for illegal weapons, although on a small scale. Alarm gun conversion workshops have been found in recent years and registered companies have been discovered selling firearms by forging documents to export them illegally.

In terms of narcotics trafficking, North Macedonia is a minor source country for heroin and a key transit point for Afghan and Turkish heroin moving through the Balkan route to Europe. North Macedonian groups based in Veles, Shtip and Kočan control the market. Cocaine arrives from Latin America through the Balkan route, going to Bulgaria, Turkey and Greece.

Money laundering in North Macedonia is often related to financial crimes, such as tax evasion and smuggling, and a small part is related to drug trafficking.

Criminal networks linked to migrant smuggling groups offer a full range of services, including accommodation, provision of forged documents and information on points of contact in countries further along the route. The responsibility of the host is to take care of the migrants once they enter North Macedonia, while the task of the observer is to identify police patrols, checkpoints or ambushes along the route and inform the remaining members of the network.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> <https://mup.gov.hr/UserDocImages/statistika/2021/Basic-safety-indicators-2020.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> Ivan Sterjoski dhe Bojana Bozinovska. Trafikimi i qenieve njerëzore dhe trafikimi i emigrantëve në Maqedoninë e Veriut, Shoqata e Avokatëve të Rinj, Maj 2019.

Most asylum seekers and migrants are young men from the Middle East and North Africa, as well as Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Based on 2019, there were no cases of terrorism in North Macedonia, while in 2020, one man and three women were repatriated. The suspect was sentenced to 5 years in prison for participating in the war as a member of ISIS.

## **8. Organized crime and terrorism in Montenegro**

Montenegro has a long and vulnerable coastline with a number of seaports used as trafficking points which have seen a proliferation of trafficking, particularly of cocaine.

Montenegro is primarily a transit area, and to a less extent a country of origin, for human trafficking. Only 22 victims were officially identified between 2015-2019, but there has been a growing trend towards sophisticated forms of trafficking and slavery to facilitate cybercrimes.

As a result of the wider regional migration crisis, there has been an increase in human smuggling in Montenegro. While Montenegro is not part of the main migration route of the Western Balkans, it serves as a transit country from Turkey and Greece to Central Europe.

Montenegro is positioned along one of the most important transit routes for arms trafficking in the region, from Serbia to the Middle East, Russia to North Africa (especially Libya) and from the Balkans to Western Europe, as well as from Bosnia and Herzegovina to Serbia and Kosovo. Guns are usually smuggled legally in private vehicles.

Montenegro is the main entry point for cocaine trafficked through the Balkans into the EU, especially cocaine coming from Latin America. The market is controlled by several mafia-style groups, most notably the Kavac clan and the Škaljari clan.

Montenegro is a major transit country for cannabis originating in Albania and transported to Bosnia and Serbia. Cannabis is also the most commonly seized and consumed drug in the country, with a marked increase in consumption rates over the past decade. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the price of cannabis increased due to increased demand for recreational use.

Corruption is widespread within institutions and this facilitates the work of criminal groups and even the network of terrorist groups. There are many citizens from Russia and the Middle East who have already bought properties on the coast, such as Budva and Tivat.

## **9. Organized crime and terrorism in Romania**

Since the fall of communism, the main drivers of organized crime have been economic transition, political instability, opening borders and increased mobility. Romania is an EU member state, but not part of the Schengen area, and therefore has risks associated with its borders with Ukraine and Moldova, both of which experience fragility and higher levels of organized crime. Romania is a major source and destination country for human trafficking and is among the top five countries in the EU for victims of human trafficking. Victims from Romania are mainly trafficked to Italy, France, Germany, Spain and the UK, while Pakistan and the Philippines are the main source countries for those arriving in Romania.

They are also used for domestic services, forced begging and theft.

Criminal groups smuggle migrants from Ukraine to and through Romania, Hungary, Slovakia and Poland. Some migrants are smuggled from Turkey across the Black Sea to Romania and Bulgaria, from where they move north into Western Europe.

Although its arms trafficking market has shrunk significantly in the past decade, Romania is still a transit country for illegal weapons from Eastern Europe destined for other European countries. Bulgaria is the main source country for Romania's illegal firearms. Albanian-speaking organized crime groups traffic weapons in Romania, along with Balkan, Russian, Georgian and Turkish criminal groups. Romania is part of the northern Balkan route used for heroin produced in Afghanistan. Heroin entering Romania is either for local consumption or destined for Central and Western Europe. Cannabis is the most used drug in Romania. Most users are young people between the ages of 15 and 34.

Drugs are imported into Romania from Spain, Greece and Albania; however, most of the cannabis seized in the country is produced in several regions of Romania.

Romania has structures in place to make it somewhat resilient to money laundering and terrorist financing.

## **10. Organized crime and terrorism in Serbia**

Serbia is a country of origin, transit point and destination for human trafficking. Women and children are trafficked to neighboring and EU countries for sexual exploitation and forced labour, and men are trafficked for forced labour, usually in the construction industry.

In arms trafficking offences, Serbia is a hub of illegal firearms trafficking and is a major arms producer, with large quantities of arms being diverted to the illegal market. Since the "Arab Spring" of 2011, the illegal trade in firearms has become very profitable and large quantities of weapons are trafficked to armed groups in Syria and conflict zones in the Middle East.



Human trafficking is widespread. The police filed criminal charges against 63 suspects, compared to 57 in 2020. The Public Prosecutor's Office (PPO) investigated 35 suspects, compared to 22 in 2020. The PPO prosecuted 26 defendants, compared to 42 defendants in 2020. Courts convicted 16 traffickers and 18 traffickers in 2020.

All 16 traffickers were sentenced to prison terms, but the government did not collect or report information on the length of sentences. Courts also acquitted 10 individuals, compared to seven individuals in 2020. While in cases of production, transportation and sale of narcotics, the heroin market dominates, which is among the most widespread and violent criminal markets in Serbia and includes several gangs. organized crime. Serbia acts as a transit country, as local gangs collaborate with foreign criminal networks to move heroin from Afghanistan to the Balkans. Networks use intimidation to maintain control of local communities, extorting businesses, controlling criminal markets and maintaining political connections.

There were no reported terrorist incidents in Serbia in 2019.

## **11. Organized crime and terrorism in Albania**

Albania serves primarily as a transit country for smuggling migrants from the Middle East and North Africa, who travel through Greece and Montenegro on their way to Western or Northern Europe.

Compared to other Balkan countries, arms trafficking is relatively limited in Albania and there is no production of arms or ammunition.

Albania is also a transit country for heroin trafficked to Europe via the Balkan route from Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan. Most of the heroin is trafficked to Albania by land, through North Macedonia, but heroin processing laboratories have also been discovered inside the country by the Albanian police.

As for the cases of human trafficking, in 2021 the police investigated 61 cases which occurred almost during the pandemic, while in 2020 there were 31 cases of human trafficking.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, however, criminal offenses were committed. In 2020, there were 876 cases of fraud, while in 2021, 975 cases occurred, which means that during the pandemic there was an increase in cases of "fraud" committed by suspected persons in various forms, including online shopping fraud.

Regarding the drug cases that occurred during the pandemic period, according to the statistics of the state police in Tirana, it is known that in 2020 there were 2,086 cases, while in 2021, 3,078 drug cases were reported.

Migration cases during the pandemic continued even further, confronting the country with the influx of foreigners, who irregularly entered the territory of Albania without the necessary documentation. 18,835 people were identified in 2020, while 10,062 people were identified in 2021<sup>13</sup>.

As for the cases of terrorism during 2019, there were no reported cases, nor in 2020. However, during the time of the COVID-19 pandemic, in July 2020, a suspected agent sponsored by the Iranian authorities was declared "unwanted" by the Government of Albania and then deported from the country, while in October 2020 the authorities successfully repatriated an Albanian woman and four children from Syria.

## **12. Organized crime and terrorism in Turkey**

Turkey's prime location at the crossroads between Asia, the Middle East and Europe, combined with its long land and sea borders, makes it a key player in transnational markets for both human trafficking and migrant smuggling, and narcotics.

Trafficking in human beings is mainly concentrated in the country's tourist areas, metropolitan cities and border towns.

In terms of people smuggling, in 2020 there were 1,525 incidents of migrant smuggling, while the Turkish police detained 2,835 organizers and 722 people were arrested as suspects. Again in 2020, 42 incidents of human trafficking occurred, 126 traffickers were caught and 32 people were arrested.<sup>14</sup>

In 2021, the Turkish police handled 2,565 cases of migrant smuggling, 4,503 organizers were caught and 868 people were arrested. Again in 2021, 64 cases of human trafficking occurred, 194 traffickers were caught and 63 people were arrested.<sup>15</sup>

Illegal arms trade is widespread in Turkey, with firearms use and arms trafficking increasing in recent years.

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<sup>13</sup> INSTAT: <http://www.instat.gov.al>

<sup>14</sup> Raport vjetor i policisë turke 2020, faqe 36. Faliyet report 2020 sayfa 36

<sup>15</sup> Raport vjetor i policisë turke 2021, faqe 36. Faliyet report 2021 sayfa 36

Drug trafficking during the COVID-19 pandemic had a trend of increasing the number of incidents and suspects. In 2020 there were 159,268 drug cases, while in 2021 there were about 215,771 cases<sup>16</sup>.

There are a large number of loose criminal networks, mainly in areas close to Turkey's sea and land borders, such as Adana, Izmir, Diyarbakir, Reyhanli, Gaziantep and Istanbul. These networks engage in a variety of cross-border smuggling activities, ranging from narcotics trafficking to migrant smuggling. As of 2020, Turkish citizens can travel to Bosnia simply with an ID. Many Syrians and Iraqis obtain Turkish IDs in both legal and illegal ways.

Regarding the fight against cybercrimes, the Turkish police in 2021 handled 67,658 cases and in this regard 540 operations were undertaken against suspected persons, in which case they arrested 6,903 suspects as perpetrators of criminal cybercrimes and judicial proceedings have been initiated against them.

In the fight against terrorism in 2021, Turkey's fight against terrorism increased steadily but remained exceptional. Only 26 terrorist attacks occurred within Turkey's borders, and all of these attacks were carried out by the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) and its constituents. Taking into account the attacks against the Turkish front/forces in Syria and Iraq, there were 191 attacks in 2021. A total of 217 terrorist attacks targeted Turkey inside and outside its borders in 2021. Meanwhile, 101 terrorist attacks were prevented even before their execution, 97 of which were planned by the PKK, 3 by DAESH and the rest by the far-left terrorist organization. In addition, 2,529 terrorists were neutralized in 2021 alone. During 2020, the Turkish police handled 9,904 cases related to terrorist acts, while filing criminal charges against 173 suspects: 161 related to the PKK organization, 3 from the ISIS organization, 2 from the DKP and 1 from the MLKP.

## **Conclusion**

Southeast Europe based on its geographical and geopolitical position can be said to constitute the shortest corridor in the world between source and destination countries for heroin and a prominent route from countries experiencing war and instability and European states that can offer international protection.

Based on the research done in this paper, we can mention the fact that there is no point of coordination of the activities of different criminal groups from South Eastern Europe that develop their activity outside this region. There is no crime homeland in SEE and likewise there is no big boss from the region organizing the activities of various groups from SEE countries.

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<sup>16</sup> Raporti vjetor i drogës në Turqi 2022, faqe 27.

However, the history of this region and the socio-economic conditions have influenced the export of criminal activities. In general, SEE has an unstable political economy and this type of system creates a situation of insecurity that prompts various individuals to seek or offer protection, create networks, and launder dirty money.

One of the main links between the world's problem areas and SEE is logistics. The region is located at the intersection of important traffic corridors, such as heroin trafficking along the corridor in the SEE and is even the epicenter of migrant trafficking.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, there have been a number of drug cargo seizures in the Albanian ports of Durrës, in the Greek ports, in the Montenegrin ports of Tivat, in the Turkish ports of Mersin, which shows that these ports are being used as points for unloading large quantities of drugs. cocaine that arrives by ship from Latin America and is then sent to major markets in Italy and other European countries.

Another important factor is the laundering of the proceeds of crime in this region. It appears that this has had a major impact on the construction and real estate industries, driving up prices while incomes are not increasing. Other widely used methods of money laundering are investments in tourism, gambling, call centers, money exchange agencies and remittances from immigrants to the mother country.

In conclusion, while some criminal groups have profited from the conflict in the Middle East, through the trafficking of arms and immigrants, this situation has also had a boomerang effect, as it has sparked popular discontent as a result of the increase in the number of immigrants and concerns in related to the return of foreign fighters and radicalization. In the future it is important to analyze not only the spread of organized crime from SEE around the world, but also how organized crime groups from abroad can penetrate into SE Europe.

# **THE ROLE OF THE POLICE IN DEALING WITH COVID 19 PANDEMIC**

## **(Presentation of the Research results on the Project: Functioning of the Security System of the Republic of North Macedonia in conditions of Emergency Situations and Crisis - Case Study COVID-19)**

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*The aim of this paper is to present a part of research results of the Project Functioning of the Security system of the Republic of North Macedonia in Conditions of Emergency situations and Crisis - Case Study COVID-19.*

*At the very beginning of COVID-19 crisis, the Faculty of Security established a team of professors to follow activities of the governmental institutions with the main goal to prepare scientific report on the functioning of the security system as a whole, and on some of the sectors as a part of the system.*

*The team was divided on a several sub teams with task to prepare research report on the following topics:*

- 1. Activities of the Ministry of Interior in dealing with COVID-19 crisis*
- 2. Case study on activities of Local Protection and Rescue Headquarter in the Municipality of Kumanovo during COVID-19 pandemic*
- 3. Psychosocial aspect of the crisis situation caused from COVID-19 and*
- 4. Citizen response to the crisis*

*This paper presents a part of the scientific report on the functioning of the security system of the Republic of North Macedonia in conditions of emergency situations and crisis with focus on the activities of Macedonian police and MoI.*

*The main goal is to carry out a scientific description and review current approaches in the prevention, handling of the Covid-19 pandemic and recovery from threats, risks, disasters, with a special emphasis on contingency plans and continuation with the work covered through case studies and analyses.*

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*We were very aware of the activities of other sectors, mainly health care, economy and finance. However, our focus is on security system, and focus of this paper is to present the most important findings of the activities of the Police and MoI.*

**Keywords:** *COVID-19, security, crisis, security institutions, crime rate*

## **Introduction**

As a socially responsible institution, the Faculty of security through the research team, was actively engaged in research project with more science-based instruments for the purpose of perception of the shortcomings in the functioning of the institutions (on central and local level) and proposing measures for better functioning and dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic.

The aim of the project was to determine possible critical areas in the security system of the Republic of North Macedonia with necessary elements for positive change, especially on the crisis management and protection and rescue sector. As a result of a theoretical and practical approach, the team agreed on several proposals and possible solutions for building an efficient security system where crisis management and protection and rescue are an integral part of security system by creating appropriate security policy.

The discussion about the general functioning of the system should be updated in the operational activities of the early warning system as an integral part of security system of North Macedonia.

The emergence and rapid spread of the Covid-19, which represent threat to public health at the global level, as well as the official declare of a state of pandemic on COVID-19 by World Health Organization (WHO), created numerous challenges to protect life and health of citizens all over the world\*.

The measures to protect and deal with COVID-19, which were undertaken at the national level, directly reflected the way that public institutions act, negatively affected the economic flows and the work of the private sector and changed the usual life of the citizens. However, in such circumstances the Government bring the only possible decision – to protect life and health of the citizens in North Macedonia.

Facing the COVID-19 crisis, for the first time we faced the introduction of a state of emergency on the territory of the entire country. The introduction of a state of emergency proved to be a necessary measure for ordinary functioning of the public authorities, especially considering that at that time the country was in a sensitive period in which the Parliament was dissolved, and early parliamentary elections were set to 12 April 2020. In such conditions, different Laws and articles are applied, especially in the area of compliance with the Law on Prevention of Corruption, the

Law on Public Procurement, employment in the public sector, etc.

Declaring state of emergency, the Government makes quick and efficient decisions to act as much as powerful, in case of non-functional Parliament and other bodies responsible for election. Just after a few days, the President of the Republic of North Macedonia bring a decision to confirm the adopted decision to declare a state of emergency, and the Government has “an open door” to do its best to protect citizens. The very first decision was to establish the Main Headquarter within the Government responsible for coordination and improving cooperation between all ministries and national and international institution, to manipulate with domestic and international assistance and help, to solve the main challenges in the functioning of different institutions etc.

Step by step, we start to fight for our social and economic development, education, finance, economy, customs, transportation, etc. A Decree with legal force was adopted to suspend all preparatory activities related to the organization of the early elections. This aloud to release more resources, to carry out the necessary purchases, above all, in the health sector.

At the very beginning of the state of emergency, and thanks to the system that is well organized to respond to the crisis, there were no major disruptions to economic flows, one could justifiably feel secure. This is especially significant for the perception of risk that is present among citizens. In order to make analysis of risk, but also to influence the perception, which is particularly significant even now, and will be even more significant after the end of the health crisis and the return to the normal situation in the country, the Faculty of security support activities of the Police and other security agencies and produce the research report to the functioning of the system.

The lessons learned will remain a strong benefit for any subsequent situation in which we are not starting from zero, and will face as stronger as possible.

## **Activities of the Ministry of Interior**

The Ministry of Interior is a main pillar of functioning of the security system, the guarantor of rule of law, the most respectful institution in the country, the people expect from the Police to serv as the protector in different situations. And Police did it. They face the most dangerous situations but act very professional and do their best to save as many lives as possible.

Parallel with the new obligations, regarding the nature of police work, the Ministry continued to perform the basic functions for the protection of public order and peace and the maintenance of the overall security situation, while also working on detection and prevention of crime in other areas.

Taking into account the decisions of the Government and the need for coordination of activities between the various departments, the Ministry of the Interior established a coordination body within the Ministry, which on a daily basis monitored the duties of the Government and delegated the activities within the various departments in the police. A total of 220 conclusions were made, which mostly refer to the implementation of the decisions and decrees of the Government, coordination of activities between MoI and the Army of the Republic of North Macedonia, appropriate redistribution of human resources in the Ministry in accordance with the needs, decisions on procurement and distribution of protective means and equipment, as well as decisions on specific issues from citizens and employees of MoI.

To timely monitoring the measures taken by the Ministry, an application was created with data and reviews that represent official statistics on the measures taken and activities of the police regarding COVID-19.

MoI also participate in the Coordinating Body for the collection and exchange of information for the implementation of measures to prevent the emergence, early detection, prevention of the spread and suppression of the coronavirus (Covid-19) established on February 28, 2020, by the Ministry for health, through which the activities of the Sectors of internal affairs (SIA) in the Ministry are coordinated, in conditions of a declared state of emergency, and preventive activities were also carried out in the area of education and raising the awareness of police officers for protection against the virus.

MoI conducted activities through the Headquarters of the Crisis Management Center (CMC) that related to the declared state of crisis in the area of the municipalities of Debar and Centar Župa. In that direction, an Action Plan was prepared for the actions of the institutions within the Crisis Management System, as well as an assessment of the necessary material and technical means for the Ministry to act in conditions of a declared crisis.

The Police undertook protection activities with an increased degree of readiness and quick action. Adapting to the new situations and respecting the decisions of the Government, the Ministry intensively cooperated with the competent institutions and continuously undertook activities to preserve public safety in emergency conditions.

Compliance with the health regulations and the implementation of the decisions of the competent state authorities that are related to the protection and prevention of COVID-19 were the top priority of the MoI, but at the same time, the overall security situation was continuously monitored and analyzed, including crime trends. Fight against crime was also very high as a top priority of the Police in any conditions.



As part of these activities, Guidelines were prepared for the behavior of the Police officers in conditions of a declared state of emergency caused by the emergence of COVID-19, with recommendations for preventing the introduction and spread of the virus.

Then pocket flyers were prepared in which the measures to protect police officers from COVID-19 were prescribed, and a series of preventive measures and activities aimed at educating and raising the awareness of health risks.

In the direction of managing the situation and management at a strategic level, the Government made several decisions, the implementation of which is under the competence of the MoI, and they were published in the "Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia", starting from March 12, 2020.

In that period, the country, the citizens, the Police, and the whole society face a numerous restrictions and prohibitions. We face the prohibition to hold and collect mass gatherings and events in open and closed spaces, any kind of public and private gatherings, cultural, informational, sports events and manifestations, then a ban on the operation of catering facilities, cafeterias, bars, restaurants, clubs, casinos, sports betting, gathering in a group of more than five people, in parks and other public places and public areas

Also, by decision of the Government, all land border crossings were closed for the flow of passengers and vehicles to neighboring countries, except for the entry and transit of cargo vehicles, representatives from the diplomatic corps in the Republic of North Macedonia, as well as for other persons for whom the MoI will issue permission after a previous opinion from the Governmental Headquarter. The airports were also closed, except for the International Airport - Skopje, where flights for state, military, humanitarian, hospital, cargo and flights without passengers were allowed with prior notice to the airport operator TAV Macedonia.

The Government has adopted a measure to implement mandatory state quarantine for a period of at least 15 days from the day of arrival for all citizens of the Republic of North Macedonia found abroad who will be returned to the country by humanitarian flights.

All the mentioned measures were adjusted according to the current situation and the development of the disease in the country, so during the state of emergency, the measures were relaxed, but also the closure of certain economic operators, and the bans and restrictions on the movement of citizens were also adopted depending on the intensity of the expected movement.

MoI take the responsibilities to control the respect of all Government decisions on protection against COVID-19. In the period of less than a month (April – May 2020) after prohibition the operating of catering facilities, cafeterias, bars, restaurants, clubs, casinos and sports betting, the Police in coordination with the State Market Inspectorate, conducted 6,233 controls and notice that

nine catering establishments did not comply with the measures (two in each: SIA Tetovo, SIA Skopje, SIA Shtip and SIA Ohrid and one in SIA Strumica).

Regarding the decisions of the Government on the ban on movement, the Police notice a total of 1,773 people that did not comply with the measure, of which 1,299 people were detained or deprived of their liberty, 36 people were warned, and in the remaining cases, the data of the persons was provided, and additional information will follow.

On self-isolation, which applies to persons returned from foreign countries, self-isolation statements were issued to 1,936 persons, and a total of 821 persons were in self-isolation. 31,829 controls were carried out on people in self-isolation, where it was determined that 27 people did not comply with the statements. The decision of the Government on mandatory state quarantine, a total of 1,433 people were returned from foreign countries and placed in facilities intended for state quarantine. 454 people were currently housed in 17 state quarantine facilities.

In the first month after the introduction of the state of emergency, at the proposal of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, six decrees with legal force were adopted for the duration of the state of emergency, which refer to the ban on holding public gatherings on the territory of the Republic of North Macedonia (Law on Public Gatherings) , then extension of the validity of identity cards and travel documents whose term has expired (Law on Identity Card and Law on Travel Documents), the possibility for a foreigner who is staying in our territory for a short term with or without a visa, to stay in the territory even after the expiration of the short-term residence, and the validity of temporary and permanent residence permits whose validity period has expired is extended (Law on Foreigners). Then, the duration of the internship of a trainee police officer was determined for a duration of five months for those who have concluded an employment contract with the Ministry on November 1, 2019 and for the rest of the employees of the Ministry with trainee status (Law on Internal Affairs), while in the section of traffic, training for the driving test is postponed, and the validity of the driver's license whose term has expired and the documents established for the implementation of training in driving schools (Law on Road Traffic Safety) continue.

### **Introduction of a telephone line and an electronic e-mail for the needs of the citizens**

For the needs of the citizens, the MoI put into operation a phone line in Macedonian and Albanian language, as well as an e-mail where citizens may receive appropriate information regarding the functioning of the services of the Ministry, about the right of movement while the measure for limited movement lasts, registration of persons who should be in isolation and self-isolation, complaints about non-answering of telephone numbers from other institutions, issuing movement permits, etc. From the introduction of the telephone line and the e-mail on 12 March 2020 to 11

April 2020, 2094 calls and 189 questions were registered. In the period from 12 April 2020 to 12 May 2020, a total of 420 calls and 20 questions were registered. This means that the calls and electronic questions in the second month after the declaration of the state of emergency recorded a significant decrease.

**Table number 1. Phone calls and questions asked on the established line and email address in the Ministry of the Interior**

Period	Phone calls	<i>Questions asked on the established line and email address</i>
12.3.2020 – 11.4.2020	2094	189
12.4.2020 – 12.5.2020	420	20
<b>Total:</b>	<b>2514</b>	<b>219</b>

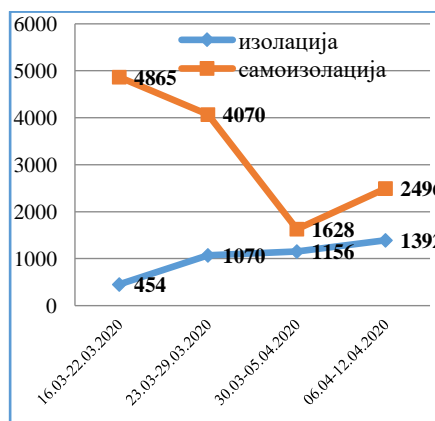
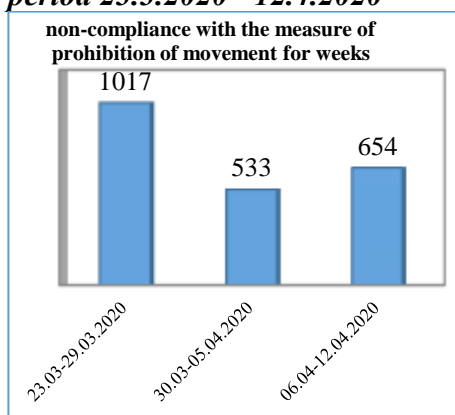
Source: Ministry of interior, Bureau of Public Safety, 19 May 2020

### Other measures taken by the MoI

With the Government's decisions to prohibit the operation of catering establishments, cafeterias, bars, restaurants, clubs, casinos and sports betting shops, the Police in coordination with the State Market Inspection carried out 6,062 controls, where it was ascertained that 72 catering establishments did not comply with the measures (in the area of SIA Tetovo - 31 facilities, SIA Skopje - 22, SIA Ohrid -11, SIA Strumica - 5, SIA Bitola - 2 and SIA Kumanovo-1 facility).

As for the ban on movement, it was established that a total of 2,191 people did not comply with the measure, of which 1,214 people were detained or deprived of their liberty, 345 people were warned, and in the remaining cases, the data of the persons was provided and additional measures are being taken.

**Graph number 1. Non-compliance with the measure for the prohibition of movement in the period 23.3.2020 - 12.4.2020**



Source: Ministry of the Interior, Bureau of Public Safety, Criminal Intelligence and Analysis Division, 19 May 2020.

From table no. 2, it can be noted that the greatest disobedience of the movement ban measures was observed in the first six days after the introduction of the measure, which is understandable considering that the citizens were not yet sufficiently informed to the bans and restrictions. Then, in the second and third week of the implementation of the measure, a significant drop in the ascertained violations of the measures was recorded. This decreasing trend continued in the second and third months of the introduced state of emergency.

***Table number 2. Issued decisions on isolation and signed statements on self-isolation and violations with the same in the period 23.3.2020 - 12.5.2020***

Period	Isolation	Statement for isolation	Controls	Violations
23.3-12.4/2020	2133	7670	62305	145
13.4-12.5/2020	1397	2692	21200	10

Source: Ministry of the Interior, Bureau of Public Safety, Criminal Intelligence and Analysis Division, 11 May 2020.

In the period from 23 March 2020 to 12 April 2020, self-isolation statements were issued to 7,670 people, and a total of 2,133 people were in self-isolation. 62,305 checks were carried out on these persons, and it was determined that 145 of them did not comply with the statements. In the period from 13 April 2020 to 12 May 2020, a total of 2,692 isolation decisions were issued, and a total of 1,397 people were in isolation. A total number of 21,200 controls have been carried out on people in isolation, and only 10 of them did not comply with the decisions.

Regarding the persons with issued isolation decisions and signed declarations of self-isolation, a significant decrease was recorded in the period from 13 April to 12 May 2020 compared to the period from 23 March to 12 April 2020, and that by almost three times. In the first few days after the introduction of the state of emergency, a large number of airplane flights were made from Europe to Skopje International Airport, with which, through humanitarian flights, our citizens who were found throughout Europe and the world were returned home. Most of them were students studying at universities in Europe or temporary workers abroad. In addition to humanitarian flights, a large number of citizens returned to the country through land border crossings. For all of them at that time, the obligation for a two-week state quarantine was valid, and in some period the obligation for mandatory self-isolation in their homes.

In relation to the measure to implement mandatory state quarantine for a period of at least 15 days from the day of arrival, a total of about 3,000 people were returned from foreign countries and placed in facilities intended for state quarantine. In addition to this number, the number of approximately 800 Macedonian citizens were placed in state quarantine after 12 May 2020.

## **Curfew**

Related to the measures to protect citizens' health is the introduction of the curfew, which restricted movement, for different categories of citizens at different times of the day, but on the entire territory of the state. As a real need and primarily at the suggestion of the health authorities, a curfew was introduced, for the first time in the entire territory of the country. The curfew is a measure that in this crisis period can greatly contribute to respecting the decisions of the Government to protect the life and health of citizens. Immediately after the introduction of the state of emergency, it was easy to see that the recommendations were not being followed, sometimes even with serious violations. The instructions for citizens to stay at home, not to group together, not to travel outside the country, to register at the border crossings, to self-isolate, were only partially respected.

However, since it is a particularly sensitive restriction on the free movement of citizens, it is necessary to elaborate a little more on the curfew, as it is introduced in North Macedonia and the reason for which it is being introduced. Although it is called a curfew, it does not mean that the MoI and the Police have a dominant role in the state, nor that the police structures manage the currents in society. On the contrary, with the introduction of the curfew, the capacities of several state bodies are put into operation for the purpose of protecting the health of the citizens.

In the practice, curfew is introduced very rarely, because it is a question of extremely rare situations that are strictly regulated and prescribed only in the highest legal acts in each country, or, on the other hand, they are not prescribed at all, but are introduced in extremely necessary situations. The curfew introduced in North Macedonia was clearly intended to protect the health of the population. Many countries in Europe, as well as almost in the whole world, acted similarly. Some of the countries (such as Slovenia) at the beginning of the pandemic managed to keep the disease situation at a tolerable level and without introducing a curfew, i.e. limiting the movement of citizens, faced this need in the autumn wave.

The curfew is usually introduced by the Government in order to limit the free movement of citizens and prohibit gathering in public places. By introducing the curfew, the Government guarantees that the curfew will be respected, and anyone who does not comply with the curfew or restrictions will be detained and fined.

Practice has shown that the curfew is introduced, mainly, in the night hours, after the daily routine activities related to work, education and social needs of the citizens are finished.

## **Crime on specific articles regarding COVID-19**

Articles 205 and 206 of Criminal code were the only legal possibilities for sanctioning perpetrators of crimes who did not respect the curfew, i.e. the prohibitions established by the Government for

the protection of public health, as well as for persons who transmitted the infectious disease through their reckless and irresponsible behavior. The MoI took numerous daily actions to find and catch the perpetrators of these crimes, reacted quickly and responsibly to the violations and did not allow massive violations of the provisions of the Criminal Code.

In the following, we present the statistics that the MoI kept in relation to submitted criminal charges under Articles 205 and 206 of the Criminal Code.

**Table number 3. Filed criminal charges under Articles 205 and 206 of the Criminal Code by departments for internal affairs for the period 12.3.2020 - 12.4.2020**

Sector	Charges	Article205	Article 206	Offender
SIA BITOLA	89	16	73	93
SIA VELES	109	21	88	116
SIA KUMANOVO	78	14	64	86
SIA OHRID	101	14	87	114
SIA SKOPJE	276	62	214	298
SIA STRUMICA	142	16	126	155
SIA TETOVO	109	19	90	129
SIA STIP	140	20	120	158
<b>Total</b>	<b>1.034</b>	<b>182</b>	<b>852</b>	<b>1.149</b>

Source: Public Safety Bureau, Criminal Intelligence and Analysis Division, December 2020

**Table number 4. Criminal charges under Articles 205 and 206 of the Criminal Code by departments for internal affairs for the period 13.4.2020 - 12.5.2020**

Sector	Charges	Article205	Article 206	Offender
SIA BITOLA	91	9	82	83
SIA VELES	98	10	88	106
SIA KUMANOVO	81	11	70	82
SIA OHRID	101	9	92	105
SIA SKOPJE	214	32	182	221
SIA STRUMICA	139	12	127	139
SIA TETOVO	91	6	85	93
SIA STIP	137	16	121	142
Total:	<b>952</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>852</b>	<b>971</b>

Source: Public Safety Bureau, Criminal Intelligence and Analysis Division, December 2020

**Table number 5. Criminal charges under Articles 205 and 206 of the Criminal Code by departments for internal affairs for the period 13.5.2020 - 12.6.2020**

Sector	Charges	Article205	Article 206	Offender
SIA BITOLA	69	2	67	70
SIA VELES	78	7	71	79
SIA KUMANOVO	71	4	67	75
SIA OHRID	116	5	111	118

SIA SKOPJE	254	17	215	255
SIA STRUMICA	121	5	116	121
SIA TETOVO	72	2	70	76
SIA STIP	128	9	119	131
<b>Total:</b>	<b>909</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>846</b>	<b>925</b>

Source: Bureau of Public Safety, Criminal Intelligence and Analysis Division, December 2020.

*Table number 6. Criminal charges under Articles 205 and 206 of the Criminal Code by departments for internal affairs for the period 13.6.2020 - 22.6.2020*

Sector	Charges	205	206	Perpetrators
SVR BITOLA	12	4	8	19
SVR VELES	16	1	15	16
SVR KUMANOVO	11	1	10	12
SVR OHRID	22	2	20	21
SVR SKOPJE	31	2	29	31
SVR STRUMICA	40	18	22	46
SVR TETOVO	3	1	2	3
SVR STIP	33	2	31	33
<b>Total:</b>	<b>168</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>181</b>

Source: Bureau of Public Safety, Criminal Intelligence and Analysis Division, December 2020.

Analyzing the period from 12 March to 22 June 2020, when the state of emergency was in force in North Macedonia and special measures were applied to protect the population, we can state that the MoI took strengthened control measures on control of the prohibition of movement and the observance of isolation and signed self-isolation statements by citizens. In a certain period during the state of emergency, in addition to the police, the Army of the Republic of North Macedonia took care of the safety and security of the facilities in which persons were placed under state quarantine. However, the biggest burden for implementing the decisions of the Government and other competent authorities, related to the curfew, was on the Police.

From the presented data, it can be noted that at the beginning of the introduction of the state of emergency, the largest number of crimes were committed under Articles 205 and 206 of the Criminal Code, but that trend changed slightly or insignificantly in the next two months, for the last ten days before the ending of the state of emergency, to see a more significant drop. This means that for almost the entire duration of the state of emergency, the citizens did not respect the regulations for the protection of the population to a similar extent.

The total number of submitted criminal charges related to crimes under Articles 205 and 206 of the Criminal Code is 3,063, of which 275 were filed under Article 205, and 2,688 criminal charges were filed under Article 206. A total of 3,226 persons have been prosecuted for further proceedings.

As the events with the disease developed, the needs to restrict the movement of citizens changed and adapted. The curfew was introduced depending on the epidemiological situation, but always

according to the recommendations of the health authorities, i.e. the Commission for Infectious Diseases at the Ministry of Health. Chronologically, in the period from 22 March to 22 June 2020, the curfew was introduced as follows:

1. 22 March 2020 – ban on movement throughout the entire territory of the country in the period from 21:00 to 06:00. During this period, the production plants and factories continued their production organized in shifts during the curfew, and during the ban, the workers moved with special permits for performing shift and night work. At the same time, the content of the permit has been adopted and it is required to be issued by the responsible persons of the company. The permit states the basic data about the employee, the address of residence, the workplace, and the shift in which the employee is engaged. For the validity of the permit, the name of the company in which the person works is also filled in, and it should contain the letterhead of the company as well as the signature and stamp of the responsible person in the company. This document was a confirmation of the employee's movement during the curfew, and it will have to be submitted for inspection to the state authorities. The movement permit was valid exclusively for the person in whose name it is issued.

### **Other crimes during COVID-19**

In the reporting period, a total of 2,035 (2,194) criminal cases were registered in North Macedonia, and the rate of total criminality is 94.2 (105.5) per 100,000 inhabitants. The largest part, i.e., 47% of the total crime were related to the measures taken for prevention of COVID 19, with a total of 952 (1,039) crimes registered on this basis. If we exclude these crimes from the analysis, it is evident that the rate of other crimes is 50.1 per 100,000 inhabitants.

***Table number 7. Total crime in the period 12.3 - 12.4.2020***

<b>Crime</b>	<b>12.3.-12.4.2020</b>	<b>12.3.-12.4.2020 without article. 205 n 206</b>
<b>Total crime</b>	<b>2.194</b>	<b>1.155</b>
<b>Crime rate per 100.000 inhabitants</b>	<b>105,6</b>	<b>55,6</b>

Source: Bureau of Public Safety, Criminal Intelligence and Analysis Division, December 2020.

Viewed by area, the largest part of the total crime (excluding crimes against people's health) was committed in the area of SIA Skopje, SIA Bitola and SIA Shtip, with the crime rate, calculated per 100,000 inhabitants, being the highest in SIA Bitola - 73 .3, followed by the areas of SIA Shtip with 70.1 and SIA Skopje with 69.7.



**Table number 8. Criminal offenses for the period 12.3-12.4.2020 excluding the criminal offenses from Articles 205 and 206 of the Criminal Code**

	crimes for the period from 12.3.-12.4.2020 without articles 205 and 206	crime rate per 100,000 inhabitants
Sector		
SIA SKOPJE	459	69,7
SIA BITOLA	192	73,3
SIA KUMANOVO	50	28,4
SIA OHRID	80	37,6
SIA STRUMICA	100	58,8
SIA TETOVO	76	21,3
SIA STIP	135	70,1
SIA VELES	60	44,8
RC for Border Affairs	3	/
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>1.155</b>	<b>55,6</b>

Source: Bureau of Public Safety, Criminal Intelligence and Analysis Division, December 2020.

Analyzing the data according to the type of crimes, the most common are crimes related to the observance of health regulations and prohibitions related to the prevention of COVID-19, followed by aggravated thefts, thefts and attempts to commit serious crimes and crimes with elements of violence.

**Table number 9. Crime rate and more characteristic crimes from 12.3 to 12.4.2020**

	12.3.-12.4.2020	12.3.-12.4.2020 without 205 and 206 article
Total crimes	2.194	1.155
Characteristic crimes		
Theft	164	164
Aggravated theft	515	515
Domestic violence offences	79	79
Attempted aggravated theft	73	73
Failure to comply with health regulations during epidemic	1.034	/
Crime rate per 100,000 inhabitants	105,6	55,6

Source: Bureau of Public Safety, Criminal Intelligence and Analysis Division, December 2020.

**Table number 10. Crimes according to SIA compared for the period 13.4 - 12.5.2020 with the period 12.3 - 12.4.2020**

SIA	criminal acts for the period from 13.4. to 12.5.2020 without articles 205 and 206	crime rate per 100,000 inhabitants	criminal acts for the period from 12.3. to 12.4.2020	crime rate per 100,000 inhabitants

			without articles 205 and 206	
SIA SKOPJE	481	73,1	459	69,7
SIA BITOLA	168	64,2	192	73,3
SIA KUMANOVO	49	27,9	50	28,4
SIA OHRID	76	35,7	80	37,6
SIA STRUMICA	87	51,2	100	58,8
SIA TETOVO	55	15,5	76	21,3
SIA STIP	120	62,3	135	70,1
SIA VELES	46	34,4	60	44,8
RC for border affairs	1	/	3	/
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>1.083</b>	<b>50,1</b>	<b>1.155</b>	<b>55,6</b>

Source: Department of the Interior, Bureau of Public Safety, Criminal Intelligence and Analysis Division, December 2020.

***Table number 11. More characteristic crimes compared for the period 12.3.-12.4.2020 with the period 13.4.-12.5.2020***

	13.4.-12.5.2020	12.3.-12.4.2020
Total crimes	2.035	2.194
Characteristic crime		
Theft	138	164
Aggravated theft	448	515
Domestic violence offences	85	79
Attempted aggravated theft	70	73
Failure to comply with health regulations during an epidemic	952	1034
Crime rate per 100,000 inhabitants	94,2	105,6

Source: Department of the Interior, Bureau of Public Safety, Criminal Intelligence and Analysis Division, December 2020.

Analyzing the data according to the type of crimes, the most prevalent are crimes related to compliance with health regulations and prohibitions related to the prevention of Covid-19, which are in a decrease of 8%, followed by aggravated thefts, thefts and attempted aggravated thefts, which compared to the previous period, also saw a decrease in crimes with elements of violence, which increased by 7.5%.

## Conclusion

North Macedonia is passing through the biggest challenge in recent history, just like all countries in the region, in Europe and in the world. The development of the disease will directly affect the development of society, the economic flows, the capacities of the security system in the country. It is of real interest for science, but also for all professional bodies, to monitor the work of the

institutions working to deal with the consequences of COVID-19. Primarily, we are talking about the health system, the security sector and economic and financial institutions.

The Faculty of Security was involved in the monitoring of the activities related to the work of the security sector, the decisions and activities of the Headquarters established under the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia, the MoI, the Ministry of Defense (MoD) and other security institutions were monitored and analyzed. The goal of proposing a text that will serve as statistical data and analyzes of the activities carried out and the results achieved, has been partially achieved with the research report on the functioning of the security system in emergency situations.

The main headquarters for dealing with COVID 19 established at the beginning of the pandemic contributed significantly to the coordination of the activities of state institutions, helped to respond appropriately at the beginning of the state of emergency, maintained contacts with authorities from the region and Europe, especially in the first few weeks when it was necessary to involve the political factors in order to organize the humanitarian flights and convoys for the return of our citizens from abroad.

The MoI and the police have demonstrated that they have the institutional capacity to deal with the challenges of the pandemic from a security perspective. Although the MoI functioned in complex conditions, led by a minister who came from the opposition (because of the elected Government to conduct early elections), a high level of cooperation and coordination was observed within the Ministry and the Bureau of Public Safety. The same can be said about the activities and participation of the Ministry and the Government, as well as in the work of the Headquarters. No major deviations were observed that would negatively affect the functioning of the MoI as a whole.

Coordination between the various security institutions has only partially proven to be a strong point of the system. The MoI, the MoD and the Army of the Republic of North Macedonia cooperated at the appropriate level, especially in the Coordinating Headquarters of the Police and the Army established in the MoI. The declared state of emergency enabled the active role of the Army in assisting the police structures working to deal with the consequences of the pandemic.

The curfew, announced for the first time in the entire territory state, was a serious challenge for both the citizens and the police officers. Simply, these are situations for which police officers rarely or never prepare neither they have training how to act. All police officers were active involved in dealing with the consequences of the pandemic, aware of consequences for personal health and the health of citizens, they have taken all necessary measures to protect health of the citizens. They were exposed to unknown danger but performed their duty at a very high professional level which enabled the fulfillment of security plans of the authorities. The small number of complaints about the work of police officers speaks of the fact that compliance with laws, regulations for protection of the population and human rights and freedoms was not brought into a question.

Citizens with their behavior, more or less helped the Government in the implementation of measures and decisions for preserving the health of citizens. The large number of submitted criminal charges for non-compliance with health protection regulations of the population can be commented on in terms of disrespect institutions, as well as from the aspect of ignorance or not having enough information. The fact that since the adoption of the decision on mandatory wearing protective equipment (where the penalty for natural persons is determined in the amount of 20 euros), so by the beginning of December 2020, were charged more than 2.2 million EUR is an overwhelming figure that indicates that citizens had a hard time getting used to this measure.

The crime rate during the state of emergency recorded a significant decrease, except for crimes under Articles 205 and 206 of the Criminal Code. At the beginning of the pandemic, the general criminality recorded a serious decrease, and later, the numbers slowly returned to the so-called normal, with a significant reduction in the consequences of the crimes committed. The police did not reduce their activities in the fight against crime, at the same time strengthening the activities for the implementation of the measures for the protection of the population and for the implementation of the curfew on the entire territory of the country.

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# CHALLENGES IN THE DRAFTING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INTEGRITY PLAN AND THE INTEGRITY ACTION PLAN OF THE STATE POLICE OF ALBANIA 2020 - 2021

Berti KOXHA<sup>19</sup>

Drafting process of the Integrity Plan and Action Plan of the Albanian Police 2020-2021 was conducted in collaboration with important police partners, such as PAMECA V and DCAF. It began under normal conditions and continued under conditions of strong restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which increased the degree of difficulty of the working group in recognizing the methodology of the implementation of "Analysis and management of the risk of corruption and the design of the assessment matrix of the intensity of the risk". This was a challenge that was successfully faced and did not undermine the seriousness and quality of this important document and the commitment to its implementation even under conditions of serious restrictions due to this pandemic.

The State Police is the first organization of the Albanian public administration that drafted such a document in 2020. The Integrity Plan for the State Police organization is a strategic and operational document aimed at strengthening integrity and preventing corruption in the ranks of the police.

This plan was drawn up on the basis of the analysis of risk factors that affect integrity and is a document that reconfirms the efforts of the Albanian State Police to have a healthy organization that serves the public and the entire community in fulfilling the objectives and principles on the basis of which the organization is guided.

In order to achieve the objectives of strengthening the rule of law, strengthening the integrity, values and ethical and professional standards of every employee of the police structure, the plan defines concrete measures, based on a detailed analysis of the areas of activities at risk, which violate the integrity and risk involvement in corruption.

This is the reason that this plan, in the continuation of efforts to have an organization as immune as possible to the risks of corruption, will play a key role in the following years for:

- *Integrity risk management in all structures of the State Police, with a focus on the areas and macro-processes most exposed to the risks of corruption, with the main objective "to avoid corruption practices before they occur";*
- *The commitment of management structures, the development of capacities and the increase of awareness of the culture by all employees with the aim of prevention and effective management of risks to integrity, the identification and prevention of bad behavior, the discouraging of the "culture of silence" and the encouragement of denunciation of actions corrupt by taking advantage of the opportunities offered by the "Whistleblower" law;*
- *Strengthening cooperation with internal actors and international partners in order to fulfill the obligations defined in the strategic documents of the Anticorruption reforms.*

The Integrity Plan and the Action Plan for its implementation was drawn up in accordance with the 6 principles on the basis of which such a document is drawn up, as well as based on the provisions of Law 108/2014, "On the State Police", (amended), the provisions of the State Police Regulation, approved by DCM No. 750/2015 (amended), the Anticorruption Strategy 2015-2023 and the Action Plan for the Implementation of the Anticorruption Strategy (2018-2020), approved by DCM no. 241/2018, Objective A 8 "Systematic use of evidence of areas for corruption" and A 9 "Strengthening the integrity of public servants", in which it is sanctioned that "The integrity plan will provide the conceptual framework for the policies and measures that must be taken in order to prevent violations of integrity by public officials and to monitor the effects of the measures implemented in a public institution".

Aware of the potential and ongoing danger of corruption within the police, preventing and fighting it cannot be conceived as a speed race, but as a marathon whose successful completion requires a lot of determination, courage, energy and measures spread over time. Therefore, the Integrity Plan was conceived as a first document with a one-year deadline, which will be improved and supplemented with other measures in the following years, depending on the dynamics of the police's work to improve the capacities in the fight against this phenomenon.

The Integrity Plan is based on the results of a work initiated in 2019, by representatives of the State Police with the support of PAMECA V Project Partners and DCAF, formalized with the high-level Conference on the theme "Modern approach to improve integrity in the Albanian State Police", in which the initiative was presented to promote the development of a risk assessment analysis on police corruption practices. Based on this approach the Working Group was created to carry out the "Analysis management of the risk of corruption, whose activity was based on the application of policies and best international practices. In addition to the police representatives with experience in the structures of Professional Standards, investigation of crimes, public security order, migration border, audit, the group also added employees with experience in PSA, MI, Ministry of Justice.

While a working group of the Directorate of Professional Standards in PSA and the Service for Internal Affairs and Complaints in MI/ today PSA, finalized this important document.

The Integrity Plan was conceived as a document that would contain:

- *Fields and activities exposed to corruption with a risk of integrity vulnerability.*
- *The Action Plan, which describes the measures to be taken, the deadlines, as well as the responsible structures that will carry out the defined activities and the activities exposed towards corruption with the risk of integrity vulnerability.*

This Plan grouped the activities that will be carried out in 6 areas identified as exposed to integrity risk, which are related to:

- Corruption in crime investigation structures;
- Bureaucratic corruption in human resources;
- Low-level corruption or so-called street corruption;
- Bureaucratic corruption in management;
- Bureaucratic corruption in public procurement;
- Discouraging the "culture of silence" and encouraging the denunciation of corrupt actions by taking advantage of the opportunities offered by the law "On whistleblowers";

## **II. The methodology used for the design of the Integrity Plan**

Only two 2-day training sessions could be carried out by the working group under normal conditions with the support and presence of experts in January-February 2020, completely insufficient for knowing the methodology and developing the matrix.

The previously unknown methodology and processes of analysis and design of the assessment matrix of risk intensity and consequence, which were quite abstract, were a challenge that had to be overcome.

In these conditions, the announcement of the covid 19 Pandemic by the WHO in March 2020 found the working group.

All these unknown and previously unapplied processes could not be carried out in direct contact and training, since the invisible enemy had already arrived and would interrupt and change almost all previously planned agendas.

### **Adaptation of activities in accordance with the changes of the COVID-19 pandemic**

It seemed for a moment that the process would be suspended, as the meetings of the group with international experts as well as of the group itself within it were postponed for more than 2 months, as the focus shifted to monitoring the implementation of anticovid measures. Inspections, meetings, activities were stopped. The training sessions continued through online platforms, a method not applied or applied very little before, which were limited in time and with the lowest rankings. The working group had to be reduced, with a core of the Directorate of Professional Standards and PSA, taking on an almost unbearable burden due to the lack of capacities, especially the Directorate of Standards. The deadlines for the completion of the matrix were extended, therefore also the work for the drafting of the Integrity Plan document and even more so the drafting of the Action Plan, which would include the risks or behaviors at risk for violating the integrity in the 6 fields/macro processes identified with risk, as well as the definition of preventive measures. There were serious difficulties to consult the drafts prepared with the police structures, especially the local ones. Thanks to the ambition to finalize this initiative during the months of May-July via online platforms, almost all the steps according to the methodology for completing the Matrix and continuing with the work on drafting the final draft in September 2020 were finalized. After reflecting the comments and evaluations of the experts supporting the project, as well as of the central and local police structures, the Integrity Plan and Action Plan of the State Police 2020-2021 was approved by the Minister of the Interior in October 2020. With the approval of this strategic document, the State Police fulfilled one of its main objectives, including the recommendation of GRECO, in the fifth round of evaluation for "Prevention of corruption...", increasing its responsibilities, but also putting an important instrument available in improving the image, integrity and the fight against corruption.

- In the Action Plan in the 6 areas/macro processes analyzed, 19 risks or behaviors at risk for violating integrity are defined;



- In order to prevent and treat these risks, 53 measures and preventive activities have been foreseen, defining, in addition to the structures of responsible persons, cooperation with other agencies and supporting partners;
- 27 indicators for evaluating success and 28 objectives have been defined;

After approval by Order no. 331, dated 12.10.2020, of the Minister of the Interior, this document was distributed to all central and local structures for recognition. Based on the tasks and activities planned in the Action Plan of the General Directorate of Police, the Integrity Plans and Action Plans of the central and local structures were drawn up. Each Department and local structure has adapted the activities and tasks depending on the identified problems, but in the conditions when this document was the first of its kind for the State Police organization and the lack of experience, these plans have had their shortcomings.

On 25.03.2021, in a ceremony organized at the premises of the ASP, the PAMECA V Project delivered 300 copies of the brochure "Integrity Plan for the State Police 2020-2021", which were distributed to all structures of the State Police .

The Directorate of Professional Standards is tasked with monitoring and implementing the Integrity Plan, which will analyze and report on the implementation of measures to improve integrity and convey the results to the top management level of the police. For the implementation of this plan, each department and separate central and local structure in the composition of the police has determined the responsible persons, who report every 6 months regarding the activities carried out within this plan. Following the activities for the presentation of the Integrity Plan in the police structures in cooperation with the PAMECA V project in June 2021, (when the cases of infections had decreased) 5 regional meetings were held not only presenting, but also training for the employees who were determined as a contact point engaged with the implementation of this important document during 2021. At the end of 2021, after administering the reports of the central and local structures, the Directorate of Professional Standards drew up the final Monitoring Report, Integrity Plan and Action Plan, which synthetically reflects all the realized indicators, but also the problems and deficiencies that have come due to the lack of training and knowledge of the methodology for drafting this report. From the month of June, the State Police has approved the revised IP and AP for the years 2022-2024, which we hope will be implemented and monitored under conditions of structural improvements, increased monitoring and training capacities and support from partners that assist the State Police as EU4LEA etc.

The Directorate of Standards has prepared a Manual - Guide for the way of monitoring and reporting for the implementation of the integrity plan and the action plan for improving integrity in the Albanian State Police 2022-2024.

We are now in the phase of organizing trainings with the main leaders of the police in the central and local structures as well as with the contact points for this document, which will serve to help and guide the responsible structures and contact point persons on how to complete the information on the 6-monthly periodic reporting, for the realization of the objectives arising from the Implementation of the Integrity Plan and the Action Plan for the Improvement of Integrity in the Albanian State Police 2022-2024.

What is expected to be done next is a type of activity that is not an assessment, but a dynamic monitoring and analysis that must be done day after day and that at a certain moment we must fix it statically, but then we must review and improve it again.

This process is very important perhaps as much as the drafting of the Integrity Plan, which was itself a result, but not a final result. These activities and the following work are very useful in the whole process of implementing this living and dynamic instrument to prevent corruption and strengthen integrity, for interaction and communication with citizens and other actors to confirm their trust in the organization of head of the Albanian State Police.

# THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON THE INCREASE OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CASES

Fatlind AZIZI<sup>20</sup>

*Violence is an action that is mainly motivated by many different factors. Usually, the use of violence is a consequence of the lack of proper communication between two or more parties, who cannot be understood and as a result of the lack of appropriate emotional control, it turns into a physical reaction. It is understandable that this phenomenon also comes as a summary of a series of events and circumstances, mainly related to mental and emotional health. The COVID-19 pandemic caught us off guard at the beginning of 2020, leaving devastating consequences. Health policies for the total closure of the population due to the preservation of the spread of the pandemic, caused people to leave their daily obligations and lock themselves at home with their families. So, for months, people became frustrated and took out their anger on family members. Such cases became more frequent during the time that the measures for the prevention of COVID-19 began to be tightened. In the Republic of Kosovo, according to the data of the Kosovo Police, compared to 2019, in 2020 there was an increase of over 15% in cases of domestic violence, statistics which indicate a rapid rise in this phenomenon. Security institutions have tried to deal with these activities through public education and information through media channels and social networks. Despite this, this phenomenon has continued to grow throughout the year 2022, based on the general confusion encountered during the COVID-19 pandemic, which has increased domestic aggression.*

**Keywords:** *Violence, COVID-19, Family, Consequences, Prevention.*

## Introduction

The world and humanity often have great challenges to face, especially those caused by human factors. These problems are usually caused by the meaningless wishes of states or interest groups that have long-term goals of changing the world. Normally, these are easily avoidable because a solution can always be found that is caused by the hand of man, but when the issue goes to another level and the main cause is not man-made but comes as a biological or natural challenge, then everything changes.

Pandemics are trials that have characterized the history of mankind, and there is even an expression that every 100 years the world faces a deadly pandemic. COVID-19 was one of the world's greatest challenges, not only in terms of health but also in terms of humanity. Like the many consequences

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that were brought throughout the period of total closure and isolation from the outside world and society, COVID-19 extremely damaged mental and emotional health. Therefore, we can say that all these ambiguities, filled with the turbidity of the time, also led to an increase in cases of domestic violence. This development did not happen only in Kosovo but was present all over the world.

In the first chapter, we will talk about the main concept of domestic violence as a sociological and scientific notion. This part of the paper is explained synthetically, starting from the most basic understanding of the meaning of the family, and continuing to deepen the understanding of how the whole process of family violence can develop.

In the second part of the paper, it has been proven how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected the increase in cases of family violence in the world, especially in Kosovo. The emotional importance, increased stress, and socio-economic pressure was among the main factors that greatly influenced the increase in the tendency to use violence in the family, and as such, children and women were the most at risk.

In the last part, all the cases of domestic violence in Kosovo from the beginning of 2016 until 2022 are expressed statistically. These data are presented to compare and analyze the cases before the COVID-19 pandemic and after this period, to provide a factual explanation of the impact of the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic on the increase in domestic violence.

## **Chapter I**

### **What is Domestic Violence?**

In life many events characterize the process of living amid a social circle, mostly surrounded by a smaller group that is called and considered family. In this narrow social circle, two or more people who have decided to create a joint institution, where they will help each other in various challenges and commitments, are treated and coexist.

The family can be considered as a group that includes one or two parents and their children. This is how the Oxford dictionary describes it simply, but it is understood that there are many other notions can in other ways that the term family consists of.

Many different concepts can explain social phenomena such as domestic violence, but we can briefly and clearly understand that this phenomenon is, the action through the use of different methods, but most often the use of physical force of a member of a family, to cause violence against another family member.

The National Center on Domestic Violence in the US considers domestic violence as a complex and multidimensional phenomenon that can be defined as a type of behavior pattern used by one

partner to gain or maintain power and control over the other partner.<sup>21</sup> This abuse can take many forms, including physical, sexual, emotional, economic, or psychological acts or threats that affect or harm another person. These behaviors may include intimidating, terrorizing, manipulating, hurting, humiliating, blaming, injuring, or injuring the victim. It is important to note that domestic violence can happen to anyone, regardless of race, age, sexual orientation, religion, or gender. This type of violence can happen to couples who are married, cohabiting, or dating and affects individuals of all socio-economic backgrounds and educational levels.<sup>22</sup>

Meanwhile, according to Edwards, domestic violence can be summarized as follows:

"Domestic violence typically involves physical and mental acts of cruelty that range from a slap or push, to a punch or kick, and to more extreme manifestations of violence, strangulation, suffocation, attempted murder, and murder. The prefix 'domestic' serves to neutralize the sheer horror, savagery, and habit of violence."<sup>23</sup>

Domestic violence is a process that includes many steps and preliminary indicators that give signals of the possibility of escalation of the situation within the family. There are many reasons why these incidents happen, according to Gelles who had researched for more than twenty years to find out the main causes of why domestic violence happens, he concluded that the main factors related to this phenomenon are:

- (1) Cycle of violence – transmission of violence between generations;
- (2) low socioeconomic status;
- (3) social and structural stress;
- (4) social isolation and low community involvement;
- (5) low self-concept;
- (6) personality problems and psychopathology.<sup>24</sup>

The Council of Europe has several different ways in which violence in the family can be presented, this violence can occur from one or more members to the other or all family members. Therefore, they are listed as follows:<sup>25</sup>

- a) Domestic violence, physical, psychological, or economic violence
- b) Rape or sexual assault in marriage, or outside of marriage
- c) Sexual abuse in childhood
- d) Crimes in the name of "honor"
- e) Forced marriage, marriage between minors
- f) Sexual harassment and sexual exploitation

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<sup>21</sup> Spouse or partner.

<sup>22</sup> Davis, Richard. 2008. Domestic Violence: Intervention, Prevention, Policies and Solutions. New York: Taylor and Francis Group. Fq.1.

<sup>23</sup> Edwards, Sex, Gender, and the Legal Process (1996), London: Blackstone Press, p. 180.

<sup>24</sup> Gelles, Richard. 1987. Family Violence. Beverley Hills, CA: Sage Publications, p. 40

<sup>25</sup> Këshilli i Evropës. 2020. Dhuna në familje. Broshurë, Strasbourg: Këshilli i Evropës. Accessed February 10, 2023. <https://rm.coe.int/bpp-brochure-a5-semester-nasilstvo-alb-web-ver-01/1680a523a1>.

- g) Tracking
- h) Disturbance or violence in the workplace or public space
- i) Cyber violence or harassment

In the Republic of Kosovo, domestic violence is recognized as a criminal offense punishable under the relevant legislation. The main legal sources for this phenomenon are Law No. 03/L-182 on Protection from Domestic Violence<sup>26</sup>, which provides for the protective measures of psychosocial treatment as well as the protective measures of different categories that also define the responsibilities of security institutions. Meanwhile, according to the Penal Code<sup>27</sup>, domestic violence involving physical, psychological, or economic violence or abuse to violate the dignity of another person within the family, is punishable by a fine and imprisonment for up to 3 years. There are many elements involved in domestic violence and it is not easy to summarize as a concept. Unfortunately, during the last few years, there has been an increase in the mentality and political culture regarding the prevention and proper treatment of cases of domestic violence. Civil society, together with the support of international organizations present in Kosovo, has been one of the main supporters of educating the people on how to prevent and report cases of domestic violence. Even though more work is always needed, the Kosovo Police have also worked hard in this aspect through announcements, especially brochures which they distribute on social networks. Kosovo continues to face an increase in the number of cases of domestic violence, which according to the universal global agreement have come all over the world as a result of the lockdown and the COVID-19 pandemic. Considering that domestic violence is a problem to be dealt with in Kosovar society, mainly due to the more traditional culture where the prevailing opinion is that such problems are simply part of family coexistence. In Kosovo, there has been an increase in the number of reported cases of domestic violence, this is due to the increase and awareness of the people, but there are frequent cases when these accusations are withdrawn by the victims, arguing that they have forgiven their abusers. There have been other cases that have falsely reported these cases for various reasons. We can see the complexity of this phenomenon, which, like in any country in the world, is very difficult to handle and act with high efficiency.

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<sup>26</sup> Kuvendi i Kosovës. 2010. *LIGJI NR. 03/L-182 PËR MBROJTJE NGA DHUNA NË FAMILJE*. Ligj, Prishtinë: Gazeta Zyrtare e Republikës së Kosovës. Accessed February 10, 2023. <https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDocumentDetail.aspx?ActID=2691>

<sup>27</sup> Kuvendi i Kosovës. 2019. *KODI NR. 06/L-074 KODI PENAL I REPUBLIKËS SË KOSOVËS*. Ligj, Prishtinë: Gazeta Zyrtare e Republikës së Kosovës. Accessed February 20, 2023. <https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDetail.aspx?ActID=18413>.

## **Chapter II**

### **The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the increase in domestic violence cases**

The COVID-19 pandemic has been the biggest challenge in the last century for humanity and the world. After the arrival and development of this virus which spread all over the world within a short period, countries and international organizations established rigorous measures regarding people's space.

At the end of 2019, only the first cases were reported, while in March 2020, the first cases had reached almost all countries of the world, including Kosovo, where the first cases of infection were discovered.<sup>28</sup> Due to nature unknown to mankind, governments had taken measures to completely lock all citizens in their homes. Thus almost the whole world was quarantined for several months, with small but approximate facilities. Another measure that blocked the world was the closing of state borders, to prevent the spread of Covid-19, but despite this, it was impossible to limit or stop the cases of COVID-19.

In the Republic of Kosovo, citizens and institutions, like everywhere else, were gripped by the pressure and fear of worsening public health, which is why harsh measures were often imposed that included several cases of total closure in different periods. To add to this the other measure of setting the curfew also in different periods.

The preventive measures taken on the other hand had caused a lot of damage to the citizens, starting from the deterioration of the economic situation, mental health, and personal life and full of community freedoms that were compromised. At the very beginning of the pandemic, the Council of Europe itself had reacted by calling for the respect of international conventions for the protection of victims of domestic violence and had warned the member countries of this organization that they are not able to protect the victims of family violence.<sup>29</sup>

The impact of the pandemic has been the main factor in the increase in cases of domestic violence according to YIHR, which considers that the measures to control COVID-19 have hurt the exercise of economic, social, and cultural rights, especially freedom of expression of living and participating in society. According to this report, the measures to control the COVID-19 pandemic have had a direct impact on the increase in gender-based and family violence. Isolation was one

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<sup>28</sup> Top Channel. 2020. Rritet bilanci: Shkon në 3 numri i të infektuarve në Kosovë me Covid-19. Tiranë, 14 Mars. Accessed February 20, 2023. <https://top-channel.tv/2020/03/14/rritet-bilanci-shkon-ne-3-numri-i-te-infektuarve-ne-kosove-me-covid-19/>.

<sup>29</sup> Këshilli i Evropës. 2020. *Declaration of the Committee of the Parties to the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention) on the implementation of the Convention during the COVID-19 pandemic*. Declaration, Strasbourg: Council of Europe. Accessed February 20, 2023. <https://rm.coe.int/declaration-committee-of-the-parties-to-ic-covid-/16809e33c6n-cases-of-violence-against-women>

of the main reasons that influenced the increase in cases of domestic violence because most family members were forced to stay at home, especially women who faced violence and abuse, and consequently, it became impossible for these cases to be reported to the security authorities due to the conditions and circumstances at that time. The report emphasizes that even though there have been cases of reporting domestic violence, the real number remains much higher, but unfortunately, there has been a lack of reporting.<sup>30</sup>

Since this phenomenon has been and continues to exist all over the world, this is confirmed by the reports issued by the UN, which affirm the increase in domestic violence due to COVID-19, with special emphasis on girls and women. According to data from UN WOMEN, globally 1 in every 3 women has been a victim of physical or sexual violence, mostly caused by an intimate partner.<sup>31</sup> Meanwhile, there is general agreement in the scientific fields for the increase in cases of domestic violence throughout the world, is a phenomenon directly influenced by the measures taken to prevent the spread of COVID-19. This is also confirmed by several scientists who confirm that policies and strategies for limiting movement have led to the isolation of family members in their homes, consequently, there has been an increase in abuses and domestic violence. The pandemic has revealed the importance of mental health, where unfortunately the general situation throughout the world has been at an unsatisfactory level. The increase in stress and emotional and psychological problems have been difficult challenges that have left irreparable consequences to this day.<sup>32</sup>

We can see that each of the readers of this paper has experienced or faced the same problems within the family, where there was uncertainty and fear about the future due to the lack of full recognition of the COVID-19 pandemic, and meanwhile, elements such as economic instability, the increase in inflation, the lack of interaction with family members and society, have been the height of tension that have affected mental health. When all these factors are summed up, then many people have not been mature and restrained not to cause violence within the family and then it has been clear a large number of cases of domestic violence. We emphasize once again that the real number of these cases remains a much higher reality, but there are no reports that include all the victims.

### **Chapter III**

#### **Comparison of cases of domestic violence before and after COVID-19**

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<sup>30</sup> YIHR. 2021. REPORTI I SHOQËRISË CIVILE PËR TË DREJTAT E NJERIUT NË KOSOVË NË VITIN 2020. Report, Prishtinë: YIHR. Accessed February 20, 2023. [https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2021-08/2020\\_kosovo\\_cso\\_annual\\_human\\_rights\\_report\\_AL.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2021-08/2020_kosovo_cso_annual_human_rights_report_AL.pdf)

<sup>31</sup> UN WOMEN. 2022. The Shadow Pandemic: Violence against women during COVID-19. Publication, New York: UN WOMEN. Accessed February 20, 2023. <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/in-focus-gender-equality-in-covid-19-response/violence-against-women-during-covid-19>.

<sup>32</sup> Usher, Kim, Caroline Bradbury Jones, Navot Bhullar, Joanne Durkin, Naomi Gyamfi, Syadani Riyad Fatema, and Debra Jackson. 2021. «COVID-19 and family violence: Is this a perfect storm?» *International Journal of Mental Health Nursing* 1-11. Accessed February 25, 2023. <https://doi.org/10.1111/inm.12876>



In the previous chapters, we clarified the essence of the notion of the phenomenon of domestic violence, to continue to discover the main factors that led to the increase in cases of domestic violence in Kosovo and the world. Now we will deal with the official statistics that come from the Kosovo Police and other security bodies, where we will also compare the number of cases of domestic violence before and after COVID-19.

*Table 1. Comparison of domestic violence cases 2016-2022*

Year	Number of cases	Increase in (%) from the previous year
2022	2.757 cases <sup>33</sup>	13.34%
2021	2.432 cases <sup>34</sup>	10.65%
2020	2.198 cases <sup>35</sup>	12.37%
2019	1.965 cases <sup>36</sup>	27.59%
2018	1.533 cases <sup>37</sup>	20.8%
2017	1.269 cases <sup>38</sup>	3.59%
2016	1.225 cases <sup>39</sup>	

In table 1, I have presented the data on the number of cases from 2016 to 2022. As we can see from the number of cases before the COVID-19 pandemic or the year 2019, there are 1,965 cases, while in the year 2022, there are 2,757 cases of violence in the family, a frightening increase of over 40%. It is clear to see that the numbers start to increase tremendously in 2020 onwards, where from 2,198 cases in 2020, they increase exponentially in 2021 with 2,432 cases and in 2022 with 2,757 cases.

<sup>33</sup> Policia e Kosovës. 2022. *Reporti vjetor i punës së Policisë së Kosovës: Janar-Dhjetor 2022*. Report, Prishtinë: Policia e Kosovës. Accessed February 20, 2023. [https://www.kosovopolicice.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Reporti-vjetor-i-pun%C3%ABs-s%C3%AB-Policis%C3%AB-s%C3%AB-Kosov%C3%ABs-Janar-Dhjetor-2022\\_SHQIP.pdf](https://www.kosovopolicice.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Reporti-vjetor-i-pun%C3%ABs-s%C3%AB-Policis%C3%AB-s%C3%AB-Kosov%C3%ABs-Janar-Dhjetor-2022_SHQIP.pdf).

<sup>34</sup> Policia e Kosovës. 2022. *Reporti vjetor i punës së Policisë së Kosovës: Janar-Dhjetor 2021*. Report, Prishtinë: Policia e Kosovës. Accessed February 20, 2023. [https://www.kosovopolicice.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/REPORTI-VJETOR-I-PUN%C3%8BS-I-POLICIS%C3%8B-S%C3%8B-KOSOV%C3%8BS\\_shqip.pdf](https://www.kosovopolicice.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/REPORTI-VJETOR-I-PUN%C3%8BS-I-POLICIS%C3%8B-S%C3%8B-KOSOV%C3%8BS_shqip.pdf)

<sup>35</sup> Insajderi.org. 2022. *Dhuna në familje në rritje, kaq raste u reportuan brenda vitit 2021 në Kosovë*. Prishtinë, 1 Janar. Accessed February 22, 2023. <https://insajderi.org/dhuna-ne-familje-ne-rritje-kaq-raste-u-reportuan-brenda-vitit-2021-ne-kosove/>

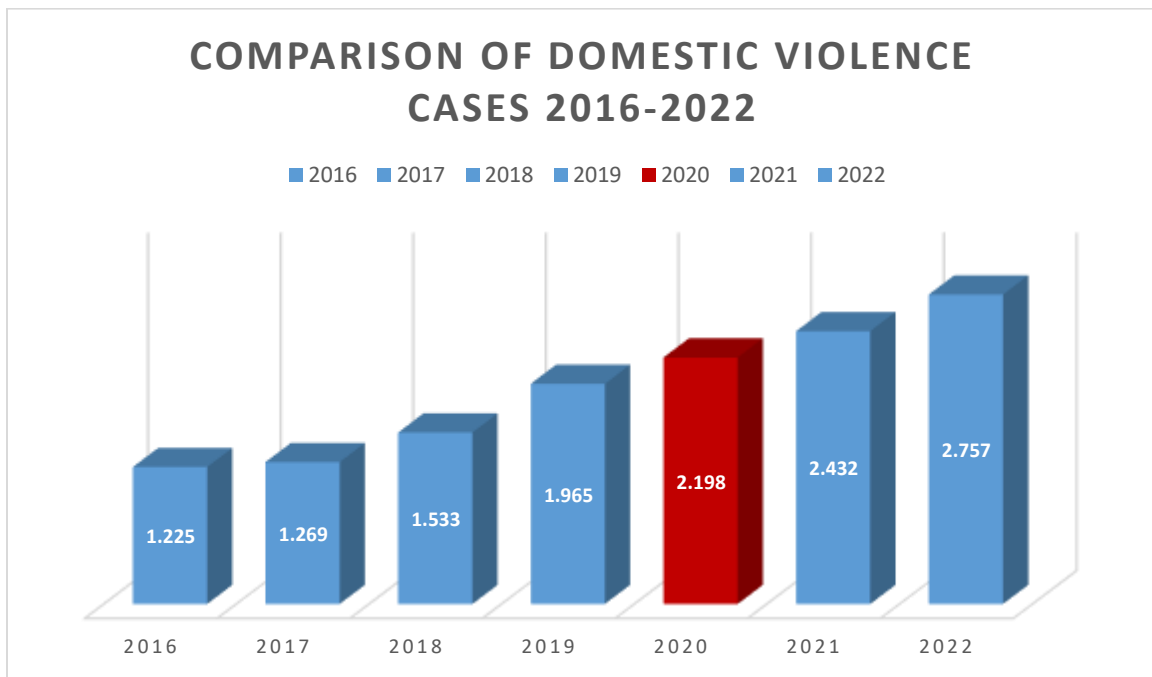
<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Hasani, Albana. 2021. "Byzylykët Elektronikë": *fokusi në parandalimin e rasteve të dhunës në familje*. Research paper. Prishtinë: Lëvizja Fol. Accessed February 23, 2023. <https://levizjafol.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Pajisjet-elektronike-fokusi-n%C3%AB-parandalimin-e-rasteve-t%C3%AB-dhun%C3%ABs-n%C3%AB-familje.pdf>. p. 20.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid. p.20

<sup>39</sup> Ibid. p.20

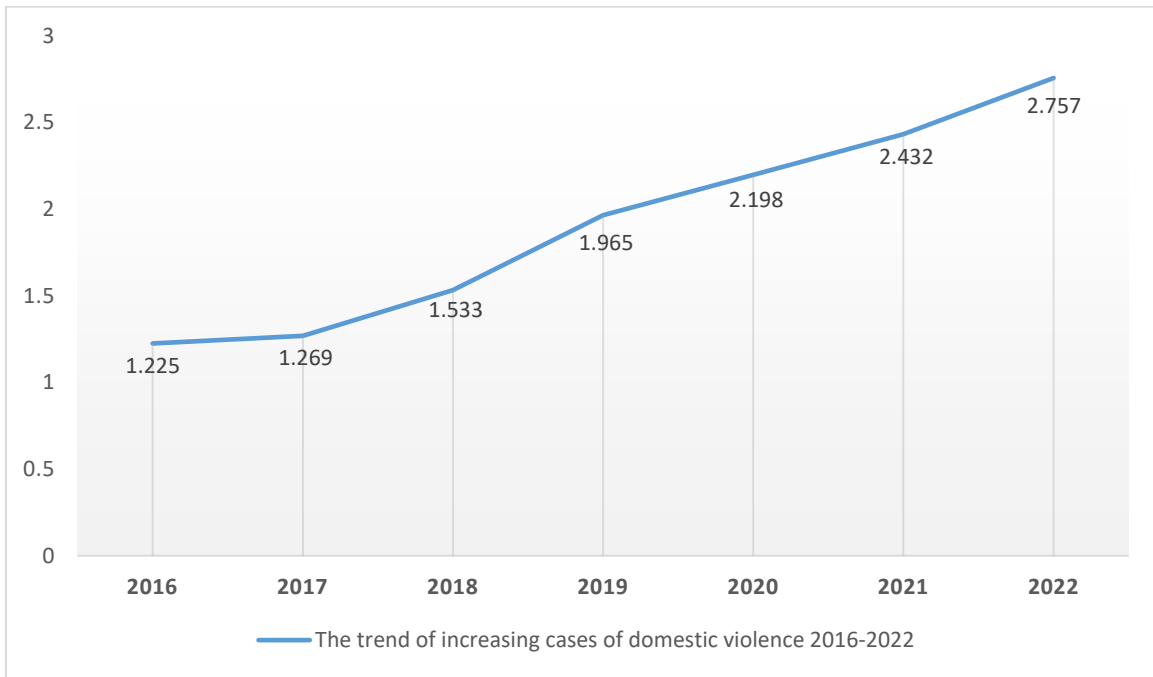
*Graph 1. Comparison of domestic violence cases 2016-2022*



Through the graph, we can see that in 2016 there was a much smaller number of cases of domestic violence, where according to the security institutions, 1,225 cases were reported. The year 2017 showed a slight increase, with 1,269 reported cases. Meanwhile, in 2018, a sharp increase is seen with 1,533 cases, to continue with the pace of growth in 2019, where 1,965 cases were presented. The year 2020 represents a rapid increase compared to the previous years, especially considering that it is the first year of the pandemic. The total number of cases for that year is 2,198 cases, but taking into account that the COVID-19 pandemic did not start at the beginning of 2020, the biggest consequences are presented in 2021, where a record number of 2,432 cases were presented. Unfortunately, the number continued to grow in 2022, where the largest number ever recorded in the Republic of Kosovo was presented with a total of 2,757 cases.

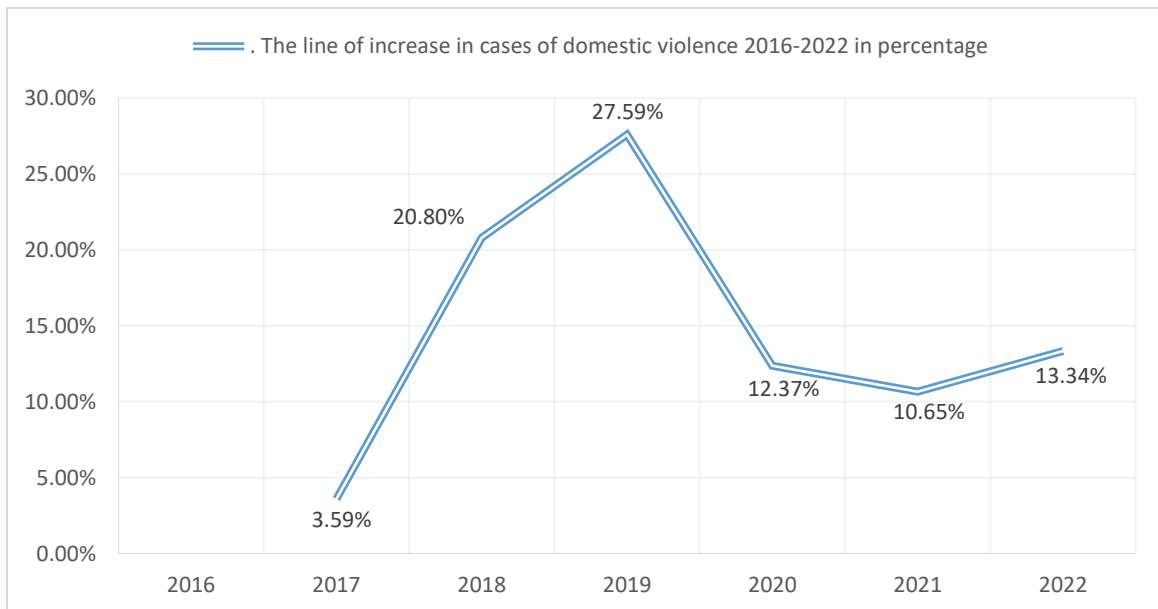
The consequences suffered by the COVID-19 pandemic have greatly influenced the large increase in cases of domestic violence, to add to this the fact that during this time institutions, civil society, and international organizations have had numerous awareness campaigns for reporting violence in the family and thus has led to a rise in the collective consciousness.

*Graph 3. The trend of increasing cases of domestic violence 2016-2022*



Through this graph, it is seen how from 2016 to 2022 the line is steadily rising, this is because there is a rapid increase since 2016 when 1,225 cases are presented, and in 2022 when 2,757 cases are presented.

*Graph 4. The line of increase in cases of domestic violence 2016-2022 in percentage*



The last graph shows the growth of cases of domestic violence in Kosovo during the years 2016-2022, expressed as a percentage. These numbers represent the percentage increase from the previous year, where it can be seen that the year 2017 has only a 3.59% increase from the previous year, while the year 2018 sets the first negative turn since the cases increase by 20.80% from 2017. The same pace continues for in 2019, which also sets a record figure with 27.59% more cases than in 2018. Meanwhile, the year of the pandemic continues the increase by 12.37% more than in the previous year. The year 2021 has an increase of 10.65% from the year 2020, while the year 2022 was the largest number of reported cases of domestic violence, or 13.34% more than in 2021. When we compare the years 2016 and 2022, it is observed that the total of these cases increases by more than 40% during this period.

The year 2022 negatively symbolizes the year with the most cases of domestic violence where a total of 2,757 cases are presented in Kosovo. In analyzing what is the main reason for these cases, representatives of the Kosovo Police stated that the violence was caused mainly between spouses or partners, who had disagreements due to the control of power within the family. As other reasons are jealousy, which also represents a pretty large number of cases, while social conditions are another reason. The reason in most cases seems to be disordered family relationships. These are only according to the declaration of the victims and are not part of a separate social study.<sup>40</sup>

It is not by chance that all these reasons are expressed as the main factors of the increase in domestic violence since most of these reasons are related to the problems brought by the Covid-19 pandemic, which to a large extent have disordered relationships and the lack of clarity of the leadership of the family. These have been directly affected by the struggles and problems that have developed throughout the time of quarantine and the total lockdown in 2020.

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<sup>40</sup> Beha, Besian. 2023. *S'ka vend për festë: Shtohen dukshëm rastet e dhunës ndaj grave në Kosovë*. Prishtinë, 8 March. Accessed March 11, 2023. <https://nacionale.com/drejtisi/ska-vend-per-feste-shtohen-dukshem-rastet-e-dhunes-ndaj-grave-ne-kosove>

## Conclusions

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought about the biggest change in the way of living of this generation, creating extraordinary circumstances that have led to the creation of new problems. Although difficult times can be key to creative choices, many things negatively impact post-pandemics. COVID-19 has brought people to face many psychological and emotional pressures due to the preventive measures that almost all countries in the world have taken, including quarantine, border closure, inflation, and other preventive measures that negatively affected mental health.

The Republic of Kosovo has had an increasing trend of reporting cases of domestic violence from 2017 onwards, but we can see in the results within the paper that the highest point was reached in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic, and then in 2021 and 2022 this trend continued to grow in alarming numbers. From these findings, Kosovo has faced a very high number, especially during 2020, when preventive measures such as quarantine and curfew were in force, which brought record numbers of domestic violence. Due to the inability of the victims to report domestic violence, many of these cases never reached the right place. But despite this fact, the total number of reports of domestic violence in 2020 and beyond was much higher than in previous years.

In 2022, we have an increase in the number of domestic violence over 40% since 2016. This fact remains very negative and dangerous since the post-pandemic years have been terrible times for the increase in murders within families. Kosovo Police, public institutions, and civil society have certainly done the right information to raise common social awareness, but sometimes it remains simply impossible to educate the entire population through such campaigns.

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The COVID-19 pandemic has left numerous consequences in our daily lives, from changing our way of living to the consequences of damage to love and tolerance between families and society, but also to the deterioration of psychological, emotional, and mental health. As a result of this entire chronology of facts, COVID-19 has directly affected the increase in cases of domestic violence, in addition to this, the rate of increase in the number of cases of domestic violence is increasing.

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# EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING AND MENTORING: RESEARCH IN KOSOVO

Zijavere KEQMEZI REXHEPI<sup>41</sup>

Muhaedin BELA<sup>42</sup>

John R. FISHER<sup>43</sup>

*This article describes how research at the undergraduate level can provide non-traditional students valuable experiential learning that they can apply in their future careers. Adult learners anticipate that their education will be relevant to their life goals and applicable in real-world situations. Two American women conducted this research, which took place in Kosovo, North Macedonia, and Utah. Pracademics in both locations provided support and guidance to the student researchers. The study verified that mentorship, self-reflection, and active experimentation are crucial factors for a successful undergraduate research experience.*

## Introduction

Although there isn't a definitive description of adult learners, they generally share a common goal of obtaining practical experience while attaining a higher education degree. Adult learners are a diverse group that includes a significant number of women and individuals from various racial and ethnic backgrounds. Adult learners tend to have varying learning styles and multiple roles and responsibilities. Many adult learners are interested in entering the workforce for the first time, changing careers, or advancing in their current career. An example is retired military or first responders who may be looking for second careers. To achieve these goals, it is important for adult learners to have opportunities to apply their prior knowledge, acquire new knowledge, and gain valuable experience. One effective way to gain experience and broaden knowledge is participation in research.

This article will discuss a case study which combines research and mentorship relationships in providing adult students experiential or applied learning opportunities. In this article experiential and applied learning are used synonymously, although differences may exist. Insights are provided from the literature using both terms. Use of theory related to the scholarship of teaching and adult

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development, in particular the work of Mezirow, Brookfield, and Boyer, will be used to connect adult education to the need for experiential learning, as distinguished from prior life experience.

Creating experiential learning opportunities specifically for non-traditional, adult students in a university setting can be challenging, but it is crucial and worthwhile (Sissleman-Borgia & Torino, 2017). As educators, it is our responsibility to offer these opportunities despite the obstacles, as it is important to help our students stay relevant in an ever-changing economy and job market. Adult learners need to acquire new skills to pursue new career paths, and we must constantly assess and update our teaching methods to meet their needs. Teaching and learning should be a two-way process, with instructors learning from their teaching experiences and adjusting their pedagogical approaches based on student feedback. This ongoing evaluation is essential for providing the best possible education for our students.

### **Adult Learning Theory**

Mezirow et al. (2000) propose that educators should utilize educational tasks that encourage active involvement with new ideas, such as engaging in social action. This type of active participation both in and out of the classroom enables learners to develop their own perspectives on the subject matter and participate in discussions. To succeed, learners must be able to analyze the material critically and apply it in practical workplace situations. Therefore, learning activities that give students the chance to put these skills into practice in a genuine work environment are extremely valuable.

Research indicates that the use of experiential learning methods can enhance the transfer of learning. Techniques like project-based learning, cooperative learning, and reflective learning provide opportunities for adult learners to combine their classroom knowledge and apply it in practical, real-world scenarios. According to Furman and Sibthorp (2013), experiential learning methods are more effective than traditional teaching methods because they promote a greater level of cognitive recall and complexity, which is essential for successful learning transfer.

Cercone (2008) highlights the relationship between experiential learning and adult learning theory. According to adult learning theory, adult learners tend to learn more effectively when they can connect new knowledge and concepts to their existing experiences and knowledge base. Experiential learning provides an opportunity for adult learners to apply their knowledge and skills to real-world situations, making the learning more meaningful and relevant to their current experiences.

Research offers a valuable opportunity for adult learners to engage in experiential learning. By doing active research in a real-world setting, they can apply the theories and concepts they have learned in the classroom to actual situations, gaining hands-on experience and enhancing their

learning. The applied nature of internships also allows adult learners to develop practical skills and competencies that are highly valued by employers.

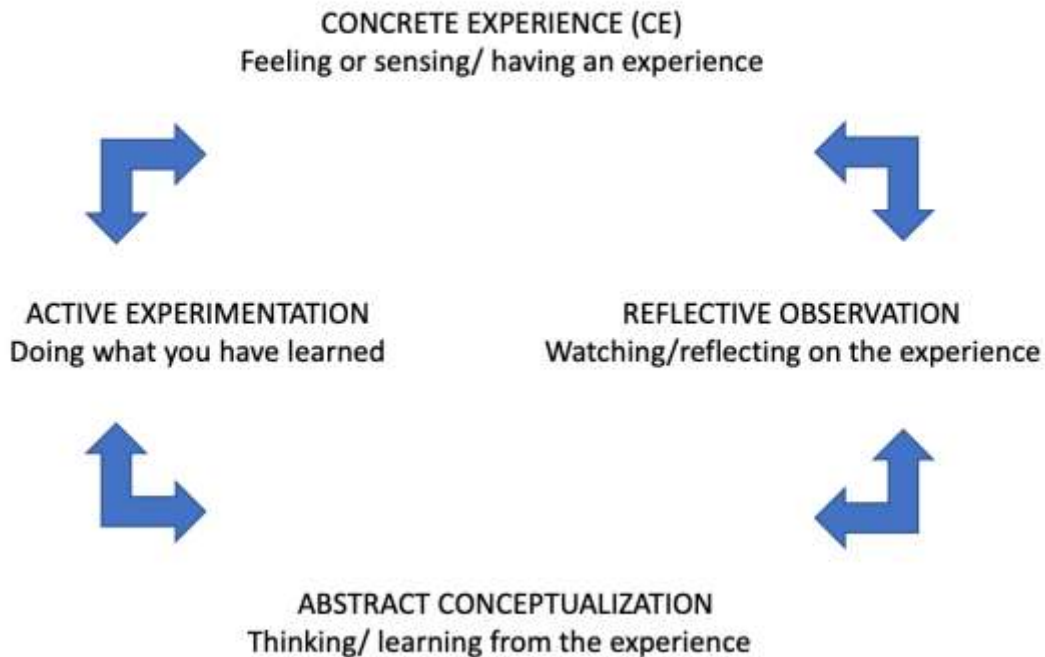
Overall, the connection between experiential learning and adult learning theory underscores the importance of providing opportunities for adult learners to apply their knowledge and skills in practical settings. Through research and other forms of experiential learning, adult learners can deepen their understanding of concepts and develop valuable skills that can help them succeed in their chosen careers.

Ernest Boyer (1990; 1996) held the belief that teaching should do more than just impart knowledge to students; it should also bring about some kind of transformation in their lives. As part of their duty, teachers must engage in the scholarship of teaching to enhance the learning experiences of their students. Adult learners possess a wealth of life experience and come with certain expectations regarding the outcomes of their education. Although they may enjoy learning for the sake of it, they often have specific goals, such as career advancement or meeting job-related requirements. Consequently, creating learning activities and objectives that cater to the complex needs of adult learners can be challenging.

## **Experiential Learning**

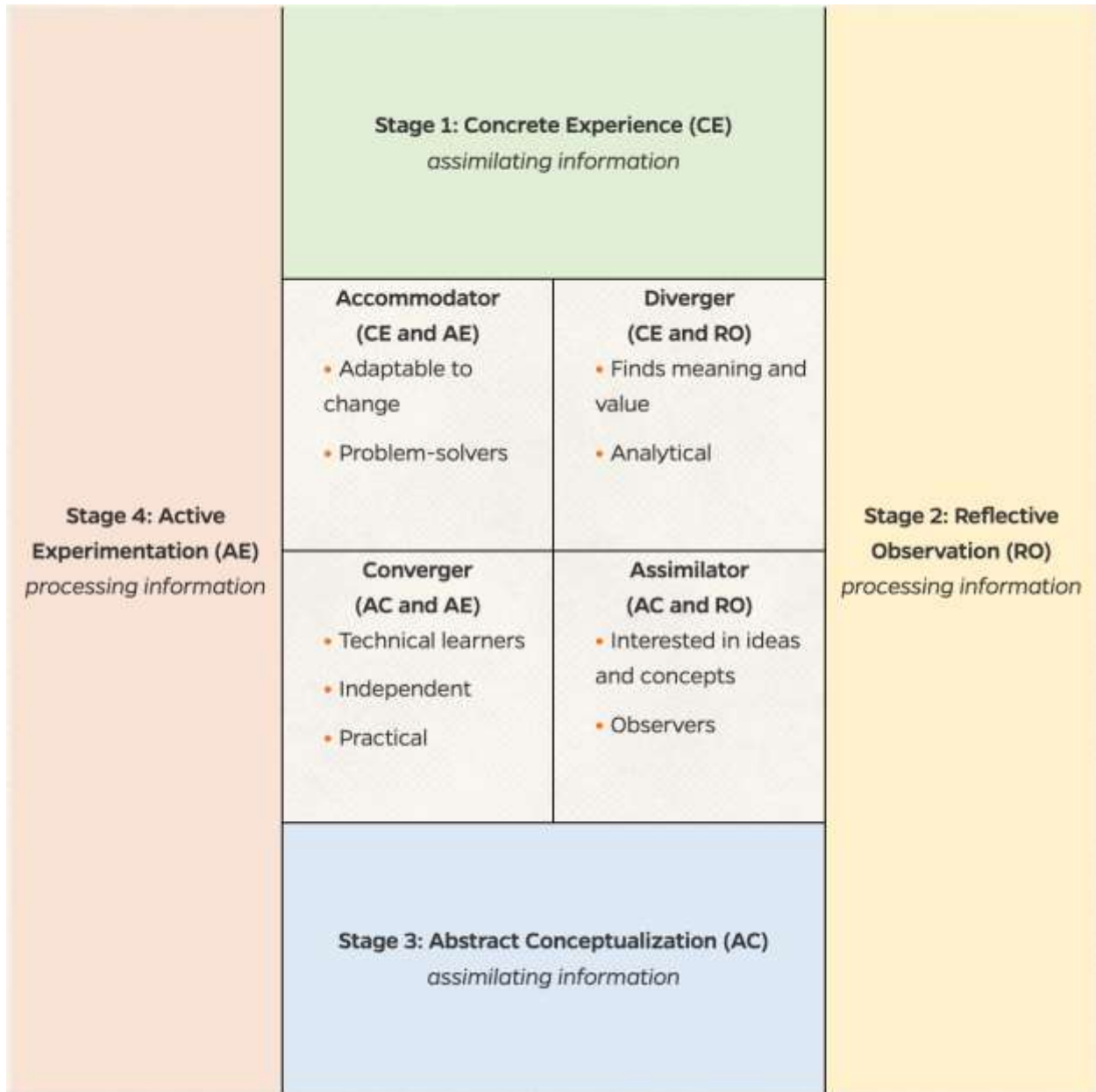
Kolb (1984) defined learning as the process of creating knowledge through the transformation of experiences. According to him, learning occurs through four stages: Concrete Experience (CE), Reflective Observation (RO), Abstract Conceptualization (AC), and Active Experimentation (AE). These stages usually form a cycle that starts with the learner undergoing a concrete experience and concludes with them putting the acquired knowledge into practice through active experimentation. During the Concrete Experience stage, students get a sense or “feel” the experience. Through Reflective Observation, they watch what has happened and reflect on the experience. In Abstract Conceptualization, they think and learn from the experience. In Active Experimentation, they do what they have learned or put it into practice.

## KOLB'S 4 STAGES OF EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING



**Figure 1. Kolb's 4 Stages of Experiential Learning**

From his observations of the learning cycle, Kolb identified four distinct learning preferences, commonly known as learning styles. These styles are considered as customary ways of responding to a learning environment, which are determined by how students respond to different stages of the learning process. The stages of learning are indicative of how learners comprehend and integrate information. A grid is presented below to illustrate the different types of learners and their corresponding leaning towards a specific stage of the learning cycle.



**Figure 2. Kolb’s Learning Preferences**

In a conventional classroom, instructors can identify the learning preferences of students by participating in class discussions and observing them during lectures, group projects, or presentations. However, in an online setting, it is crucial to keep students engaged throughout the learning process and include activities or prompts that will help you uncover their learning preferences. Teachers should provide a range of learning experiences that cater to all learning styles, as this will not only help students adapt but also become versatile learners. These learning stages are part of the experiential learning. (See end notes.)

## **Applied Learning Defined**

According to Schwartzman and Bouas Henry (2009), “applied learning” refers more to a spirit or movement in education than to a definitively bounded subject matter (p. 4).

Applied learning refers to educational approaches related to engaged scholarship, civic engagement, communities of practice, experiential education, and critical pedagogy. Although diverse, these approaches have some common features. They all emphasize the importance of "learning by doing" through concrete experiences. In other words, students are actively engaged in putting theoretical concepts into practice, making applied learning a form of active learning.

Applied learning can take various forms, including curricular or co-curricular activities related to coursework or other institutional opportunities like student service projects. Such practices always have an educational aspect that distinguishes them from volunteer work done solely for its intrinsic value, as observed by those involved in service-learning. While they expand beyond the traditional classroom setting, applied learning practices complement, rather than replace, other teaching methods. Higher education typically sees applied learning practices in forms such as studying away in off-site environments like studying abroad or community-based learning, service-learning, independent research, and internships, practica, or clinical experiences. The distinguishing feature of these practices is the educational component at their core, setting them apart from extracurricular activities carried out purely for their inherent humanitarian worth (Schwartzman & Bouas Henry, 2009).

Philosopher Gilbert Ryle made a clear distinction between applied learning and theoretical knowledge. Ryle (1949) proposed that intelligence combines two types of knowledge: "knowing that" and "knowing how." "Knowing that" involves understanding theory and mastering facts and principles, while "knowing how" involves demonstrating skill in performing a task. The integration of these two types of knowledge is essential to intelligence. Applied learning extends beyond job training and aims to connect knowledge to lived experience. Scholarship on applied learning investigates the relationship between understanding theory and skillful practice. For example, when learning how to play a game, "knowing that" involves internalizing the rules, while "knowing how" involves the ability to execute moves in the game.

According to Ryle (1949), having practical skills alone, without a theoretical understanding, may not produce the intended outcomes consistently. Even the fastest runner cannot win a race without knowing the correct direction to run in. Ryle suggests that combining theory with practice allows learners to go beyond mere training and develop self-discipline, which is a hallmark of lifelong learning. He argues that being intelligent involves not only meeting standards but also applying them, regulating one's actions, and not just being well-regulated. “To be intelligent is not merely to satisfy criteria, but to apply them; to regulate one’s actions and not merely to be well-regulated” (p. 28).

The idea of applied learning is frequently mentioned in academic discussions about vocational education. Scholars have recognized that in order to adapt to a knowledge-based economy,

individuals must be able to apply their knowledge to various tasks, which can only be achieved through hands-on experiences that go beyond traditional classroom settings (Kolde, 1991). There is an increasing demand for higher education to be more applicable to real-life situations, which has led to a greater emphasis on applied learning, not just for job training purposes but for the general public who believe that knowledge should be connected to real-world experiences.

## **Applied Learning in the U.S. Fire Service**

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA, 2011) has been responsible for developing and maintaining fire protection standards in the United States for many years (Maxfield & Fisher, 2012). These standards cover various areas such as construction, occupancy, sprinklers, and firefighter safety, and are followed by almost every fire department in the country. In addition, standards have been created for the training and development of firefighters. Certifications are widely recognized across the states.

However, little has been done to address the development and maintenance of leadership positions within the fire service. To fill this gap, the International Association of Fire Chiefs has created a Professional Fire Officer Development Standard with the aim of elevating the status of the fire and emergency services from a mere occupation to a recognized profession. To achieve this goal, a curriculum and code of conduct have been established, with four levels of the profession identified: supervising officer, managing officer, administrative officer, and executive officer. Each level has specific requirements for education, training, experience, and self-improvement.

The Professional Fire Officer Development Standard includes a noteworthy element that mandates the pursuit of personal growth. This aspect is less objective and centers on an individual's perception, characteristics, and mindset, which are shaped and improved through personal efforts. In essence, it evaluates the progress, maturation, and transformation of an individual over a specific duration. The criteria specified are based on significant benchmarks that indicate that an individual's self-development undertakings and encounters have equipped them to take on supervisory and leadership responsibilities.

Having sufficient experience plays a crucial role in achieving success in the fire and emergency services field. Therefore, the professional standard mandates that every level within the category has a progressively increasing experience prerequisite. Experiential learning begins at the recruit academy and continues through the firefighters' careers. It is an integral part of their training, education, and personal self-development.

Fisher, Means, and Corson (2014) validate that the exercise and training methods required by National Incident Management System (NIMS) and the U.S. Fire Service for first responders are effective for educating and training students in emergency services. Simulation-based exercises also provide practical learning opportunities that complement traditional classroom instruction.

Participating in emergency response exercises helps students boost their confidence, improve their teamwork skills, establish personal and professional relationships, and test and enhance their knowledge and abilities related to disaster response.

This research indicates that implementing NIMS principles during disaster relief exercises has had positive effects on college students. The study exemplifies how students have improved their ability to respond to emergencies by putting their theoretical knowledge into practice during simulated scenarios. Collaborating with fellow students during the exercises has also helped them enhance their leadership and teamwork skills. In addition, by interacting with professional responders, they have developed valuable connections that can benefit their future careers. Furthermore, students have gained self-assurance in their capacity to deal with high-pressure situations during simulated critical incidents. The practical learning experience gained through training and exercises complements and enhances their traditional classroom learning.

Three themes and five sub-themes emerged from the student participant responses to interview questions. The themes were cultural awareness, relationships, and field experience. Sub-themes were: differences in handling disaster response, leadership and teamwork, testing and developing skills, applied learning versus classroom learning, and self-confidence and trust.

## **Reflection**

Maxfield and Fisher (2012) experimented using reflection techniques among students taking an online Homeland Security course. The course followed Kolb's four-stage cycle. Students used reflective observation to explore how they could apply their new knowledge in their workplaces. While traditional students were prompted to relate their learning to future work experience, non-traditional students leveraged their work experience to enhance their learning. The diverse knowledge and experiences of non-traditional students added value to the learning environment for all students. Case studies, reflective papers, simulations and training, role playing, journaling, and discussions were used to help students apply their learning (Jarvis, 2001).

The DEAL model (Ash and Clayton, 2009) was used as a means of encouraging critical reflection among students. The DEAL model consists of three steps: a) description of experiences in an objective and detailed manner; b) examination of those experiences considering specific learning goals or objectives; and c) articulation of Learning, including goals for future action that can then be taken forward into the next experience for improved practice and further refinement of learning (p. 41). Students responded to the questions: What did I learn? How did I learn it? Why does it matter? What will I do in light of it?

The Homeland Security course utilized discussion and critical reflection exercises to provide both cognitive and emotional learning opportunities that allowed students to make sense of their experiences. Through contemplation, reflective practice, and experimental learning, students were able to achieve a deeper level of learning. Journaling helped students become reflective learners



who could examine their own personal growth and feelings of empowerment. As a result of this approach, students were able to think outside the box, consider new ideas, and explore alternative options. They gained a better understanding of the subject matter and became more knowledgeable.

Russell and Fisher (2014) did a follow-up study, based on Maxfield and Fisher's initial findings (2012). Reflective thinking and keeping a journal can be used to evaluate students' achievement of stated objectives, as well as uncover any implicit objectives. By engaging in reflective journaling, it is possible to identify unintended learning outcomes among students. These techniques are particularly useful for emergency services and homeland security education, which often involve non-traditional students who are already practitioners in the field. Additionally, reflective journaling is an effective way to gauge how well a course addresses affective objectives, such as developing "global awareness" and an "awareness of vulnerabilities to the nation."

## **Mentoring students**

According to the APA (2006), mentoring is a process where an expert (the mentor) guides and assists a less experienced person (the mentee) in developing their career. They have two primary roles for the mentee: the career-related function, where the mentor acts as a coach to provide challenging work for improving the mentee's professional performance and development, and the psychosocial function, where the mentor serves as a role model and support system (see Kram, 1983). Both functions provide important lessons for professional development and work-life balance.

It's important to note the difference between the terms "protégé" and "mentee." "Protégé" specifically applies to individuals engaged in senior-mentor and junior-protégé relationships within an organization where the protégé is under the mentor's protection and guidance. "Mentee," on the other hand, refers to anyone in a mentoring relationship regardless of age or position.

Research consistently shows that mentored individuals are more satisfied and committed to their professions than non-mentored individuals. They also tend to receive higher performance evaluations, higher salaries, and faster career progress. Mentors themselves can benefit from mentoring by finding satisfaction in developing the next generation of leaders, rejuvenating their own career development, learning new technologies, and gaining awareness of important issues, methods, or perspectives in their field.

Mentorship is also applied to the teacher-student relationship, particularly as it focuses on research (Sargent et al., 2022; Wright, Treadwell & Hughes, 2022). In this context, a mentor can guide and support a student in conducting research projects, developing research skills, and navigating the academic landscape. Mentorship in research can take many forms, such as providing guidance on research design, offering feedback on drafts of papers, introducing students to professional networks, and helping students identify research opportunities. A good mentor will also help

students develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills and encourage them to think creatively and independently. Mentorship can also occur in the form of a study abroad.

University students can gain practical experience that will help them in responder careers. Students from Utah Valley University participated in study abroad programs in 2014, 2016, 2017, 2019, and 2022 to Southeastern Europe. The study abroad focused on providing field experience which supplemented and augmented the students' classroom experience. In addition to learning from emergency officials and local responders, the UVU students taught other university students emergency response skills. The field experience provided students an opportunity to test and develop their emergency response skills and helped build self-confidence and trust. Trust is essential in developing relationships with team members and those people the responder serves. Working together also helped the students build teamwork and leadership skills (Fisher and Bela, 2015; Fisher, Means, & Corson, 2014).

### **Mentorship as Applied Learning**

Following the most recent UVU study abroad in 2022, two women students, Mary Bennett and Jordan Newman, stayed afterward to research evacuation preparedness in Kosovo and North Macedonia. Zijavere Keqmezi-Rexhepi and Muhaedin Bela took on the role of mentors, providing them contacts, translation, transportation, and housing (2022).

In preparation for interviews in Southeastern Europe, beginning in April 2022, the researchers met with John Fisher numerous times to draft a problem statement, research literature, establish a methodology, and develop questions and a consent form. The research proposal was submitted for IRB approval both at UVU and in Kosovo. Mrs. Keqmezi and Dr. Bela arranged for interviews in the Balkans.

The purpose of the study was to gain insight into the experiences of individuals who were compelled to leave their homes, how authorities reacted to evacuations and refugees, the level of readiness of government entities and people for evacuations, and the disaster prevention advantages of such preparedness. A sequence of face-to-face interviews and surveys were carried out with government officials, educators, students, and civilians in the Balkans and Utah. Surveys also were administered to two groups of UVU students – from the general student population and emergency services majors.

The use of qualitative interviews allowed the researchers to seek “to understand how people connect emotions, motivations, and meaning to their experiences in a disaster.” The quantitative survey provided a sense of the general preparedness of university students. Two sets of questions were used in interviews – one for government officials and workers and the other for the general public, former evacuees, and former refugees. Among the 27 people interviewed were nine government officials or first responders and 18 evacuees from fires, earthquakes, and war.

Twenty-four of interviews were in the Balkans and three in the Utah.

Kosovars suffered two major events that required evacuation: the Kosovo war in 1998-1999, and a major earthquake in Gjilan, Kosovo on April 24, 2002. One of the worst earthquakes to hit the Balkans occurred in 1963 in Skopje, killing over 1,070 people, and leaving 200,000 homeless. In Utah evacuations occur mainly because of wildfires and floods. Utah has over 400 earthquakes annually, but none have been large enough so far to result in major damage and evacuations.

Mary wrote: "We sought to understand their past experiences of ethnic cleansing, wars, and natural disasters and how their level of preparedness effected their families and citizens of these countries."

While conducting the research, it was evident that both individuals and governments in Kosovo and Northern Macedonia lack the necessary resources, funding, and readiness for disasters. Despite the fact that the region has experienced ethnic cleansing, war, and natural calamities, the people of these areas seem to be unaware of their responsibility to be prepared, the significance of an evacuation kit, and the need to have one. Only a handful of individuals expressed their intention to prepare kits for their families, while most believed it to be impractical or unaffordable. Nevertheless, these people exhibit a remarkable level of emotional resilience and take pride in their ability to overcome challenges.

The interviews and survey results from Utah were unexpected because despite the state's claim of being well-prepared, a considerable number of people were unprepared for evacuations. Although they acknowledged the importance of having an emergency kit, they did not consider it a priority. The Utah Department of Emergency Management has detailed plans, but smaller towns lack sufficient funds and personnel to oversee planning efforts.

Bennett, Newman, and Fisher attended the Homeland Defense and Security Education Summit in Monterey, California October 30 to November 2, 2022, where they presented their findings. Funding for the research and conference attendance was provided by UVU undergraduate and scholarly activity grants.

## **Reflective Statements**

The following are reflective statements about the purpose and benefits of the research project.

"The impact this has had on me personally is incredible. My eyes have been opened to new cultures, languages, geography and the love I have for the people of Kosovo and Northern Macedonia is beyond words. The stories that were shared in our interviews have changed my perspective on what is truly important and why disaster preparedness is so critical. I will do all I can to help these beautiful people and I will do all I can to have a positive impact on my own

Community and UVU" (Mary Bennett, 2022).

"The benefits we hope to bring to UVU, the students, and our community is an understanding of why it is important to be prepared for emergencies, how to increase their disaster resilience by starting with small steps that can make a big difference. Also understanding how disaster preparation can impact all aspects of the individuals, communities, and UVU for the better. This in turn will allow greater increase success in disaster prevention, protection, mitigation, response, and recovery" (Mary Bennett, 2022).

"I have learned an incredible amount about the research process, but more importantly I have gained a greater appreciation of other cultures and of people who have a lot less than we have in the United States" (Jordan Newman, 2022).

"The research shows how to prepare for and respond to disasters. It provides recommendations for being more resilient. The hoped for result is that government will use the results in planning and policy development. UVU, students, and the community will benefit from the recommendations for disaster and emergency preparedness" (Jordan Newman, 2022).

## **Conclusions**

In a mentorship relationship both parties' benefit. This case study shows that teaching and learning is a two-way process, where students learn new skills and teachers gain insights that improve their own work and instructional skills. By letting students extend their reach, they discover unknown abilities that they could not gain in the classroom or from textbooks. Essential to the process is analyzing and reflecting on the experience of learning. In research this is done through analyzing the research discoveries and also by reflecting back on the total experience. A reflective journal can be valuable in helping students learn from the research process (Russell & Fisher, 2014).

Training students to be first responders and public safety officers is best done through providing practical and transformative experiences (Kolb, 1984). Students go through the stages of having an experience, reflecting on the experience, learning from the experience, before they can do what they have learned. This requires they employ many faculties like feeling, observing, and thinking before doing. Involving students in active research is one valuable form of providing experience and applying theoretical principles to real life situations.

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#### End Notes

The University of Florida provides a good summary of Kolb's four stages of learning. <https://citt.ufl.edu/resources/the-learning-process/types-of-learners/kolbs-four-stages-of-learning/>

# THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON THE INCREASE IN CASES OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND THE CHALLENGES OF PROTECTING AND INTERVIEWING VICTIMS

Gentianë MORINA<sup>44</sup>

*The global world and the health of humanity in 2019 was hit by the COVID-19 Virus in a surprising way due to the exponential growth of this pandemic. Humanity and states as organized societies were not prepared in a predictable and specific manner for the consequences and effects of this virus in the course of normal life, including the economy, public, institutional and cultural life... Society and states from those open and integrated according to a global avant-garde order, it was necessarily required to transform into "closed" and controlled societies according to the measures that the WHO would update. Such marginalization with unknown effects from this virus on one hand, and the demand for the closure and ban of economic, public life activities and with special emphasis on recreational ones (sports, culture, theaters,...) Had a negative-depressive impact that in certain families derived violent behavior and actions. In these diversionary circumstances, the media world dominated the masses with information on the progressive growth of the pandemic, the health collapse, the trend of high death statistics. Undoubtedly, this caused the high uncertainty about the future to produce violent behavior and manifest itself in numerous cases even in Kosovar families.*

**Keywords:** *Pandemic, virus, WHO, COVID-19, media, violence.*

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# 1. Declaration of the Problem

## 1.1 Domestic violence

Domestic violence is an old phenomenon in society, which can be found anywhere in the world, affects the entire human society and extends to all its social and economic levels, and the Republic of Kosovo is no exception.

In Kosovo, for a long time, domestic violence has been a taboo topic, except that it has been reluctant to be reported by victims for various reasons, (such as old inherited traditions, the fear of victims to report violence caused by the member of the family, lack of victims' awareness of domestic violence and their legal rights, lack of trust in state institutions that provide protection and security for victims of domestic violence, etc.), at the same time, in some cases, domestic violence has been neglected even by the institutions that have responsibility to deal with this phenomenon and it is defined as a private matter that requires a solution within the family.

It is inevitable that every day there is not another victim, woman, man, child, elderly person or person with special needs, as a victim of domestic violence, therefore the competent institutions have the responsibility to protect the citizens from this criminal act and human rights violations. According to the author James Nickel: human rights are about the right which is protected by law and freedom and equality between people. We find this in the first article of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, where all people are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They have reason and conscience and should behave towards each other in a spirit of brotherhood. Human rights are an important part of legal theories and an important philosophical-political concept.[1] Among the fundamental rights of human beings are the right to individual freedom, the right to life, the right to self-determination, the right to religion, etc. Human Rights describe a concept whereby all people are born with universal human rights, (^ James Nickel 13 dhjetor 2013).

Domestic violence is quite specific because it happens within the family and appears in different forms, therefore it is necessary to be treated in a special way and with great seriousness by all relevant institutions, including the Kosovo Police.

The Kosovo Police is committed to having a society without violence in our country, where all the citizens of its state can live peacefully and safely, regardless of beliefs and sexual orientation, all are respected and protected without distinction. The mission of the Police of the Republic of Kosovo and its strategic objectives are: "to protect the life and property of every citizen, to maintain order and public peace, to prevent and detect crime, to protect human rights and freedoms, to deal with equally all citizens regardless of race, color, religion, gender and age, [2] (P. e. Kosovës a.d.).



The criminal offense of Domestic Violence is an offense sanctioned under Article 248 of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Kosovo, according to which:

Anyone who commits violence or physical, psychological or economic abuse with the aim of violating the dignity of another person within a family relationship, is punished with a fine and imprisonment for up to 3 (three) years.

When any crime in the Criminal Code is committed within a family relationship, it will be considered an aggravating circumstance.

3. Any member of the family who inflicts physical, psychological, sexual or economic violence or abuse on another member of his/her family shall be punished with a fine and imprisonment of up to three (3) years.

3.1. "Family relationship" for the purposes of this provision is in compliance with the definition in Article 113 of this code. [3] (Q. e. Kosovës, Kodi Penal i Republikës së Kosovës, neni 248 a.d.)

3.2. Domestic violence, physical, psychological, sexual and economic violence, for the needs of this code, will be the same as defined in the provision of article 2, under paragraph 1.2. Of Law no. 03/L-182 for protection from Domestic Violence. [4] (Q. e. Kosovës, Ligji nr. 03/L-182 për mbrojtje nga dhuna në Familje 2010)

## **1.2 Domestic violence**

Persons are considered family relations if:

1. Are engaged or were engaged; 2. Are married or were married; 3. Are in an extramarital union or were in an extramarital union; 4. Live together in a common economy or who lived together in such an economy; 5. Use a common house and are related by blood, marriage, adoption, or are in a guardianship relationship, including parents, grandparents, children, nephews, brothers and sisters, aunts and uncles or cousins; 6. Are parents of a common child; 7. Are procedural parties in a dispute from family relations [5] (Q. e. Kosovës, Ligji për mbrojtje nga dhuna në familje 2010)

## **1.3 Domestic violence under criminal offences**

Domestic violence - one or more intentional acts or omissions that a person does to another person with whom he is or has been in a family relationship such as these, but is not limited to: 1. The use of physical force or psychological pressure exerted on other family member; 2. Any other action of a family member that may cause or threatens to cause physical pain and mental suffering; 3. Causing a feeling of fear, personal danger or violation of dignity; 4. Physical attack without

considering the consequences; 5. Insulting, cursing, calling with offensive names and other forms of rude disturbance; 6. Constant repetition of behaviors with the aim of humiliating the other person; 7. Sexual intercourse without consent and sexual abuse; 8. Unlawful restriction of freedom of movement towards another person; 9. Damage or destruction of property and threats to do so; 10. Putting the other person in a position to fear for their physical, emotional and economic condition; 11. Entering or leaving by force from the shared apartment or the apartment of the other person; 12. Kidnapping [6] (Q. e. Kosovës, Ligji për mbrojtje nga dhuna në familje 2010).

#### **1.4 Factors affecting domestic violence**

Domestic violence occurs within the family and as such it is difficult to measure the degree of violence caused, the specific factors that cause it and to assess its spread in our country.

There are different factors that can cause violence in the family, which can be from personal influence or general influence such as; the control to place one member against another family member, the influence of old traditions, the economic/social situation, the family's education, the deteriorated relationships in the family, the earliest family experiences where the perpetrator or even the victim were victims of violence, jealousy among family members, individual's mental health problems, sexual frustrations, alcohol abuse, drug abuse, stress and other factors. One of the factors that influenced the increase in cases of domestic violence in 2020 was the situation created as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Based on police data, domestic violence has increased in recent years, but can we consider that we are dealing with an increase in citizens' awareness of their rights to report cases of domestic violence, as well as an increase in trust in The local police for reporting this incident? We have not been able to prove this since we have not interviewed any victim.

What we have understood during the analysis of statistical data, we can conclude that domestic violence in our country during 2021 and 2022 has been quite present and has been extended to all its social levels. Domestic violence in 2020 until January-August 2022 affected both genders, but the female gender was the most affected with about 80% of cases. All family members were attacked by domestic violence, where according to the data, the most affected family member was the wife in about 45% of the cases.

According to the police data that we had at our disposal, as well as based on the possibilities provided by the analysis of the comparison of cases, some conclusions were drawn regarding the criminal offense of domestic violence, which were clarified in the following of this paper through graphs and tables. As follows:

YEAR	Number of victims	Female victims	Male victims	Child victims (up to 18 years old)	Victim (over age 65 years old)	Victim (with disability)
2019	1978	1593 81%	385 19%	46	95	20
2020	2101	1636 78%	465 22%	121	120	17
2021	2486	1986 80%	500 20%	159	180	31
January August/2022	1899	1551 82%	348 18%	113	168	18

- The number of victims in 2019, the total number of victims is 1978, female victims are: 1593, male victims are: 385, child victims are: 46, victims over the age of 65 are: 95 and victims with disability are in total: 20.
- The number of victims in 2020, the total number of victims is: 2101, female victims are: 1636, male victims are: 465, child victims are: 121, victims over the age of 65 are: 120 victims with disability are in total: 17.
- The number of victims in 2021, the total number of victims is 2486, female victims are: 1986, male victims are: 500, child victims are: 159, victims over the age of 65 are: 180 victims with disability are in total: 31.

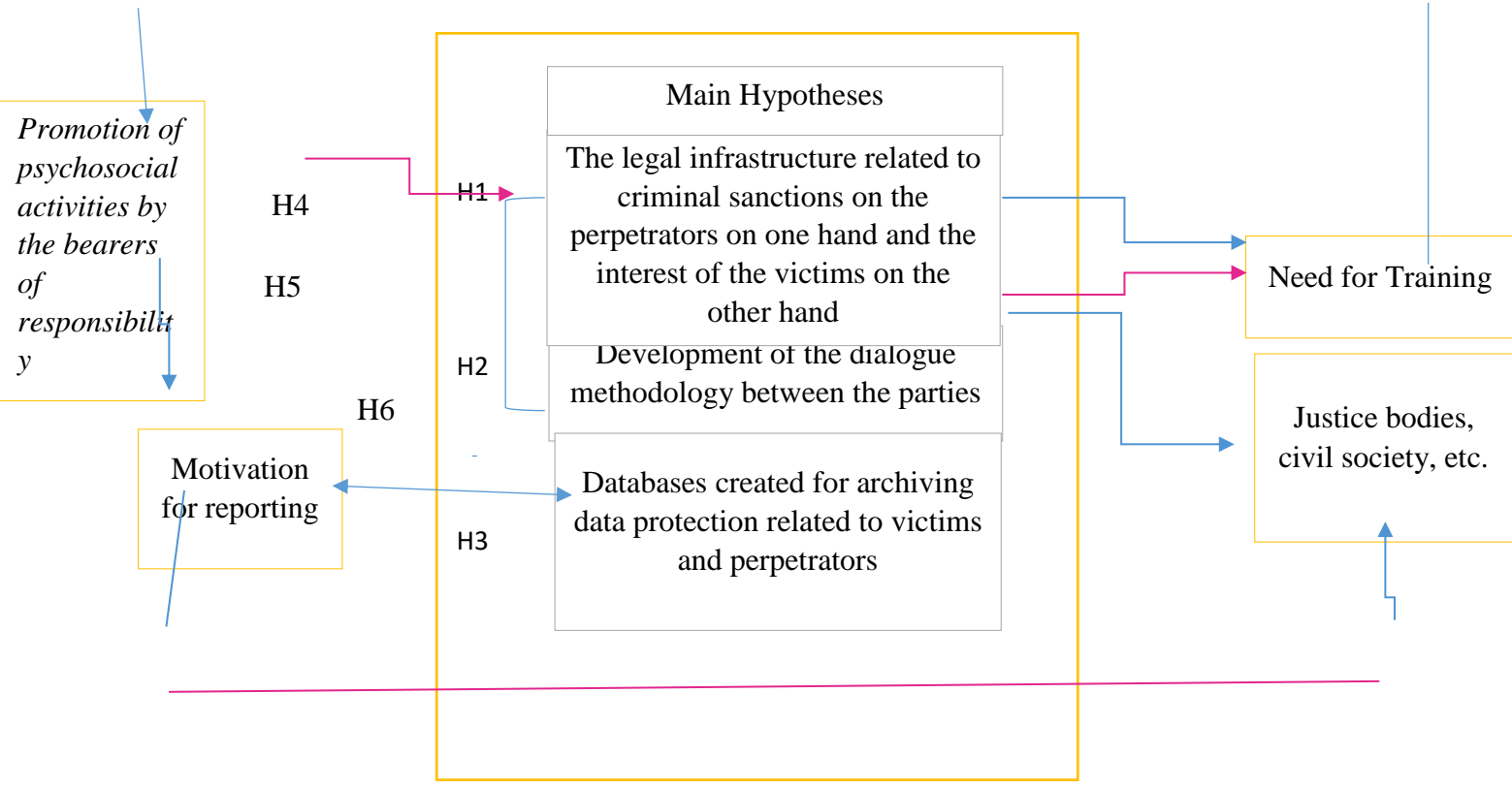
The number of victims from the month of January-August of 2022, the total number of victims is 1899, female victims are: 1551, male victims are: 348, child victims are: 113, victims over the age of 65 are: 168 victims with disability are in total: 18.

### 1.5 Theoretical Framework and Hypotheses

Challenges of victims of domestic violence

In order for the study to achieve the required results, a hypothesis has been raised on the basis of which the proofs will be tested.;

Hypothesis: Increase in cases of domestic violence as a result of COVID-19



In order for the paper to provide a clear overview of the challenges faced by victims of violence, three hypotheses have been raised:

- H1.** The legal infrastructure related to criminal sanctions on the perpetrators on one hand and the interest of the victims on the other hand (brings to the surface the general needs for training)
- H2.** Development of the dialogue methodology between the parties (Judiciary bodies, civil society, etc.)
- H3.** Databases created for archiving data protection related to victims and perpetrators (Motivation for reporting)

## 2. Research Objectives

The purpose of this research is to reflect the real state of the increase in cases of domestic violence as a result of the Covid-19 virus, bringing to the surface the causes of the increase in violence, the reasons for causing and exercising violence by the abuser against the victim. In order to achieve this, based on the raised hypotheses of this research, the research objectives and research questions were set through which the expected results were achieved using the empirical research method. Some of the research objectives of this paper are:

- 1) Family reports, through which the relations between a man and a woman, married, ex-married, engaged or in an extramarital relationship are highlighted. In the framework of this objective, relationships between other relatives are also treated
- 2) The victim's awareness to report violence is another research objective of this paper, through which trust in security institutions (specifically in the Kosovo Police), the provision of security and protection for the victim will be highlighted.

### **3. Research questions**

In order for the research to achieve the expected results, highlighting a clear overview of the general functioning of legislation in force for the protection of human rights, as the main mechanism responsible for protection from domestic violence, the research questions compiled for this paper, and based on the defined objectives through which we will identify the findings as: the analysis of the research to determine the gender of the victims of domestic violence, it is requested that the gender be declared through the request to the Kosovo Police. Through this question we have a clear overview of the research results based on gender, we will present the research comments in the research tables. Likewise, the declaration of the age of victims of domestic violence aims to compare their ages. On the other hand, the statistical report of domestic violence by region over the years, brings us a clear picture that in recent years there has been a significant increase in domestic violence, but also in reporting to competent bodies such as the Kosovo Police.

## **4. Literature Review**

### **4.1 Challenges for interviewing and protecting victims**

The time of the pandemic, covid 19 was also very challenging for the kosovo police officers as they had restrictive measures from the government updated by the who, which have made it difficult for the police to contact the victims of domestic violence.

They had difficulties in dealing with the victim, contact with victims' defenders, shelters, etc. The great commitment of police officers to their duties - implementation of measures against the COVID-19 pandemic, the possibility of infection of police officers during the intervention in the absence of protective measures, as well as the lack of information about the condition of the victim, the perpetrator and witnesses - (infected or not). The COVID-19 pandemic has also made it difficult to interview and treat victims, both in homes and in police facilities.

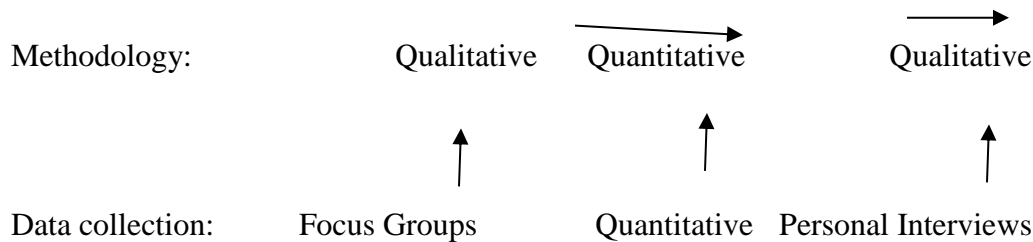
The provision of health services has also been a difficulty in itself, as many medical wards have had limited access/limited services.

## 4.2 Research Methods

An academic paper is a piece of writing based on comprehensive reading and research, written by a scholar at any academic level. Based on the review of social science literature, the research methodology that was used for this research, provides accurate data that has enabled a deeper study, although we have managed to identify the challenges as well as the main factors that the victims of domestic violence have faced during the pandemic, as well as the Kosovo Police as key factors for law and order.

## 4.3. Research Design

In order to achieve good results and research to achieve its goal, we have used quantitative research methods. Through the quantitative method we identify the problem by generating numerical data or data that can be converted into usable statistics. Quantitative research methods are used to search for quantitative data that include numerical and statistical explanations. As a method of collecting data through questions [7] (Ros 2010). We have addressed questions such as who, how, how much which based on four types of research; descriptive research, exploratory research, explanatory research and evaluation research.



## 4.4 Data sources and data collection techniques

In order for the data to be reliable and the academic research to achieve its goal, primary and secondary sources have been used. The data provided by the Kosovo Police were used as primary sources, while the data from the annual reports of the Kosovo Police and the media were used as secondary sources.

#### **4.5 Validity and reliability**

The degree to which the results are consistent over time and an accurate representation of the general population under study is called reliability, and if the results of a study can be reproduced according to a similar methodology, then the research instrument is considered reliable[8] (p. 1) (Golafshani 2003). Intentionally quantitative and qualitative research allows us to know the problem; we have used tools to ensure reliable data sources, as well as methodological instruments, such as clear and simple questions that provide respondents with relevant questions and our results with measurable indicators. Validity in qualitative research is focused through the establishment of criteria seeking research credibility, reliability, transferability, adaptability and applicability.

#### **4.6 Research Ethics**

In order for this research to fulfill the academic criteria and the principles of research ethics, we have kept the quality of the research at a high level, paying special attention to research ethics as one of the basic principles of an objective study which gives us security, objectivity, responsibility and competence. In this way, in the introduction of the request with two paragraphs we have informed the respondents about the purpose of the research, and we have also assured them that this data will be used only for this research.

### **5. Data analysis and Interpretation**

Data analysis is done through data analysis of the plan so that the data collection instrument gives us relevant information, as well as validity and reliability results. Quantitative data results are presented in a numerical format using statistical techniques such as, in our case, percentages and scales. The Microsoft Excel program was used to analyze and calculate the data. The data are presented in textual, tabular and graphical forms, while their interpretation is done by presenting the most consistent data related to the theoretical framework used in the research study, integrating the theories into our findings and reviewing the literature. The findings were analyzed and compared with previous years in terms of gender, age, family relationship, municipalities, regions and nationalities.

#### **5.1 Reported cases of domestic violence, comparison of cases over the years**

When analyzing the number of cases of domestic violence reported to the Police of the Republic of Kosovo from 2006 to 2020, we notice a diverse movement of the criminal offense. In 2006, 1371 cases were reported, then there was a decrease in reported cases until 2015, where 1038 cases were reported, but from 2016, where 1225 cases were reported, domestic violence has seen a

continuous increase, so the year 2020 has recorded the largest number of reported cases of domestic violence with 2069 cases. (see chart 1)

According to the data presented in graph 2, the criminal offense of domestic violence in 2019 increased by 382 cases or expressed as a percentage of 24.91% compared to 2018.

According to police data, domestic violence in 2019 affected almost all family relationships, where out of a total of 1978 victims, 899 (or 46%) victims were between spouses, 98 (or 5%) victims were between ex-spouses, 160 (or 8%) victims among cohabiting persons, 200 (10%) victims among father-son relationships, 140 (7%) victims among mother-son relationships, etc. (see chart 3)

Out of the total of 2069 reported cases, 937 cases or 45%, cases were between spouses, 84 cases or 4%, between ex-spouses, 147 cases or 7%, between persons who were cohabiting, 242 cases or 12%, in the middle of the father-son relationship, 155 cases or 7% in the mother-son relationship, etc. (see chart 4)

The criminal offense of domestic violence during 2019 was expressed in all police regions. So the region of Pristina was the most affected with a total of 595 cases, then Prizren with 286 cases, Peja with 249 cases, Gjakova with 210 cases, while the region of northern Mitrovica was the least affected by domestic violence with 55 cases reported. (see chart 5)

The criminal offense of domestic violence during 2020 was expressed in all police regions, while the Prishtina region was the most affected with a total of 674 cases, then Prizren with 266 cases, Peja with 264 cases, Gjakova with 239 cases, Gjilan with 213 cases, Ferizaj with 206 cases, southern Mitrovica with 140 cases, while the northern Mitrovica region was the least affected by domestic violence with 67 reported cases. (see chart 6)

Regarding the extent of the criminal offense of domestic violence during 2019 in the municipalities of Kosovo, we note that the most affected municipality was Prishtina with a total of 281 reported cases, then the municipality of Prizren with 216 cases, Peja with 153 cases, Ferizaj with 141 cases, Gjakova with 129 cases, Gjilan with 118 cases, while in the municipalities of Raniluk and Zubin Potok only 01 case of domestic violence was reported. (see chart 7)

Based on the police data, we note that the municipality of Pristina has been the most affected by domestic violence with a total of 329 cases reported, then Prizren with 201 cases, the municipality of Peja with 166 cases, Ferizaj with 152 cases, Gjakova with 148 cases, Gjilan with 126 cases, while some municipalities of the country have a fairly small number of reporting cases of domestic violence, such as the municipalities of Zubin Potok with 2 cases and the municipalities of Junik and Mamushe with 3 cases each. (see chart 8)



Based on statistical data, from domestic violence in 2019 out of a total of 1915 cases, there were a total of 1978 victims of domestic violence, of which 1593 were women, while 385 victims were men or in percentage 81% were women and 19% were men. (see chart 9)

While during 2020, almost all family members were affected. Thus, of the total of 2101 victims of domestic violence in 2020, 1632 of them were women, while 469 victims were men, or 78% were women and 22% were men. (see chart 10)

While in 2020, out of a total of 2101 victims, 1848 were Albanian, 99 Serbian victims, 47 Egyptian victims, 42 Ashkali victims, 30 Roma victims, 10 Bosnian victims, 10 Turkish victims, 06 Goran victims and 09 victims were of other ethnicities. (see chart 11)

Graph 13 shows the age most affected by domestic violence for 2019. According to the data, we can conclude that the age most affected by domestic violence was 30-40 years old with a total of 542 cases, then 20-30 years old with 516 cases, age 40-50 with 334 cases etc. (see chart 12)

According to police data, domestic violence has affected almost all ages, while the most affected was the age of 20-30 years old with 539 cases, then 30-40 years old with a total of 505 cases, the age of 40-50 years old with 372 cases, age from 50-60 with 189 cases, age 60-70 with 110 cases, age 70-80 with 54 cases and age over 80 years with 16 reported cases. (see chart 13)

During the year 2019, as a result of domestic violence, a total of 06 cases of murder occurred, of which in 03 cases the husband killed the wife, in 01 case the brother killed the brother and in 01 case the mother killed her baby. Out of the 06 cases of murders, there were 07 victims, since in one case the suspect killed his wife and daughter-in-law.

Domestic violence during 2020 has been manifested in different forms, such as through physical violence, manifested with light and serious injuries, then through psychological violence expressed through threats, harassment, intimidation, etc., then it has been manifested through sexual violence as sexual assault, but during 2020 domestic violence was also manifested through economic violence (violation of family obligations) even though there were smaller reports of this nature. During the year 2020, as a result of various forms of domestic violence, there were 13 murder cases in the family and 01 case of suicide, and there were a total 23 victims, and based on police data, we have an increase in cases of murder as a result of violence in the family compared to 2019 for 08 cases or 133.33%, because during 2019 there were 06 cases of murders in the family and 07 victims. (see table 2).

***Chart 1*** shows the movement of the Domestic Violence trend at the country level from 2006 to 2020. Based on the data presented below, we can conclude that domestic violence during this period had a varied movement, so that in the year 2006, 1371 cases were reported, then we notice a decrease in cases until 2015, where 1038 cases were reported, but from 2016, where 1225 cases

were reported, domestic violence has marked a continuous increase, so the year 2020 has marked the highest number largest number of reported cases of domestic violence with **2069** cases.

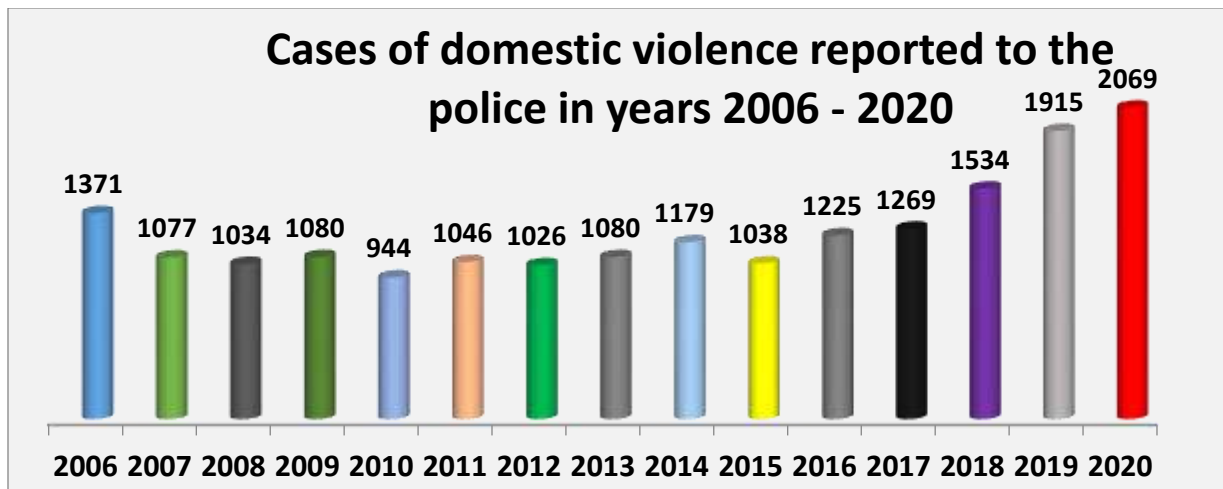


Chart 2 presents the number of criminal acts of domestic violence, reported in 2020 as well as the comparison with 2019. The data show that the year 2020 has marked an increase in cases of domestic violence reported to the Kosovo Police compared to 2019 for 154 cases or expressed as a percentage of **8.04%**.

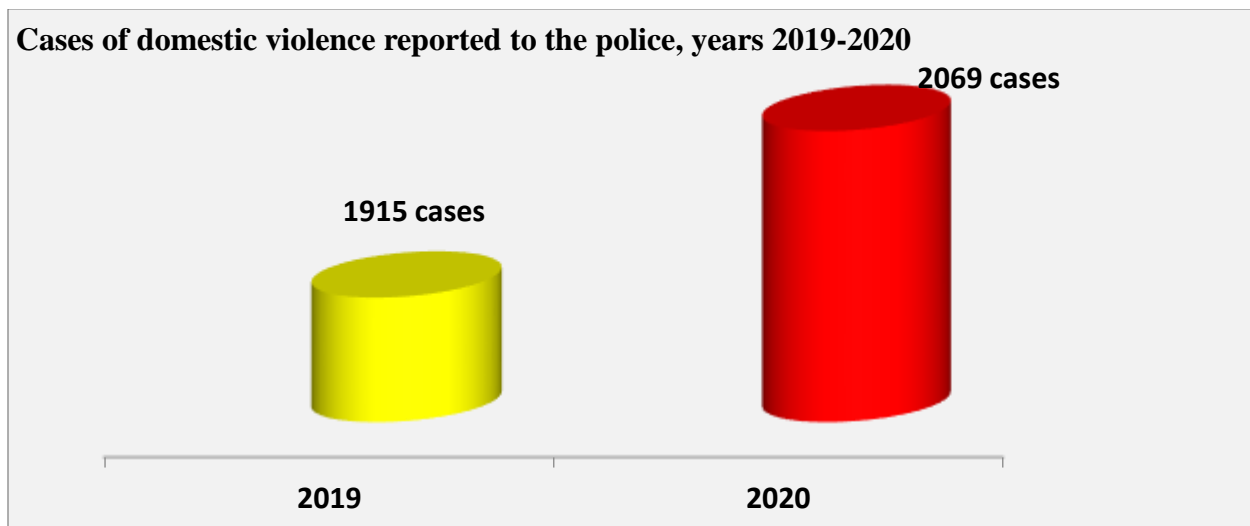
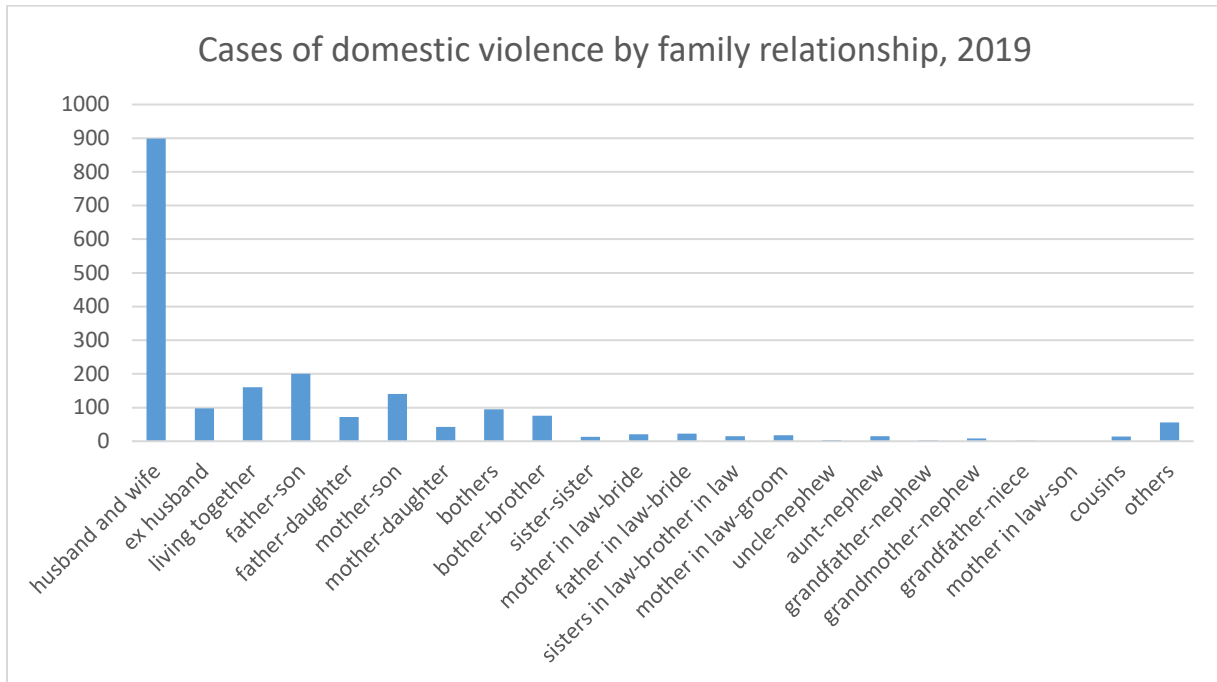
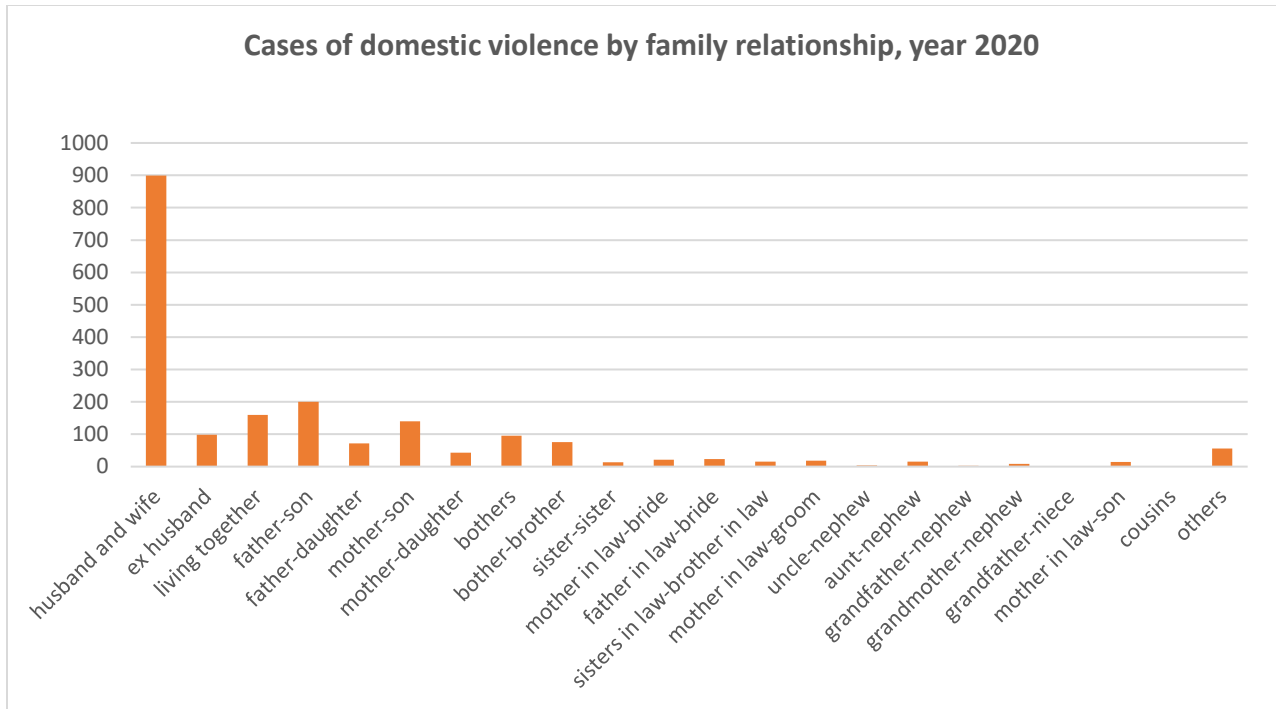


Chart 3. Presents domestic violence by family relationship, where out of a total of 1978 victims, 899 (46%) victims were between spouses, 98 (5%) victims between ex-spouses, 160 (8%) victims

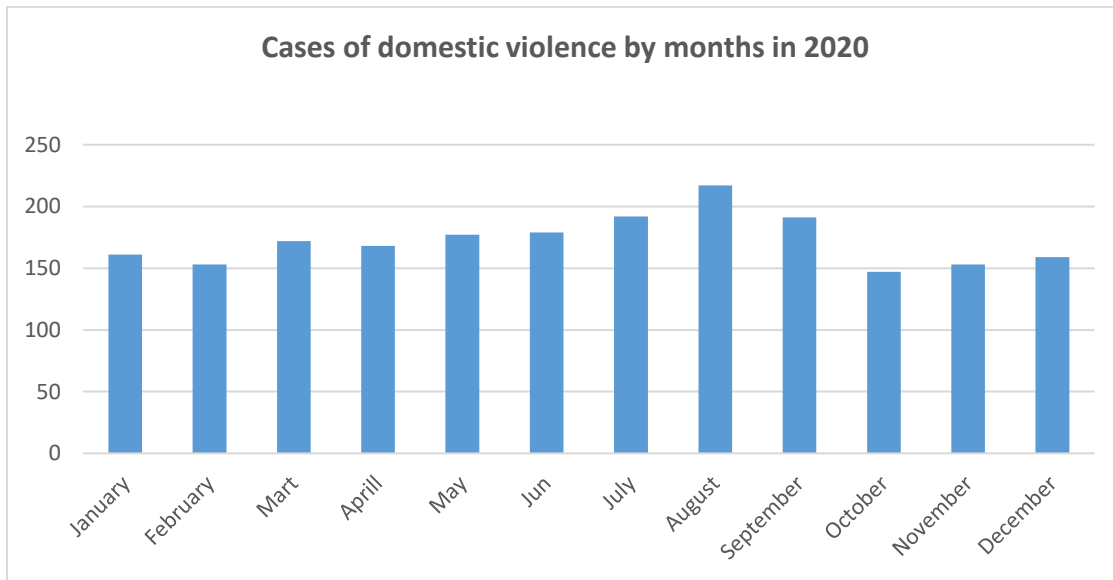
between persons who are cohabiting, 200 (10%) victims in the father-son relationship, 140 (7%) victims in the mother-son relationship, etc.



**Chart 4** presents domestic violence according to family relationship, year 2020, where out of a total of 2101 victims, 937 cases or 45%, victims were between spouses, 84 cases or 4%, victims between ex-spouses, 147 cases or 7%, victims between persons who were cohabiting, 242 cases or 12%, victims between father-son relationship, 155 cases or 7% victims in mother-son relationship, etc.

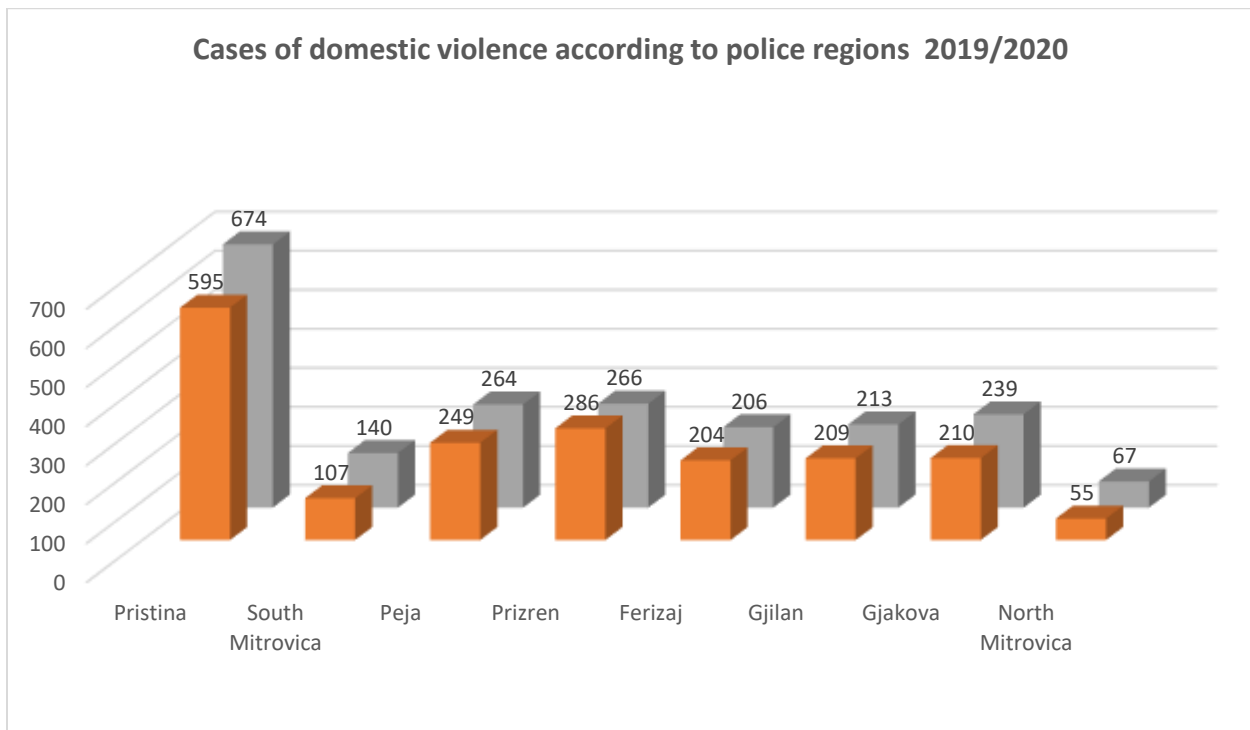


**Chart 5.** Presents the extent of Domestic Violence, according to the months in 2020. According to the data, we note that the month of August was the most affected by this criminal offense with 217 cases, then the month of July with 192 cases, the month of September with 191 cases, etc.

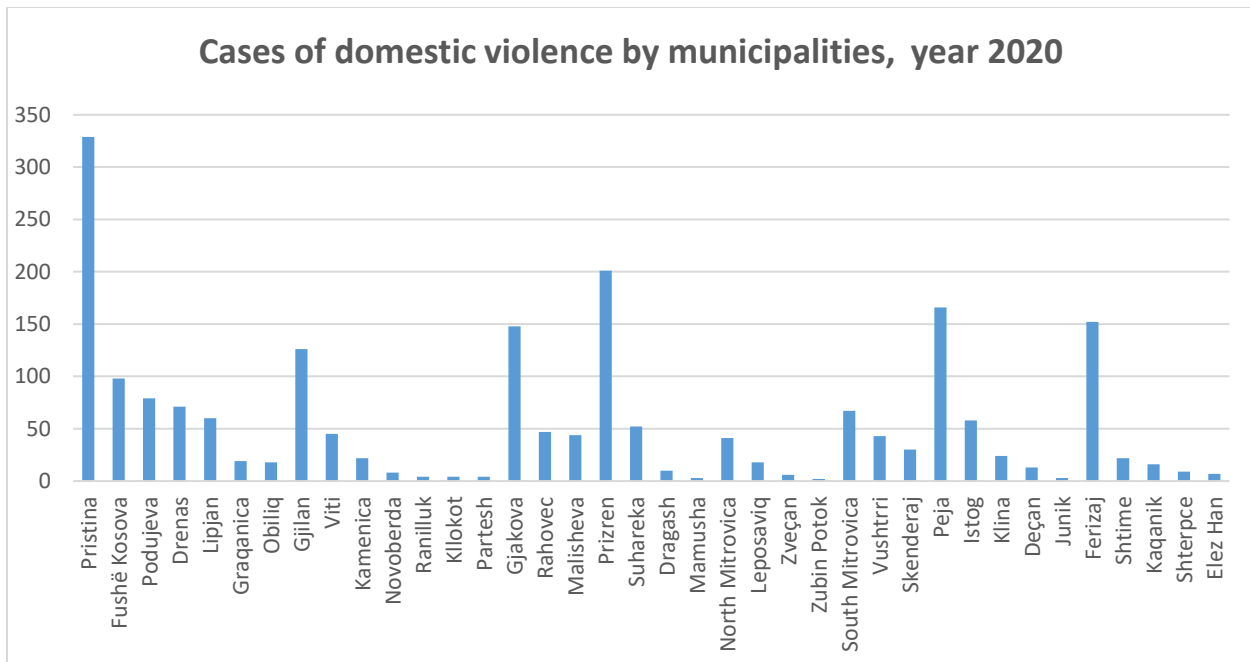


**Chart 6** presents the extent of the crime of Domestic Violence according to Police regions for 2020, as well as the comparison with 2019.

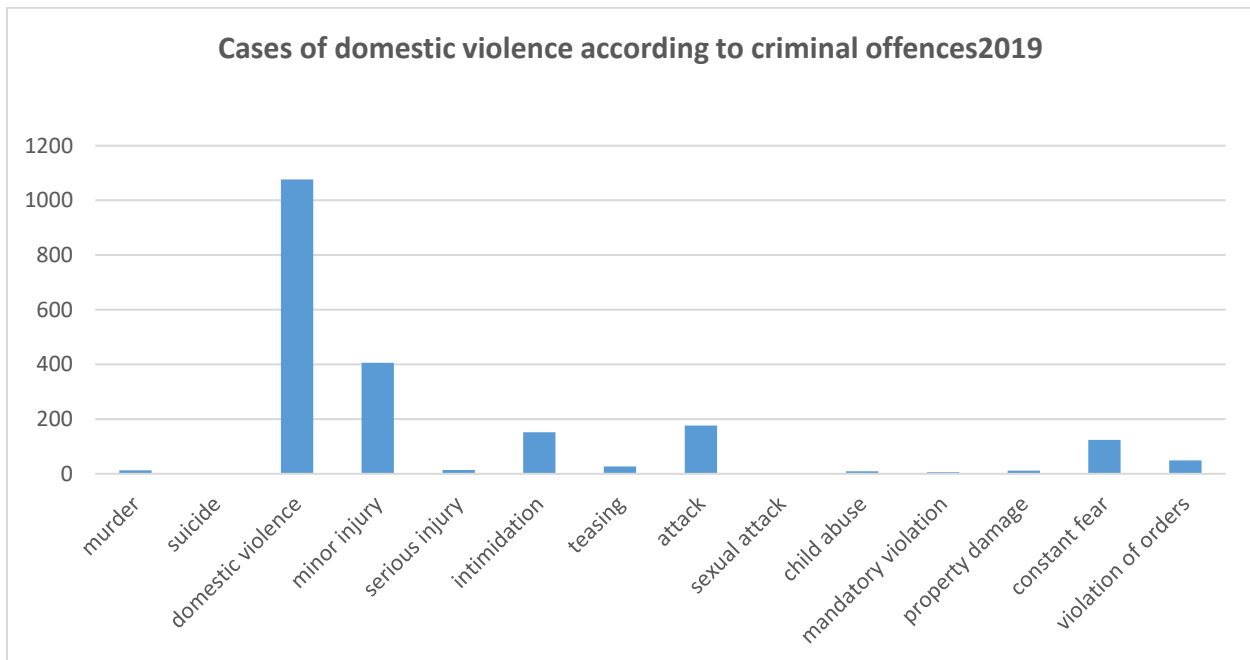
The data show that during 2020 the region of Pristina was the most affected with a total of 674 reported cases, then Prizren with 266 cases, Peja with 264 cases, Gjakova with 239 cases, Gjilan with 213 cases, Mitrovica in the south with 140 cases, while the northern Mitrovica region has been more or less affected by domestic violence with 67 reported cases. We also note that with the exception of the Prizren region, where there has been a significant decrease in reported cases, all other regions have recorded an increase in reported cases in 2020 compared to 2019.



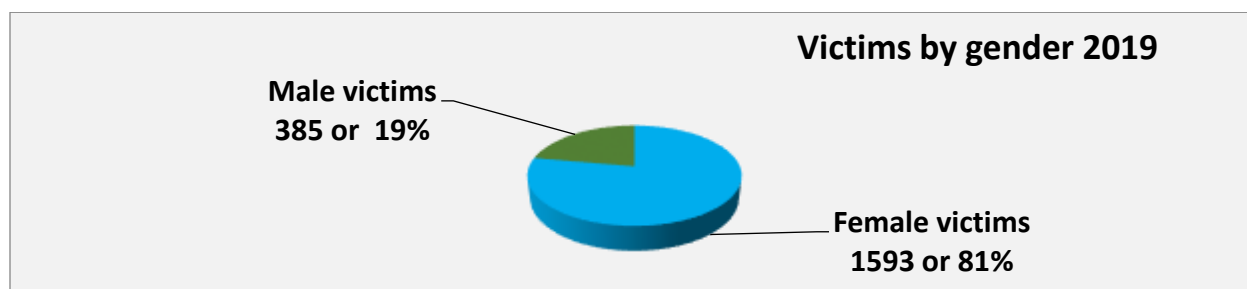
**Graph 7.** Presents the scope of the criminal offense of domestic violence according to the municipalities of the Republic of Kosovo. According to the data, we note that the municipality of Pristina is the most affected by domestic violence with a total of **329** reported cases, then Prizren with **201** cases, the municipality of Peja with **166** cases, Ferizaj with **152** cases, Gjakova with **148** cases, Gjilan with **126** cases, we also note that some municipalities of the country have a fairly small number of reporting cases of domestic violence, such as the municipalities of Zubin Potok with **2** cases and the municipalities of Junik and Mamushe with **3** cases each.



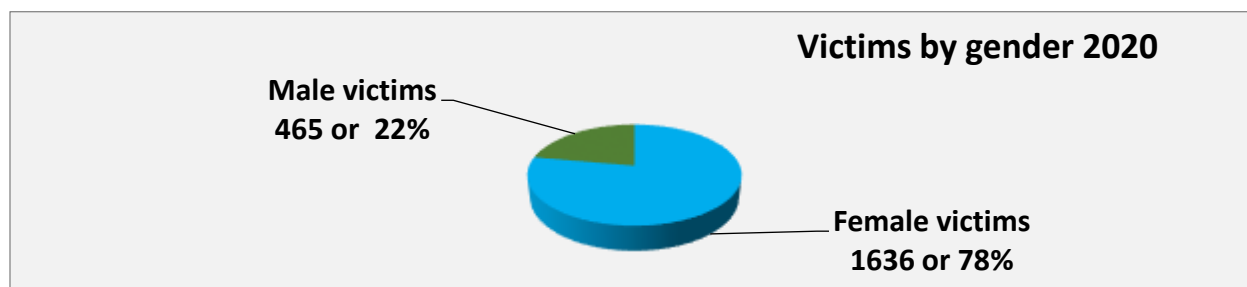
**Chart 8.** Presents the forms of manifestation of Domestic Violence during the year 2020, according to statistical data, Domestic Violence during the year 2020 was manifested in different forms, such as through **physical violence**, *through light and serious injuries*, then **through psychological** violence expressed through threats, harassment, intimidation, etc., then it was manifested through **sexual violence** such as sexual assault, but during 2020 domestic violence was also manifested through **economic violence** (violation of family obligations) even though there were more reports small of this nature.



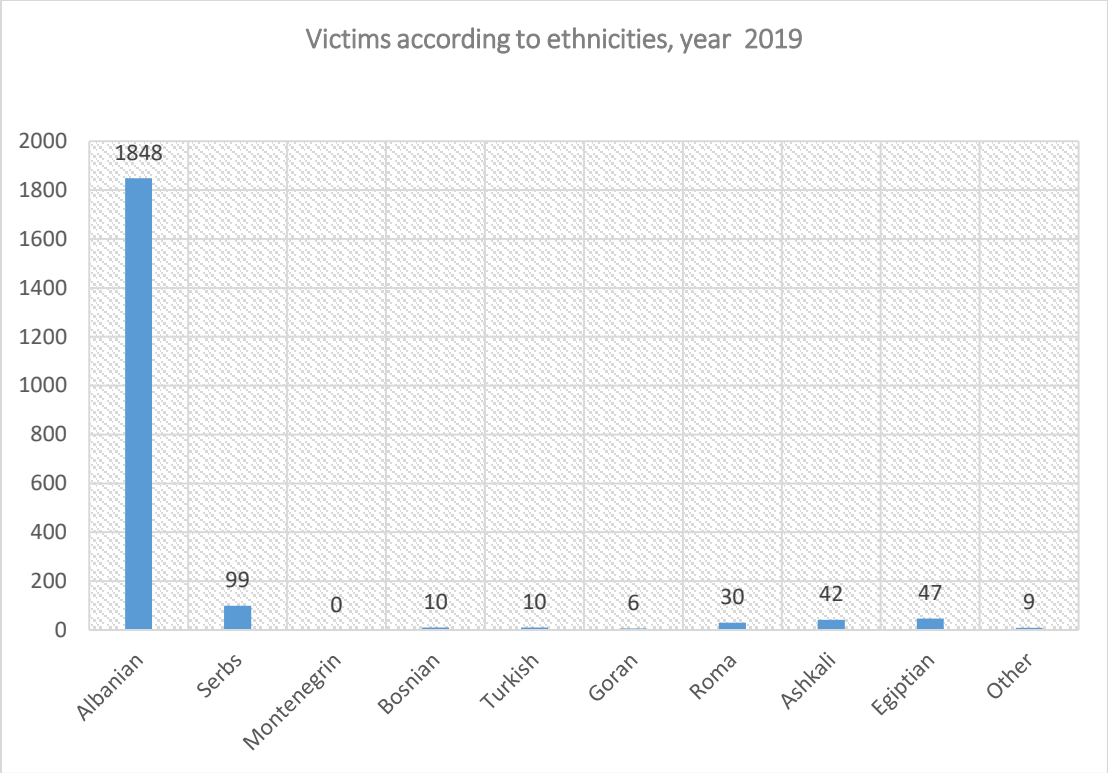
**Chart 9** presents the victims of domestic violence by gender during 2019, out of a total of 1915 cases, there were a total of 1978 victims of domestic violence, of which 1593 were women, while 385 victims were men, or in percentage 81% were women and 19% were men.



**Chart 10** presents the victims of domestic violence by gender during 2020, where out of a total of 2069 cases there were 2101 victims of domestic violence, of which 1636 victims were women, while 465 victims were men, or in percentage 78% women and 22% men.

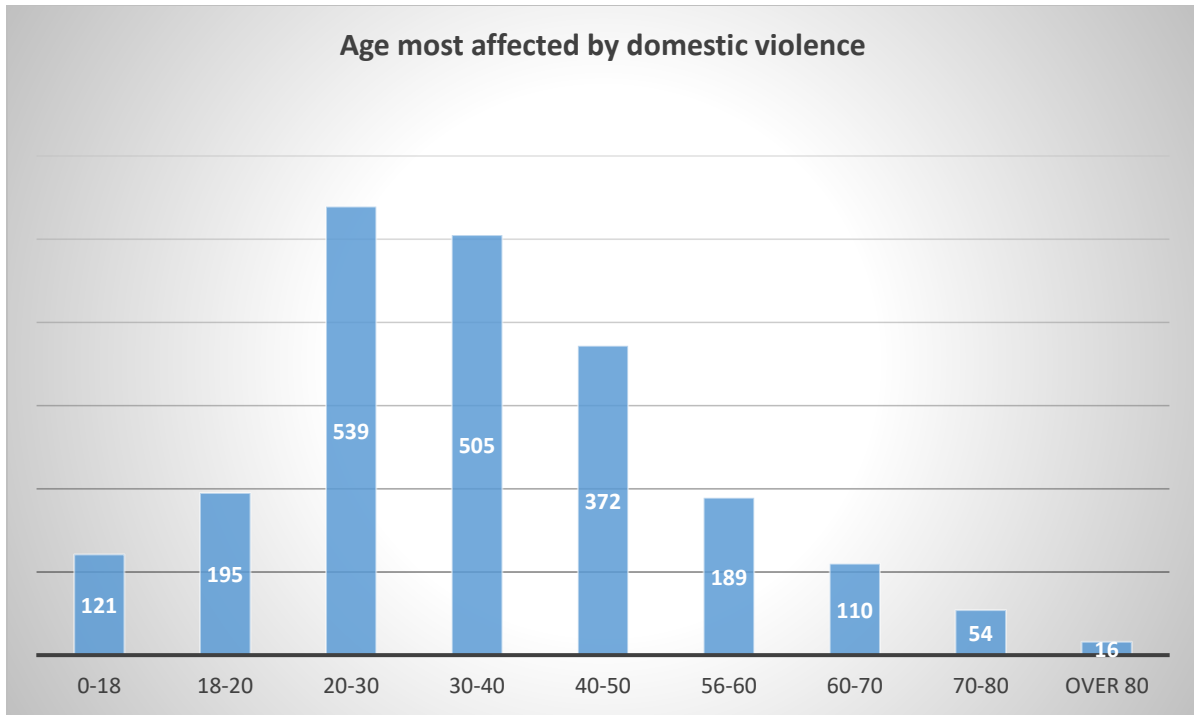


**Chart 11** presents the victims of domestic violence by ethnicity for 2020. Out of a total of 2101 victims, 1848 were Albanians, 99 Serbs, 47 Egyptians, 42 Ashkali, 30 Roma, 10 Turks, 10 Bosnians, 06 Gorans and 09 victims were other ethnicities.



**Chart 12** shows the age most affected by the criminal offense of domestic violence for 2020. According to Police data, we can conclude that the age most affected by domestic violence was the age of 20-30 years old with 539 cases, then 30-40 years old with a total of 505 cases, age 40-50 with 372 cases, age 50-60 with 189 cases, age 0-18 with 121 cases, age 60-70 with 110 cases, age 70-80 with 54 cases and age over 80 years with 16 reported cases etc.





## **6. Murders as a result of domestic violence, year 2019 - 2020**

During 2020, a total of 13 cases of murder and 01 case of suicide as a result of domestic violence were reported, and based on police data we have an increase of murder cases as a result of domestic violence compared to 2019 for 08 cases or 133.33%, because during 2019 there were 06 murder cases in the family.

Out of a total of 13 murder cases and 01 case of suicide, in 2020 there were 23 victims, while in 2019 there were 07 victims out of 06 murder cases.

In the table below, the murder cases as a result of domestic violence for the year 2020 as well as the comparison with the year 2019 are presented, in this table there is a brief description of these cases for the year 2019 and the year 2020.

**MURDERS AS A RESULT OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE 2019 - 2020**

Family relation	Murder cases 2019	Victims of murder cases 2019	Murder cases 2020	Victims of murder cases 2020
Man -woman	4 Man - woman, his daughter-in law and then himself (one case 4 victims)	5	1	2
Man-woman, 2 sons, and himself			1	4
Father - daughter, and himself			1	1
Son – father and mother			1	2
Daughter–father,mother,2 brothers, and herself			1	5
Son – father			2	2
Son – mother			1	1
Daughter – father			1	1
Brother–brother	1	1	1	1
Cousin- cousin			1	1
Person (male) – auntie’s husband			1	1
Person (male) –uncle’s wife			1	1
Mother – child	1	1		
Suicides			1	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>23</b>

<b>SWOT –Research Analysis</b>	
<b>Advantages</b> <b>There is legislation for victim protection</b> <b>Deserved punishment of the perpetrator</b> <b>Not allowing to manipulate facts</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b> Non-implementation of the legislation Deserved non-punishment of the perpetrator Disclosure of facts
<b>Opportunities</b> <b>Implementation of legislation</b> <b>Informing the general public with current legislation</b> <b>Fighting patriarchal mentality in society</b>	<b>The risks</b> Ignoring the law Failure to inform the general public with current legislation Exercising the patriarchal mentality in society

## **7. Recommendations**

- To improve the legal infrastructure related to the criminal sanctions on the perpetrators on one hand and the integration of the victims of violence on the other hand.
- To develop the dialogue methodology between the parties such as justice bodies, civil society and other parties, including best international practices.
- Government at the local level through the community safety committee to promote training activities, advice on domestic violence.
- From the bearers of responsibilities to promote as many psycho-social activities related to domestic violence as possible, the year 2020, the time of the COVID-19 pandemic showed how necessary it is to create these institutional action bodies and not only them.
- The government in strategic documents together with civil society and together with the Council for the Human Rights to promote activities related to public and moral denunciations of perpetrators on one hand and the reintegration of victims on the other hand.
- To create archived databases for the protection of data related to victims and perpetrators that will serve the parties to create a "picture" on the state of security in the family and for the future.

## **8. Conclusion**

According to the data provided by the Kosovo Police, which we have used in this paper, it can be seen that the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly influenced the increase in cases of domestic violence. Challenges faced by the Kosovo Police as an institution responsible for the physical and property protection of the citizens of Kosovo, have been of different natures since police officers were among the first to be attacked with COVID-19 due to direct contact with citizens, which has also led to virus infection. The findings of this research are a clear and reliable indicator that the comparison over the years (2006-2022) of the reported cases of domestic violence has indeed shown a significant increase.

Therefore, the security bodies must still increase their professional capacities as well as credibility for citizens in order for victims not to be afraid to report the violence inflicted on them by the perpetrators. The time of the COVID-19 pandemic itself showed how necessary this is, all these are the findings of this research presented in the above tables. Also, this research brings to the surface other findings such as: the presentation of a statistical summary of the criminal offense of domestic violence reported to the Kosovo Police in 2019. Through this report was presented the movement of the domestic violence trend from year 2006 to 2022, the extent of domestic violence during the year 2019, comparison with 2020, the extent of domestic violence by police regions and municipalities of the country during the year 2020, victims of domestic violence, victims by gender, age, ethnicities, forms of presentation of domestic violence. Then, domestic violence by family relationship, murders as a result of domestic violence for the year 2019-2020 are presented.

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# THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON THE RISE OF CYBER CRIMES AND FAKE NEWS

Kenan IDRIZAJ <sup>45</sup>

*The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has created an unpredictable and difficult situation for law enforcement agencies, especially executive enforcement agencies. When it comes to executive law enforcement, in this context there has been a great difficulty in the forces or units dealing with the fight against cybercrimes and the identification of fake news. Due to the pandemic, most companies, businesses and legal and physical persons have switched to working and acting on the digital platform. This method of work and communication has been as easy as but also dangerous. There was relief because the work activity and communication were carried out from the office, home or any other place which was suitable to achieve the goals of the organization or one's own. On the other hand, it has been dangerous due to various cyber-attacks and the theft of private or financial data. As for fake news or known, this phenomenon has been very pronounced especially with regard to state security in general, due to the distribution of fake news through digital platforms, social media, etc.*

*Therefore, in this scientific paper, we will present the main problems and phenomena faced by the law enforcement agencies, especially the specialized units in crime prevention and identifying and addressing fake news.*

**Keywords:** *COVID-19 pandemic, cybercrime, fake news, cyber security, crime prevention*

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## 1. Introduction

The situation created by the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, which gripped the world since the beginning of 2020, has produced crises: health, economic, social, security, political at the national and international levels. As for cybercrime and the spread of fake news, this phenomenon has been of a special level and has caused great consequences both at the national and international level, affecting physical and legal persons, private companies, institutions and beyond. During the pandemic, in all countries of the world as well as in Kosovo, various crimes have occurred, but the most prominent have been cybercrimes, which, in addition to material damage, these types of crimes have caused great economic damage and have influenced cyber security. According to the authors of the "Global Initiative", in their research report they noted that the pandemic has affected organized crime in four ways: some organized crime activities have been limited due to social distancing and travel restrictions; the attention of the police and politicians has been concentrated on fighting the pandemic and its prevention, while some criminal groups have used this vacuum to increase their activities; some criminal groups have smelled the health sector for the purpose of profiting due to situation and cybercrime has emerged as a risk area, which may have long-term consequences in the growth of criminal markets (Global Initiative, 2020). During the pandemic, there have been continuous publications on social networks and in some print media about the situation that has reigned around the world. Among these publications, there were also fake news which created panic and insecurity among the population. All these publications with false content have caused insecurity among the population due to the news that has been circulating continuously and that in some cases the publisher of these news has been unknown. All these problems have arisen because the entire population of the world has received news using electronic devices such as computers, laptops and mobile phones. During the pandemic, in the Republic of Kosovo, the population has largely used these devices and the Internet. According to the Kosovo Agency of Statistics, it results that in 2019, 93.2% of households in Kosovo had access to the Internet from their homes, from various devices, while 6.1% of households declared that they did not have access to the Internet from any type of device. Access to the Internet was mainly from a mobile phone, followed by a laptop/portable computer, desktop computer, tablet, etc. (Kosovo Agency of Statistic, 2019). During the pandemic, there was a large number of different news that were published on different social networks. In the year, it turns out that in 2020, 96.4% of households in Kosovo had access to the Internet from their homes, from any device, while 3.4% of households declared that they did not have access to the Internet from any type of device. Access to the internet has mainly been from a mobile phone, followed by a laptop/portable computer, desktop computer, tablet, etc. (Kosovo Statistics Agency, 2020) and in 2021 it turns out that 96.1% of households in Kosovo had access to the Internet from their homes, from any device, while 2.1% of households declared that they did not have access to the Internet from any type of device. Access to the Internet has mainly been from a mobile phone, followed by a desktop computer, laptop, tablet, etc. (Kosovo Statistics Agency, 2021). Meanwhile, the use of the Internet to buy or order goods and services via the Internet was 23.1%. In 2020 and 2021 it is observed a greater increase

in the use of the Internet by the Kosovar population. Due to this phenomenon, the increase in the use of the Internet, it is not possible to know the number of cases of crimes committed through the Internet and therefore the numbers remain obscure because most citizens do not have proper knowledge of cyber security. According to these statistics, it is observed that the citizens of the Republic of Kosovo, during the pandemic, have largely used electronic devices and the possibility that they have been damaged economically or financially from hackers who deal with these criminal offenses.

## **2. Cyber Crimes**

Marco Gercke made a distinction between "cybercrimes" and "computer crimes" In this context, a distinction must be made between these two types of crimes. Cybercrime is narrower than computer-related crimes, as it must involve a computer network. Whereas, computer-related crimes also cover those acts that are not related to a network, but only affect independent computer systems (Gecke, 2012). According to Aldo Shkëmbi, cybernetics is a scientific branch that deals with the creation of diagrams for automated systems (Shkëmbi, 2015). It is classified as the science of governance and communication between living beings and machines. The word cybernetics is derived from the Greek word "kibernetē" which means the helmsman of the ship, starting from an analogy between the helmsman and the ruler or leader. Cybercrimes are defined as: Criminal offenses committed against individuals or groups of individuals with the aim of gaining economic value, damaging the victim's image or causing physical or mental harm directly or indirectly, using modern technology or otherwise defined as: performing actions through a command system, where the goal is profit through fraud, breaking security systems, exploitation, etc. (Shkëmbi, 2015). Criminologist Thomas J. Holt has emphasized that it is distinct in that it offers a place for new offenses by intertwining with the commission of existing criminal offenses and always according to him, in the criminological aspect, cyber deviations are behaviors that may not be illegal, but they are certainly against legal values and norms. Cybercrimes occur when an author/perpetrator uses special knowledge of cyberspace to commit a crime, and in addition to cybercrimes, such as data theft, economic crimes, fraud, etc., through the cybernetic network, they can commit cyberterrorism, which the use of information technology, vital state institutions can be attacked causing serious damage to achieve political and ideological convictions of a particular terrorist group or individual (Holt, 2018). According to the Interpol report, during the year 2020, 2/3 of the European Union countries have reported significantly increasing cases of malicious domains in which the keywords "COVID" or "CORONA" were registered, targeting to take advantage of the increase in people who click on their website portals related to the information about "Covid-19". Suspects who commit cybercrimes have taken advantage of the pandemic by deploying "ransomware" against the vital infrastructure of health institutions and responsible institutions that have been responsible for preventing and combating the "COVID-19" virus, cloning the official websites of governments of the European Union in order to steal sensitive data of official and natural persons, which data can be used for further cyber-attacks. There have been numerous

attacks using the "Phishing" method, to illegally access computer systems (Interpol, 2020a). According to the Interpol additional report of 2020, worldwide, there have been mostly cyber-attacks using the following methods: "Malicious domains" in the Albanian language: "domains with harmful intent", "online scams and phishing", "online scams and phishing", "data-harvesting malware" collecting digital data and "destructive malware-ransomware" (Interpol, Global Landscape on Covid-19 Cyber Threat, 2020b) In the report of the Kosovo Police, during the pandemic, in the Republic of Kosovo, the most pronounced were cybercrimes as follows: Computer viruses - Ransomware, business frauds through the Internet, frauds on websites and social networks (Policia e Kosovës, 2020).

## **2.1 Types of Cybercrimes during the Pandemic**

With the advancement of information technology, the method of committing criminal offenses has also advanced. In our case, when we talk about cybercrimes, a computer, laptop or any electronic device such as smartphones is used as a tool for committing the crime. To commit the criminal offense, the target of this attack is the computer or electronic device. So in this case the computer attacks the computer. The importance of this is who the person behind this work. The person/s who commit these types of crimes are the people who have knowledge and are skilled in information technology, have sufficient knowledge in cyberspace and its use for their purposes. During the Pandemic, the FBI has reported a 300% increase in cybercrimes that have been reported, cyberattacks against the "CLOUD" infrastructure have increased 630% between January and April 2020, in April 2020, the company "GOOGLE", blocked over 18 million email addresses, "Malware" and "Phishing", and half a million user accounts of the "ZOOM" platform were stolen and sold on a "Dark Web" forum in April 2020. Hackers, they committed this act of stealing these accounts through the "Open Bullet" program (Fishka, 2021).

## **2.2 Domains for malicious purposes "Malicious domains"**

During the "Covid-19" pandemic, an increased number of websites have been observed which have had harmful purposes. Cybercriminals have managed to exploit the created situation and benefit from this phenomenon. During the pandemic, the issue of the pandemic has been topical on the Internet. Words like "coronavirus", "corona-virus", "covid19" and "COVID-19" have appeared on a large number of domains. Among them there were Internet domains that were legitimate, but cybercriminals managed to build thousands of sites that were for bad purposes. In addition, there has been a large increase in web pages and applications that have the pretext that they will protect people from the pandemic, such as: [www.coronavirus.com](http://www.coronavirus.com), [www.coronaantivirus.com](http://www.coronaantivirus.com), etc. (Khan.A., et al, 2022)



### 2.3 Cyber Fraud "Online Scam"

What is cyber fraud? Cyber fraud or digital fraud is: any type of fraud through the electronic address "e-mail", various websites, "chatrooms", announcements on websites such as: employment, health issues, buying or selling online, etc. Cyber fraud includes: email called "spam" (unwanted email and "spyware", identity theft, "phishing" and "internet banking fraud (Australian Federal Police, 2020). Criminals can engage in financial fraud, offering fraudulent investment opportunities in order to engage in fraud/phishing schemes, as well as malicious or fraudulent cybercrimes, fake charity fundraisers and various medical scams, targeting innocent victims, criminals trying to profit from the pandemic, exploiting people in urgent need of care (Shoqata e Bankave të Kosovës, 2021). Cybercriminals have used different methods to commit this type of crime. To their victims, they have sent various investment links encouraging people to invest in fictitious companies perhaps to gain advantage in the investments and assets of the particular company due to the bankruptcy of the pandemic, in addition, they have sent links through the Internet, maybe to sell various devices or medications that cure this type of flu, or have asked them to pay "online" for various services such as medical etc. (Staffordshire Police, 2020). The other method of committing these crimes has been to use the generosity of certain persons by inviting them to contribute to the healing of persons who do not have the financial means to heal, and by encouraging and inviting them to make a donation for poor people and those isolated due to the pandemic, the victims of these cases have made banking transactions "online", in the accounts of fictitious companies (County of Santa Clara, 2021).

### 2.4 Data Theft "Online Phishing"

Data theft or "Online Phishing" is a word with several meanings. For this activity, the researchers of this issue or phenomenon, Usha Mary Sharma and his colleagues, explain that the word "phishing" means brand fraud, swallowing or receiving digital data, cyber-attack, etc. (Sharma, M. U., et al., 2015). But generally speaking, the objective of the perpetrator of this crime is to "succeed" in deceiving the victims to get their password or bank account number or any additional information that may be important (Sharma, M. U., et al., 2015). The method of committing this crime is when the suspect of this crime creates fake web pages or links that direct the victim to a system controlled by the suspect, from where the victim unwittingly downloads a software that is maliciously dedicated in which case, the victim gives his personal and digital data to the suspect through the application or software which appears legitimate and trustworthy (Al-Qatani, A. F. & Cresci, S., 2021). Phishing-like software types are: Pharming: Going one step further than phishing, pharming uses malware to redirect unwary Internet users to versions of fake websites where they unknowingly enter their personal information: **Keylogging**. This type of malware (or to be more specific, spyware) secretly records everything you type, capturing your account information and other personal details and **Sniffing**: If you are connected to a public Wi-Fi network

-Insecure and unencrypted Wi-Fi, hackers can steal your data by sniffing your Internet traffic with special tools, these cases happen when we are connected to public WIFI (KFOR, 2022).

## **2.4 Digital Data Harvesting "data-harvesting malware and Ransomware"**

Malware is defined as a dangerous application/virus that is intended to damage electronic devices that have access to the Internet, such as personal and company ones. This type of virus can lead to the leakage of important information, both private and company. To carry out these acts, hackers use the mobile phone as a target to attack it through "phishing" and "spam" e-mails. Electronic devices can be infected by this virus at any time as long as we are connected to the Internet. During the pandemic, cybercriminals have used maps and websites containing the words "CORONAVIRUS" to distribute "Trojan" viruses. These E-mails infected with this type of virus were distributed through the electronic address "spam email" (Chigada, J. & Madzinga, R., 2021). During the month of April 2020, the company "GOOGLE" has blocked 18 million emails with "Malware" and "Phishing" content. The content of such emails contained attachments that distributed malware and ransomware or sent to fake pages to collect user credentials. The content was worded in such a way that they encouraged users to visit websites that the attackers used to collect valuable data, such as usernames and passwords, credit card information, and other personal information from the targets (Venkatesha, S., et al., 2021). The definition of "Ransomware" is the version of the "malware" virus but with a different variant. The term version refers to the same "malware" program, which itself contains the same or modified version and is a program with different features. Whereas, the term variant is described as a separate and different virus of the "ransomware" virus family (IBM Security, 2022). As we mentioned above, these have been the most frequent methods of cybercrimes in Europe and in the world. Because of these cybercrimes, great economic damage has been caused to individuals, businesses, corporations and private and state organizations. Investigating and preventing these crimes is a complex and not easy matter for law enforcers, as it requires an entire army of professionals and experts in this field.

## **3. Study of Cases of Cybercrimes Committed during the COVID-19 Pandemic**

In continuation of this paper, some of the cases that occurred during the pandemic will be analyzed and studied.

### **3.1 Cyber and Computer Crimes in the Republic of Kosovo and Albania**

In 2020, the Kosovo Police by order of the Special Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of Kosovo, the Directorate for the Investigation of Organized Crime, namely the Sector for the Investigation

of Cyber Crimes, during a joint investigation with the German authorities, managed to arrest 9 people, citizens Kosovars for the criminal offense of fraud through the Internet. These suspects, through computer systems, have communicated through e-mails and telephones with the victims, mainly foreign citizens, who have deceived them and then forced them to send them amount money in their bank account (Shefkiu, 2020). In another case, the Kosovo Police, on its official website, has published the arrest of a person for the criminal offense under the suspicion of having committed the criminal offense of "Issuing blank or fake checks and misuse of bank or credit cards". The suspect, who now are arrested, is suspected to have illegally, by abusing the position and trust of the customers, stolen the bank card data of the customers who made purchases in the store where the suspect worked as a manager, and then these data he had used by making purchases of cryptocurrencies on an online cryptocurrency platform. The suspect photographed the bank cards at the moment when the customers gave the card to the cashier to make payment, in some cases the suspect took the bank card from the cashier and secretly took pictures of the cards on both sides with his phone in order to use these data for material benefits in an illegal manner (Policia e Kosovës, 2022).

### 3.2 Cybercrimes in the Republic of Albania

According to the Statistical report of the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Albania, regarding the cyber-crimes reported in this country, the data are as follows;

Category	Month					
	March 2017	March 2018	March 2019	March 2020	February 2021	March 2021
Cyber Crimes	21	15	11	6	30	37
Criminal Offences of Information Technology	16	9	6	3	20	23
Criminal Offences committed through the comptuer system	6	6	4	3	10	14

**Table 1. Analysis of Criminal Offenses of Cybercrime in the Republic of Albania**

During the month of March 2021, the number of criminal offenses of Computer Crime has increased by 21 more cases compared to the month of March 2020, there is also an increase of 7 cases compared to the month of February 2021. Criminal offense "Criminal offense in the field of Technology Information", during the month of March 2021 there was an increase of 20 more offenses compared to the month of March 2020 and compared to the previous month there was an increase of 3 cases. Criminal offenses "Criminal offenses committed through the computer system", during the month of March 2021 has marked an increase of 11 cases compared to the

month of March 2020, there is also an increase of 4 more cases compared to the month of February 2021 (Ministria e Punëve të Brendëshme, 2021)

The State Police of Albania has destroyed a network that dealt with this cybercrime activity, where they managed to arrest 9 people who were involved in fraud with electronic addresses through the portal of the social website "Facebook". Through this criminal offense, the suspects managed to benefit €38,000 (Gazeta Si, 2021). Another case is when the law enforcers have caught a criminal network of cybercrime which happened in the Republic of Albania. An extensive operation led by Albanian law enforcement, in particular the unit for the investigation of cybercrimes, has led to the arrest of 4 Albanian and African citizens who had created an online fraud network, which directed the banking transactions of several commercial entities to the accounts of theirs. The cybercrime is committed through a method known as phishing, or rather a type of payment fraud through electronic mail. These nationals, together with other nationals located outside of Albania, controlled e-mail communications between customers and commercial entities. The suspects managed to earn 4 million euros in cash. The accused had opened fictitious business entities and bank accounts with forged documents as entity administrators. Once the monetary values were transferred to the accounts that these citizens had opened, they were withdrawn and sent to other countries. The defrauded subjects came from different countries, among others the USA, Germany, Great Britain, Turkey, Switzerland and Belgium (A2 CNN, 2021). Through these crimes in the Republic of Kosovo, over a period of time, cybercriminals have managed to steal significant amounts of money which have been investigated by the police of both countries, but what is the real number of these crimes and how many individuals, private and state companies, have been harmed by these types of crimes, which cases have not been reported, perhaps due to the lack of knowledge of being harmed by this crime.

#### **4. Fake News**

Fake is a type of yellow journalism or propaganda, which contains intentional misinformation or lies spread through traditional press, traditional audiovisual broadcasts and online social media. Fake news is published with the goal of financial or political gain, often using sensational, exaggerated or shamelessly headlines that grab the attention of public opinion. In the classic definition, "fake news" is fiction, lies, propaganda or disinformation that is used to get an audience (portals looking for clicks), but also to tarnish the reputation of individuals, different ethnic groups, social groups, organizations, etc. (Autoriteti i Mediave Audiovizive, 2021) Human society is going through a strange transition, where fear of nuclear attacks has transformed into fear of deception and manipulation through fake news. Since the appearance of the first cases of COVID-19 until now, in all countries, in addition to the challenge of dealing with this infection, there is also the concern of dealing with fake news about this pandemic. Fake news is defined as "False information that purports to be news that the author knows to be false and spreads it for the purpose of political

influence or financial gain for himself or others." However, fake news is not necessarily spread only by the media, social networks or individuals intentionally, as it can happen that a fake news is spread without the spreader knowing that it is such (Democracy Plus, 2021). According to the organization "Democracy Plus", which in their research summarized the main issue that the myths about the origin of COVID-19, with the discovery of the anti-covid vaccine, space has also been created for the spread of false news about the side effects of the vaccine (Democracy Plus, 2021). Even Kosovo has not been affected by this misinformation. Some of the comments on the website of the National Institute of Public Health are: "don't lie because you can't even protect yourself with this vaccine", "the vaccine destroys your future", "who guarantees that there are no consequences if you take it?", etc. In addition to comments of this type, anti-vaccine groups have been formed on the Facebook social network, which call for non-vaccination. One of these groups is called 'vaccine discussions'. Most of the profiles in this group are fictitious profiles and it is not clear who is behind them. Groups of this type have a membership of about one thousand people and, in addition to the videos and photos that are distributed that show the violent vaccination that is done to people in different countries of the world, in this group there is also a call to avoid information from the media, looking for other information alternatives (Democracy Plus, Fake News Threat of Democracy, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, 2019). According to the "National Democratic Institute", in their research "Monitoring Information Integrity Disorder in Kosovo" from March 2020 to February 2021, about 35,899 articles were posted, of which 3,613 posts in online media have content with information of disorder. These articles and posts generated 28,728,270 clicks and 81,777 shares on the "Facebook" social network. A web portal, published in the Albanian language with over 1,244,000 followers, shared an article on its Facebook page that falsely claimed to have a new cure that can be injected inside the human body and stop COVID-19 within 24 hours. The post had a reach of 668,700+ and two shares on social media. In Kosovo during the months of September and October 2020, on the Facebook social network, there was a news that showed that the "PCR" test only detects the infection but not by who caused it, this type of post has been shared 108 times on this network social, while 111,000 people have clicked on it. Another fake news shared on Facebook claimed that people infected with COVID-19 were forcibly placed in hospital rooms and killed, this post has been shared 890 times, and 83,000 people have clicked on it, COVID-19 is a bacteria and the virus causes blood clotting-thrombosis which has been shared 742 times and there is no data about viewership, online news portals have shared the news: doctors have said that the corona virus is a seasonal flu which has been shared 735 times and is viewed by 653 people, people who snore in their sleep are 3 times more likely to die from "COVID-19", it has been shared 92 times and has been viewed by 7269 people, face masks reduce oxygen in the blood and there is the risk of carbon dioxide poisoning which has been shared 1,124 times and viewed by 300,000 people. During the period of December 2020 and February 2021, on Facebook, fake news such as: the vaccine contains parts of monkeys and rats, blood clots of aborted babies and parts of rats containing human organs, aluminum and mercury is shared 556 times, no viewership data available (National Democratic Institute, 2021). During the "COVID-19" pandemic around the world, various types of fake news were spread

through electronic means in electronic newspapers, social networks, etc. For this reason, on February 15, 2020, the Director General of the World Health Organization of the United Nations, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, said at the Munich Conference in Germany "We are not fighting the pandemic, but we are fighting the infodemic" (WHO, 2020). An "Infodemic" is or are information, some accurate and some inaccurate, that occur during an epidemic. This information spreads among people in an epidemic-like manner, through digital and physical information systems. This type of information sharing makes it difficult for people to verify information. During epidemics, people need more accurate information in order to adapt to the situation and environment and to protect themselves, family and community against infection. "Infodemic", can have four topics, the main area in which people look for reliable information in which false information, misinformation and rumors are placed, they are: the cause and origin of the disease; symptoms of the disease and patterns of how it is transmitted; its treatments which are available, practice and cure and the effect of the intervention of health institutions against this disease. These four issues require the addition of the fifth point: coordination, management and verification of the distribution of reliable information (WHO, 2020). During the pandemic, in addition to fake news, conspiracies theories were also spread which were quite alarming and were talked about by the citizens of our country, which we have heard in various parties in the family, society, etc., and we have read them in various portals. Throughout the pandemic, trends in the Western Balkans mirrored those circulating elsewhere in Europe and around the world. Conspiracy theories depicting the COVID-19 virus as a weapon in the superpower race abounded around the world and had the same effect of casting doubt on calls for vaccination and measures to manage the pandemic. Disinformation and misinformation of various forms appeared to shape the public's response to the pandemic, placed unprecedented pressure on beleaguered health sectors, and added to political uncertainty and confusion. During this time, researchers and fact-checkers in the Western Balkans observed the emergence of a geopolitical pattern among the region's audiences, with the public open to particular theories based on their ideological orientation and affiliation, which further polarized and antagonized societies in word. Across the Balkans, the most popular conspiracy theories revolved around the origin of the virus. The vast majority of the public in Albania, Kosovo, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and North Macedonia believed that the COVID-19 virus was produced in a Chinese laboratory or was the work of the pharmaceutical industry. Other popular conspiracy theories included Bill Gates' microchip injections for population control and the 5G network. In addition to widespread conspiracy theories linking the origin of the virus to the 5G network or Bill Gates or anti-Semitic prejudices, politically motivated disinformation against the European Union was spread from Russia. A large part of the negative narratives about COVID-19 were used to portray the EU as ineffective and dysfunctional, and the EU's achievements through a unified response as ridiculous (Balaj, Sh. & Perteshi. S., 2022). According to Erlis Çela, addressing the impact of misinformation and conspiracy theories through media and information education gives a good definition of why people believe in fake news, misinformation and conspiracy theories, he says: "In general, it is thought that people are

inclined to believe in conspiracies because of their distrust of authority. This can include state leaders, scientists, doctors and professional media" (Çela, 2021).

## **5. Conclusion**

During the pandemic, almost all of humanity was connected to each other digitally. In addition to changing the way of living, acting and working, the pandemic also changes the method of committing crime. The connection of humanity in this form creates a large space in the commission of cybercrimes. Cybercrimes are kind of the most dynamic forms of crime. The people who commit these crimes are people who easily adapt to any situation. By easily adapting to these situations, it is easy for these people to change their way of acting, adapting to any way that brings benefits in money and in achieving their goals. Considering that the digital platform is endless, it is very easy for these people to hide behind their electronic devices and use different "IP" addresses just to escape detection. One of the main factors that has influenced the increase in cybercrimes during the pandemic is the great use of the Internet. This large-scale use of the Internet by the population around the world has created great opportunities for cybercriminals who have taken advantage of humanity's lack of knowledge in the use of electronic devices and lack of knowledge about cyber security. As a result of these issues, they have been damaged financially and in other forms such as; fraud, theft of personal data, or theft of various valuable information from businesses, companies, non-governmental organizations in a financial way and other forms such as; theft of personal data, or various valuable information from businesses, companies, non-governmental and governmental organizations, etc. The damages that have been caused through cybercrime to the potential victims can be irreparable damages that can cost a lot, both morally in the violation of their privacy or the theft of private and intimate photographs or recordings, as well as financially. Due to the isolation of the civilian population, around the world, they have mostly used social websites as a means of information. The use of these social sites has influenced the distribution of fake news because most users have not had the knowledge and skills to confirm the news and track or verify it in a safe source. The spread of fake news has had an impact on all walks of life. During the pandemic, people read and spread information and rumors in an uncertain manner, which in most cases were unconfirmed. State governments have been key factors in these issues, in combating, preventing and informing about the dangers and consequences of these crimes. But, no governments around the world have been prepared to create strategies that could prevent these phenomena. Law enforcement agencies have mostly been focused on maintaining public order and peace and keeping the population in isolation in order to prevent the spread of the pandemic and because of this phenomenon they have not been able to prevent or even fight with punctuality and efficiency these phenomena. The damages and consequences that we experienced during the pandemic are still unknown. But the pandemic has created new ways of living and working which can last. For example, one of the methods of working and studying online may remain in use for a long time. We can say that the world after the pandemic cannot be the same. How willing we are to experience and manage a situation like the "COVID-19" pandemic, is an

issue that must be studied in detail by all Governments around the world and the creation of different policies and strategies in order to control the situation during a pandemic and creating the conditions and protection of digital platforms in order to protect the population and create a safe and calm environment. Since the future belongs to Artificial Intelligence, then all humanity must be careful and pay attention to the awareness of the use of electronic devices such as computers, laptops and smart phones and be more responsible in receiving and distributing information through social networks.



# CUSTOMS AND THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON ITS INTEGRITY

Mentor GASHI<sup>46</sup>

*This paper aims to investigate the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic in the Kosovo Customs. Just as throughout the world the COVID-19 pandemic has widely caused its consequences, its effect has also been observed in Kosovo, respectively in customs as an institution.*

*In order to investigate the effect of COVID-19, we have taken consideration several variables that are also among the main or most important indicators that show the performance of the Customs, such as: the total customs revenues, the number of customs offenses, the amount of fines, the detected value of evasions according to criminal reports, the value of confiscated goods, the prevention of derivatives imported in the name of energy sources and other activities in the prevention of criminal activities border and within the territory.*

*But at the same time, we have also identified the challenges that have appeared from the pandemic. We have reviewed the variables for the last few years. The challenges that appeared during the pandemic period were, the incomplete participation of customs officers in the workplace, this as a result of infections of customs officers, self-isolation from infection of family members or persons in contact or reduction in order to protect against infection. where according to the evidence, about 50% of infected customs officers have been registered, therefore this has influenced the slowdown of activities, especially in 2020.*

*In 2020, as a result of the pandemic, the most important customs performance indicators were also hit, such as the drop customs revenues, the drop in the number of fines, and the drop in the amount of fines. But immediately one year later, in 2021, despite the continued presence of the pandemic and continuing with reduced staff, Kosovo Customs not only mitigated the negative effect it had a year earlier, but has raised much higher the performance indicators that are among the important customs, such as:*

*Revenues from customs have risen from 1,055 to 1,370 billion, thus for 318 million or in percent over 30% more, surpassing 2019 as a normal year before the pandemic, the number of detected offenses has increased from 1,087 to 1,774 or in percent for 63%, the amount of fines has increased from 0.4 to 1.3 million or in percent 230%, the value of evasions detected according to criminal reports from 2.5 to 2.7 million or in percent 8%, the value of confiscate goods from 1.35 to 1.36 million, operational plans realized from 54 to 212 such, about 4 million for a years have been*

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<sup>46</sup> Kosovo Customs

*detected and prevented from the import of derivatives with incorrect declaration in the name of the energy source and other activities.*

*The results show that despite the impact of the pandemic, the quick response of the Kosovo Customs has led to a significant improvement in the performance indicators, not only the improvement from the previous year but also if we compare with the other two years before the pandemic. Therefore, the improvement of the performance in 2021 and for part of 2022, not only did not allow the integrity to be compromised, but the institutional integrity of the Kosovo Customs was raised even further.*

**Keywords:** *COVID-19 effect, Performance indicators, Institutional integrity, works from distance.*

## **Introduction**

Customs has a key role in the supply chain both in a normal situation and during the COVID 19 pandemic.

Also considering that the need for supplies and consumption has not changed, on the one hand, while on the other hand it has been requested to reduce human resources, respectively the smaller number of officials in order to protect their health, in this case is appeared challenge situation.

Therefore, in this situation Kosovo Customs has gone through a challenge in itself, where at the same time must, to manage the customs clearance process, maintain the fulfillment of taxes and the implementation of legislation, maintain the health of employees, maintain the balance with trade facilities, at the same time to increased the speed of circulation of essential goods that affect the mitigation of the situation with the Coronavirus.

At that time, the Customs should keep all these factors in balance, so that integrity does not fall in the face of the public, which during this period had increased attention, which as an institution belonged to public security institutions. Therefore, in this period, in addition to the general management as mentioned, customs has continuously tried to maintain and promote its integrity in front of the citizens. Integrity is a matter of trust.

Consequently, when a public institution has integrity, this means that others have the confidence that that institution is pursuing its goals in a legitimate way, respectively acting within the authority of that institution.

When we say that it must follow its goals, in this case we must take into account that the institution must have clear, balanced goals<sup>47</sup>.

As is known, Kosovo Customs has its mission and goals that it pursues, such as: revenue collection, import and export control, protection of the country's economy, prohibition of goods with protected trademarks, combating illegal activities, increasing security through presence at border points to combat border crime, as well as protecting the population by preventing the smuggling of weapons, drugs and explosive substances.

During the period of the COVID-19 pandemic, like any other institution, the Customs has faced certain challenges, but as such it has not resulted in the decline of its integrity in front of the citizens or the public.

## **1. Challenges during the pandemic period**

Lack of full physical presence of customs officials (reduction) at the workplace, office or border crossing point, with the aim of:

- To reduce staff, to protect against infection with the COVID-19 virus, based on the recommendations of the National Institute of Public Health, there were:
- Absence in the work of customs officials, after their infection with the COVID-19 virus, with a duration until recovery.
- Absence in the work of customs officials, after the infection of any of the family members or persons in contact, who, according to the recommendations of IKSHIP, were forced to self-isolate.
- Absence in the work of customs officials, until full recovery from post-COVID-19 effects.
- There was also the loss of life of customs officials as a result of infection with the COVID-19 virus.

As can be seen from the reduction of officials at work for health reasons, although doesn't any evaluation of the efficiency of remote work has been made, it may have been less efficient until the officials had previously practiced such a method of work, because every new type or new way of working may does not give the maximum effects from the beginning until the habit is acquired by the officials practicing this particular type or way of working.

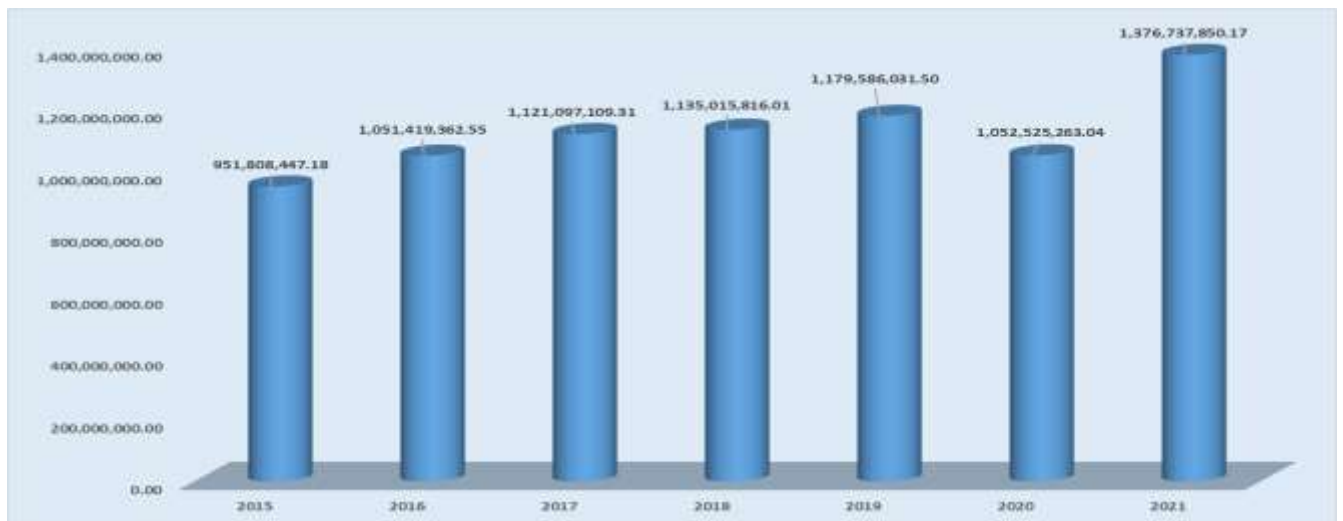
## **2. Pursuing the goals even during the pandemic, where, however, it has presented a satisfactory performance:**

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<sup>47</sup> <sup>47</sup>“Public Institutional Integrity” Defined

**Table no.1: Total Customs Revenues 2015 - 2021**

Years	Customs tax	Excise tax	VAT	Others	Total
2015	131,390,851.32	360,632,851.20	456,518,488.93	3,266,255.73	<b>951,808,447.18</b>
2016	129,969,914.81	403,295,575.26	514,461,251.80	3,692,620.68	<b>1,051,419,362.55</b>
2017	125,992,684.91	432,279,340.93	557,775,780.72	5,049,302.75	<b>1,121,097,109.31</b>
2018	123,747,923.74	418,903,169.19	585,888,724.03	6,475,999.05	<b>1,135,015,816.01</b>
2019	130,325,417.74	435,496,194.87	606,406,725.58	7,357,693.31	<b>1,179,586,031.50</b>
2020	101,618,259.53	398,072,149.85	547,645,722.55	5,189,131.11	<b>1,052,525,263.04</b>
2021	124,606,455.00	501,295,076.31	746,548,379.66	4,287,939.20	<b>1,376,737,850.17</b>



Achieving the collection of tax and tax revenues at a satisfactory level, despite the fact that a decrease has been observed if we make a comparison for the years 2015 to 2021.

However, despite the fact that in the following year in 2021, the situation with the COVID-19 pandemic was present, it was not easy and also very challenging, but the serious reaction on the part of the Customs has reduced the effect that was the year before, respectively in 2020, when as we have presented in tabular and graphic form, in 2021 it has reflected a increase, where from the amount of general revenues that was €1,052,000,000.00, revenues in 2021 have increased to €1,370,000,000.00, or for 318 million more.

Such an increase is considered to be a strong reaction to the pandemic and at the same time the realization of the purpose of the Customs.

Therefore, the increase in revenues as an important indicator, for several hundred million, there is no reason to estimate that the Customs has lost or has fluctuated its institutional integrity, but on the contrary, such a situation affects the increase in reliability, respectively the institutional integrity of the Kosovo Customs.

As can be seen in the above table, an increase in income has not only increased compared to the previous year 2020 as a critical year due to the pandemic, but more than any other previous year.

### **The reflection of the presented revenues compared to the economic growth rate**

<b>Years</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>
Economic growth rate	4.1%	3.4%	4.2%	3.8%	4.2%	-3.9%	10.5%
Revenues percentage change	8.05%	10.08%	5.72%	2.07%	3.97%	-10.6%	30.38%
The annual income	952	1,051	1,121	1,135	1,179	1,052	1,376

The first table shows the percentage of imports in relation to the last percentage of economic growth, which can be seen that in the year of economic growth with a rate of 10.5%, the total customs duties were over 30.38%. This shows the increased efficiency of the Kosovo Customs.

The increase in general revenues from customs continues in 2022. If we compare with the year 2021 until now when i am writing the paper, there is an increase of 11.5% higher compared to the previous year.

### **3. The number of offenses for the years 2020-2021**

Likewise, in the number of misdemeanors as an indicator of the performance of customs officials' controls, it was observed that despite the COVID-19 pandemic, Customs has pursued its goal, but according to statistical data, it may be the effect of the pandemic, where in 2020, the period which is considered to be the peak of the pandemic, the smallest number of pronounced customs offenses is observed.

But immediately one year later, in 2021, even though the pandemic COVID-19 continued, work efficiency increased, resulting in an increase in performance, as can be seen from the table:

#### 4. Amount of fines 2020 - 2021

The amount of fines as one of several important indicators of performance, there has been a noticeable increase.

As can be seen from the table presented, even in this performance indicator, which is the amount of fines imposed by customs, it appears to be: in 2020 it was in the amount of 0.4 million euros, until in 2021 it appears to be a significant increase in the amount of 1.3 million Euros.

#### 5. Value of evasions according to criminal reports

Even the value of evasions according to criminal reports, as an indicator of performance, has shown significant increases, as can be seen in the graph below, in 2020 it was 2.5 million until in 2021 it appears to be an increase in the amount of 2.7 million.

#### 6. Other cases of combating illegal activities, smuggling of dangerous goods, weapons, drugs etc.

Other cases of smuggling and prevention of the other dangerous goods that as such are also prohibited for import, or require special permits, have been prohibited from the control of customs officials, presented below some of them by year:

<b>Description of confiscated goods</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>
Smuggled cigarettes and tobacco	950,000.00 pcs	Considerable amount	11,000,000.00 pcs	100,000.00 pcs + 2100 kg + 5000 kg
Narcotic substances	5.80 kg	17 kg+ 55 kg	-	16.8 kg
Telephones and other electronic devices	-	-	-	106 cope + other electronic devices
Undeclared money			65,450.00€	28,310.00€ 52,000.00 CHF
Alcoholic drinks	-	-	-	14828 litra
Non Alcoholic drinks			8500 litra	-
Gold and silver jewelry	-	-	-	11.2 kg + 3 kg

Auto parts	-	-	-	Amount of auto parts over 10,000€
Cartridges and weapons	Considerable amount	Considerable amount	-	-
Medicaments	-	-	Uncountable quantity	-
Lottery machines	50 pcs	-	-	-
Rapid test for COVID19				Considerable amount

## 7. Conclusions

Kosovo Customs was faced with the challenges of the COVID 19 pandemic, for the performance of work, where the most pronounced was the reduction of customs officials and their physical presence at their workplace.

However, in order to reduce the negative impact, to prevent the situation from deepening further, but also to improve the general situation, are certain actions were taken, such as:

- The leadership has influenced to create the climate in the service of increasing the efficiency and increasing the performance of the Kosovo Customs.
- Strengthening the risk assessment analysis, in order to target goods and cargoes with a higher level of risk.
- The re-systematization of certain human resources that are in disposition in Kosovo Customs, in certain places that can best answer the tasks in a certain position or place.
- Strengthening a transparent and more efficient system.
- Implementation of information technology for monitoring goods clearance, observing through cameras in all customs offices.
- Strengthening a transparent and more efficient system. One of the elements at this point is the establishment of special lines to report the regulator as well as encouraging the public (citizens) through means of communication to report activities that violate legal provisions as well as other illegal activities such as corruption, smuggling of goods, drugs, weapons and others.
- Creation of special commissions to re-examine certain sensitive issues that can be misused more easily
- Creation of special teams of the nature of Task-Force to perform special tasks where a higher level of risk is observed.

Based on these actions and other actions that have been undertaken, customs has presented a high performance, such as:

- It has increased the total revenues from Customs, from 1.05 billion in 2020, to the amount of 1.37 billion in 2021.
- It has increased the number of customs offences, from 1087 as they were in 2020 to 1774 as it reached in 2021.
- Increased the amount of customs fines from 0.4 million in 2020 to 1.3 million in 2021.
- There has been another increase in the detection amount of evasions according to criminal reports, the amount of confiscate goods has increased.
- Prevention of evasion of oil derivatives, declared and released in the name of energy sources.
- Likewise, other results were: the discovery of the smuggling of cigarettes, electronic devices, precious metals - gold jewelry, narcotics, undeclared money, the prohibition of the smuggling of tests for the diagnosis of COVID-19.

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# THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND KOSOVO CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Nebi HALILI<sup>48</sup>

*The COVID-19 pandemic that appeared in 2020, in the world has had an extraordinary impact on all areas of life, including that of security institutions but also in correctional institutions, while they are still trying to fully explain this disease in details.*

*The undertaking of measures in accordance with the presented situations of the COVID-19 pandemic to preserve the well-being of persons deprived of freedom, the staff in correctional institutions is an indicator in the rise or fall of the reputation of security institutions, in this case the Kosovo Correctional Service.*

*This paper deals with the undertaken measures and the reactions to the situation presented after the appearance of the pandemic, the changes of daily routines in the correctional institutions presented after the appearance of the pandemic, the undertaken actions starting from physical distancing, suspension of regular daily activities, quarantine in all cases, which is still continuing in suspected cases with signs of COVID-19, with emphasis on the impact of previous stressful life events on the stress of staff, prisoners, family members during the period of pandemic.*

*This paper aims to advance research and improve current practice so that Kosovo Correctional Service management, staff and medical workers can plan appropriate levels of support and intervention both during and after a pandemic. All this in order to achieve the mission of the Correctional Service, but also to maintain order and safety and the well-being of the correctional staff and the persons they have the duty to take care for.*

## Introduction

On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19) a global pandemic. This announcement had immediate and widespread consequences for economies, security, governments and societies around the world. As the transmission of the virus and its mortality increased, institutions of all levels took preventive measures where many of them were temporarily closed, some suspended many regular daily activities in the institutional facilities. Many of the institutions where there was an opportunity, switched to work from distance (online), so there was disorder in daily life as a whole, so also in the security institutions.

However, the things that we come across during the period of COVID-19 were not simply strategic or methodological, the closure of activities, the suspension of visits, the transition to forms of

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communication in distance with families by the prisoners was accompanied by psychological and emotional stress for the entire staff in the Correctional Service of Kosovo. Many of them were distracted by developments in the means of information, were afraid of infection, making it more difficult for them to concentrate on daily routines. The lack of constant and stable access to the Internet was also an obstacle, so uncertainty became a new factor in everyday life. These findings and conclusions can guide institutions in their plans, both for the short-term and long-term future.

## **Methodology**

In the case of this paper, the cross-source method was used from correctional institutions/Kosovo Correctional Service and the Health Department of prisons/Ministry of Health.

Therefore, for the collection of data from correctional institutions, quantitative sources of data collection, the method of reviewing the literature that have dealt with this phenomenon in Europe (prisons of Europe), as well as correctional institutions having as a goal the actions undertaken to achieve the principle of effectiveness and efficiency in combating the COVID-19 pandemic.

## **General Issues**

The provisions of local legislation, in addition to regulating the rights and obligations of persons deprived of their liberty, they also regulate the obligations of institutions for the human treatment of these persons who are in correctional or detention institutions, starting from the reception, separation from convicted persons, living conditions, taking physical exercises, hygiene, food, continued disposition of water, clothing, health care until release. In addition to the provisions of local legislation, this part is also dealt with by international instruments that deal with the field of institutions that have the task of implementing in practice the rules for persons deprived of their liberty.

The data collected for this paper show that timely measures undertaken by the Correctional Service for health care have helped to avoid the worst in the spread of the pandemic within correctional institutions. From the information that circulates in the media, in general, the correctional institutions at the wider regional level have not turned into Covid hotspots.

Based on the statistics available to us and we have analyzed, it turns out that the expectations that they had about the number of people infected in prisons, which could be many times higher than that of the population, turned out to be incorrect due to the actions undertaken in time by the staff of the Correctional Service in cooperation with the competent health institutions.

## **The situation of prisons in several countries during the COVID-19 pandemic**

The actions that have been taken in almost all prisons in Europe at the time of the COVID-19 pandemic show that most countries made hard and fast prison closures from the beginning of the pandemic. Visits to prisons were immediately banned or severely restricted in almost all countries. Recreational activities, sports and work were suspended in many prisons. Also, for security reasons, the prison leave permits were also suspended.



In many countries of the world, after the appearance of the pandemic, incidents and manifestations of dissatisfaction by prisoners have also begun due to the restrictions imposed due to the pandemic, which have prohibited visits and interrupted court sessions. A case where more than 100 inmates took control of a prison in St. Louis of the United States of America, setting fire to the cells and throwing objects from the windows of the fourth floor of the building.

## **Pandemic management in Correctional Institutions in Kosovo**

On the occasion of the presentation of the first cases of the pandemic in the correctional institutions, the first actions initiated by the KCS itself, but also the actions in cooperation with the PHD (Prison Health Department/Ministry of Health) in cooperation with the Kosovo Correctional Service.

Although in some cases there have been actions that did not respect the domestic order, the provisions of the positive legislation in Kosovo that deals with persons deprived of their liberty, then the provisions of international instruments that regulate in bold terms the rights and obligations of persons deprived of their liberty, after all, all these actions were undertaken with the aim of initially securing the health, life and well-being of these persons.

## **Actions to protect the health of prisoners**

The measures undertaken in the correctional institutions regarding the management of the COVID-19 pandemic have always been based on the Recommendations of the Council of Europe, which in cooperation with PHD/MH have been taken and harmonized with those of WHO, NIPHK and Ministry of Health.

Immediately, the alternative measures were taken, visits were reduced, the way of communication between prisoners and family members began to change - from the regular ones, telephone conversations were added, the conversation through the SKYPE online platform, and that in some institutions it is continuing (in cases of the impossibility of family visits and for foreign citizens), leave permits outside the prison were also cut off.

In the correctional institutions, the preventive of all internal and external spaces has started Disinfection, Disinsection and Deratization (DDD). Then the hygiene protocol and the method of preparation of disinfectants for the disinfection of living and working spaces were also sent. Concrete actions have also been taken to increase food hygiene, all of these in accordance with the recommendations of the WHO and the NIPHK.

In order to coordinate activities and maintain peace and security in correctional institutions, continuous meetings were held between the KCS/MoJ and the Prison Health Department/MoH regarding the coordination of all activities planned for joint action in accordance with the recommendations of the MoH and the Emergency Operations Center.

Due to the situation created in the whole world where the cases of the pandemic also emerged in Kosovo, in the correctional institutions, the addition of personal hygiene tools was also done by adding protective masks, gloves and other necessary protective material.

It is necessary to emphasize the unstoppable actions that have been undertaken parallel to the appearance of the pandemic, such as the treatment of other prisoners with other diseases according to indications and needs. All elderly prisoners were separated from others as much as possible.

The difficulties that were presented at the beginning were of the most different. There have been reactions from prisoners regarding the situation and their requests for release from prisons for a certain category (such requests have also existed in the countries in the region and some of them have implemented them).

Correctional officers in collaboration with medical staff have been present, have talked continuously with the prisoners and explained to them as much as possible the state of health in the country and the general measures in function of their notification in general.

An increased care has been given to the correctional staff since the biggest fear was that the pandemic could be brought much more easily by the staff themselves who had much more contact outside the correctional institutions than the prisoners themselves, as well as the possibility of bringing pandemic within the institutions have also been new admissions.

But there have always been preventive measures that all the new admissions were first kept for a while in quarantine and then they were placed in the prison rooms. Also, the medical checks provided by LEPS for new admissions have been respected to the maximum.

Also, the medical checks are respected to maximum for new admissions, that are provided by LEPS

Importance has also been given to the protection of correctional and medical staff. All staff who have had indications of symptoms of COVID-19 have been treated in time and adequate measures have been taken.

### **Vaccinations in prisons**

Thanks to a commitment on the part of the responsible institutions, even in the correctional institutions, there have been no major delays regarding the start of the vaccination, so the vaccination of the prisoners as well as the staff has started in time, even though, as in life outside the prison, there have been reactions in the correctional institutions as well and concerns.

### **Actions for the organization of the work process in KCS**

In order to prevent the spread of the pandemic in correctional institutions, it has been requested that we have some changes, but which were temporary in the regular routine of the correctional institution, limited movement but also limited activities even though these temporary changed routines were necessary for the protection of personnel, prisoners and the community in general.

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted some serious gaps in the capacities of the KCS, both technical and human. Initially, the technical aspect, such as access to computers from home or telephones, which were available to employees of correctional institutions. Simply to say, there was not enough capacity and this was especially noticeable when institutions moved to distance/online work. These shortcomings greatly limited the effectiveness of online work

From the evaluation of the fulfillment of the tasks by the personnel, it results that with some small shortcomings, everyone managed to satisfactorily fulfill their regular tasks, in addition to the extraordinary tasks imposed by the handling of the crisis.

What was noted in those days was the continued briefing of education staff on the steps they needed to take to mitigate an individual's risk of getting the virus. The instructions they received were about protecting themselves from COVID-19 and ensuring safety in the workplace. (leaflets distributed in correctional institutions but also billboards placed in places where most of the staff, as well as prisoners, have access).

Thanks to a joint work and the activation of everyone as correctional and health personnel, continued assistance from the missions operating in Kosovo, has given good results considering



that the number of infected people has been relatively small in correctional institutions in relation to the population.

The annual work reports of the Prison Health Service present the situation in the prisons of Kosovo in a balanced way for the cases presented about the COVID-19 virus.

Presentation of tested and infected cases in correctional institutions/KCS during 2020

**Table 1** <sup>i</sup>

No	The tested	The type of result	Prisons											TOTAL	
			Dubrava	Lipjan 1	Lipjan 2	Gërdovc	Smrekovnica	Prishtina	Gjilan	Prizren	Mitrovica	Peja	PHD - MoH	n	%
1	Prisoners	Tested	40	10	0	43	18	8	14	7	52	5		197	100.00
		resulted positive	5	0	0	23	4	0	0	3	0	2		37	18.78
		negative result	35	10	0	20	14	8	14	4	52	3		160	81.22
2	Correctional Staff	Tested	48	44	21	36	18	20	45	24	79	23		358	100.00
		resulted positive	45	10	21	17	12	7	18	13	12	23		178	49.72
		negative result	3	34	0	19	6	13	27	11	67	0		180	50.28
3	Healthcare staff	Tested	43	7	11	11	13	11	8	9	11	7	5	136	100.00
		resulted positive	4	0	2	2	2	2	4	2	1	1	2	22	16.18
		negative result	39	7	9	9	11	9	4	7	10	6	2	113	83.09
4	Total	Tested	131	61	32	90	49	39	67	40	142	35	5	691	100.00
		resulted positive	54	10	23	42	18	9	22	18	13	26	2	237	34.30
		negative result	77	51	9	48	31	30	45	22	129	9	2	453	65.56

Based on these data from 691 tested, 34% (237) of those tested were positive.

From the tested of each category:

- 18% (37) prisoners have resulted positive,
- 49% (178) correctional staff and
- 16% (22) healthcare staff.

During this period, 3 elderly prisoners with serious chronic diseases and terminal diagnoses have died, who were also positive in the RT PCR test.

Presentation of tested and infected cases in correctional institutions/KCS during 2021

Table 2<sup>ii</sup>

No	The tested	The type of result	Prisons												TOTAL	
			Dubrava	Lipjan 1	Lipjan 2	Gërdovci	Šnrekovnica	Prishtina	Gjilan	Prizren	Mitrovica	Peja	PHD - MoH	n	%	
1	Prisoners	Tested	27	0	0	15	115	10	0	4	4	2	0	177	100.00	
		resulted positive	3	0	0	4	0	2	0	0	3	1	0	13	7.34	
		Resulted negative	22	0	0	11	115	8	0	4	1	1	0	162	91.53	
2	Correctional Staff	Tested	26	14	3	11	6	11	14	2	7	15	0	109	100.00	
		resulted positive	0	14	1	4	4	5	4	2	6	2	0	42	38.53	
		Resulted negative	26	0	2	7	2	6	10	0	1	13	0	67	61.47	
3	Healthcare staff	Tested	40	0	3	2	0	3	1	2	0	10	0	61	100.00	
		resulted positive	3	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	9	14.75	
		Resulted negative	37	0	2	1	0	2	0	1	0	9	0	52	85.25	
4	Total	Tested	93	14	6	28	121	24	15	8	11	27	0	347	100.00	
		resulted positive	6	14	2	9	4	8	5	3	9	4	0	64	18.44	
		Resulted negative	85	0	4	19	117	16	10	5	2	23	0	281	80.98	

Based on this data from 281 tested;

- 18.44% (64) of those tested resulted positive.

From the tested of each category:

- 7.34% (13) prisoners have resulted positive,
- 38.53% (42) correctional staff and
- 14.75% (9) healthcare staff.

During this period, there were no deaths as a result of infection with COVID-19.

During the whole year, the prisoners, medical and correctional staff were completely vaccinated.

## **Conclusions**

Although it was an unknown pandemic before, the approach has not been well foreseen due to insufficient knowledge of where it comes from and that the Kosovo Correctional Service has managed well, in cooperation with the Prison Health Department / Ministry of Health.

Taking actions in time and based on the recommendations of NIPHK have given positive results in preventing the spread of the pandemic within correctional institutions.

Taking timely measures, such as the reduction and interruption of some regular activities, have resulted in the reduction of infection in prisoners.

Drafting eventual plans that have already existed before for the Correctional Service has made us realize that something comes up that may not even have happened before, so we must always be prepared and use the best practices that states have used and have given results in practice.

And in the end, only a joint and well-organized work has brought the results we have

## **Recommendations**

The conclusions of the evaluation apply to the drafting of recommendations in order to strengthen the compliance of existing practices with human rights standards in emergency cases; but they also aim to improve future intervention responses, focusing in particular on proportionate and effective measures, access to information and independent supervision in prisons

- Lessons from experience - Adoption of normative acts and numerous guidelines as part of the preventive plan in correctional institutions.
- Increasing professional human resources and their training time.
- Extended care with confinement and seclusion in correctional institutions since such action may create opportunities for abuse.
- In case of overcrowding, to consider the possibility of releasing persons whose remaining sentence is small.
- Eventual separation for health reasons of the prisoner,
- Increasing the number of psychologists and psychiatrists in correctional institutions by addressing individual needs can reduce, among other things, violence between prisoners and other violations of prison regime.
- Rehabilitation programs, psychological treatment and therapies in the context of prison.

## **Literature**

Annual work reports of the Prison Health Service 2020 and 2021

European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman and Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT) Strasbourg, December 15, 2015.

European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, amended by protocols No. 11 and 14, November 4, 1950.

European Prison Rules

Law on Execution of Penal Sanctions

Mandela Rules/ For more information about the Nelson Mandela Rules:

<https://www.penalreform.org/issues /prisonconditions/standard-minimum-rules/>

National Mechanism for the Prevention of Torture

<sup>1</sup> Presentation of tested and infected cases in correctional institutions/KCS during 2020

<sup>1</sup> Presentation of tested and infected cases in correctional institutions/KCS during 2021

# **INTEGRATED COMMUNICATION IN A CRISIS SITUATION: DATA-INFORMATION AND REDUCTION OF LOSSES IN A CRISIS SITUATION (LESSONS LEARNED IN THE SITUATION WITH COVID-19: KOSOVO CASE)**

Nehat KOÇINAJ<sup>49</sup> Dr. Sc.

*Kosovo, in its journey in more than two decades after the 1999 war, thanks to the circumstances created and the determination to follow a model with a reliable probability for long-term sustainability, chose the path of embracing accepted international values and standards.*

*As such, in the determination of its own and with the help of the strategic partnership, the field of communication in crises since the beginning of the international administration, from the year 2000 onwards, oriented it in the direction in which the EU states were defined now, while the states of the region were then, but even today they are in certain dilemmas. As a result, the initial determination to integrate the emergency communication model based on a single emergency number 112, (DSc, 2022) with the tendency to integrate all existing numbers (092,093 and 094) which emergency numbers of response capacities based on developments of telecommunication infrastructure and support in GSM networks, today also known as (192, 193 and 194) and through this implemented the principle of integrated communication. The period after 2001 until today resulted in ups and downs in the determined integrative direction. Therefore, even to this day, the initial idea started in 2000 fails to define the possible future from this context, which is based on the developments of the EU states and those that managed for one reason or another to joined the common European family, took bold actions and completed certain stages towards integration from this aspect as well. The case of the Slovenian state for the views of the countries of the Western Balkans is a relevant indicator for achieving the objectives and strengthening the capacity of communication in crises and emergencies, followed by the Croatian state, which through a single number and identification with the common values of EU from this point of view. As such, the supposed achievement from the year 2000 in Kosovo would mean a step closer to integration, relief for local citizens and visitors-tourists, as well as readiness for a coordinated response by local capacities, avoiding overlaps in capacities, uncertainty of roles and functions in well-coordinated management of any emergency or crisis situation in the country, and with this the strengthening of the position of the state and the security structures for provider and capacity for peace and regional perspectives, and not only with the position that still has likely to be practiced primarily as security and defense consumers. Beyond this, the developments and transformations of recent years give signs that this positioning of the country is in a slow but safe process, by the very fact of the transformation of the Kosovo Security Force - KSF into the Kosovo Army - KA, reference aspect of civil defense consequently, it should be guided by the structure established for this field of mission from 2000, which has been known for more than a decade as the Emergency*

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*Management Agency within the Ministry of Internal Affairs with all the mandate and scope attributed to it by the constitution and country laws.*

*Referring to the principle which simply defines that each incident, emergency or disaster starts from the basic level or the designated administrative locality, even communication in crisis will have the analysis by creating a scenario of the event from the same level.*

*The determinations of the country to establish the framework within which certain elements will be regulated, are attributes before the determination for the model, concept or doctrine of the system. That legally regulated system, Kosovo, today and over a decade has defined with the IEMS Integrated Emergency Management System, reference (GRK, Integrated Emergency Management System, 2010) while the mode of action in operations has also been established through the Plan of the National Response PNR, reference (GRK, National Response Plan, 2010. While first of all and the preceding of the system and model of action is the definition in the Basic Law for protection from Natural Disasters and Other Disasters, reference.<sup>1</sup>. (Kosoves, 11)*

**Keywords:** *emergency, crisis, communication, management, preparedness and response*

## Introduction

The theme-focused process, now in its third decade of capacity-building and development efforts, has its own history. And for treatment in its chronology, Establishing the Department for Emergency Management, is an important subject, especially for the phase of the first decade after the 1999 war.

Based on the principle that security and protection are vital for every society at any stage of its development, it is logically concluded that every state considers it necessary to create the relevant mechanisms to manage crises and emergency situations. Now when the rapid economic, industrial and technological developments have become a world trend thanks to globalization, the various risks that threaten the world and countries in particular have increased. The fall of the communist system in some countries and especially the last war in the Balkans have prompted immediate demands for the creation and strengthening of crisis management systems, analogous to the democratic countries of the world, especially the USA and Europe.

The Republic of Kosovo emerged from the war without a political, economic, and social order system, and as a result of the almost total destruction of a Serbian colonizing system, Kosovo lacked experience in crisis management - emergency management, apart from the experience of a certain number of individuals from the past, with certain experiences in the field of security and the former civil defense that existed until the 89s, when the right of Albanian servicemen from this field was also suspended. In a word, the beginning of the administration by UNMIK in Kosovo, found the country in a state when it most needed the Emergency Management mechanism to plan, prevent, react and recover after a disaster in the country that had just emerged from the war.

Since the situation in this field was difficult, it became necessary to create institutions for security issues, especially in the management of crises and emergency situations. "In 2000, the Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) reference, in accordance with the powers derived from Resolution 1244 of the United Nations Security Council approved on June 10, 1999, approved Regulation No. 2000/61 for the creation of the Administrative Department of Civil Security and Emergency Preparedness.<sup>1</sup> According to this regulation, the Department was a body of the Permanent Administrative Council of Kosovo" The Department was responsible for services related to prevention and response in cases of emergency situations in Kosovo including, but not limited to, "Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC)), , emergency services and firefighters as well as long-term mine clearance relationships" “.<sup>1</sup>

The department established at that time had four sectors:

1. The Office of the Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC)
2. Preparedness and Emergency Response
3. Administration, and
4. Center for Alerting and Coordination of Emergencies

After the institutions of Kosovo were being created and developed, this Department was later renamed to the Directorate of Civil Protection, but it remained a reserved right within the second pillar of UNMIK for Civil Administration and "This directorate had two main sectors: a) Office of the KPC and b) Division for Emergency Management <sup>1</sup> Although the regulation for the establishment of the Executive Branch for Provisional Self-Governing Institutions (PSGI) was approved in September 2001, UNMIK's powers over the Civil Protection Department were not transferred to the Ministry of Public Services (MPS) until January of 2003. Later, the Ministry of Public Services approved an administrative regulation for the internal regulation of the ministry and enabled: "The Division for Emergency Management to be transformed into the Department for Emergency Management (DEM)."<sup>1</sup> So the DEM took over Emergency Management at the central and local level. Then "with the establishment of the Ministry of Justice (MJ) and the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA)."<sup>1</sup> , to this last one was given all the powers and functions related to emergency preparedness. Although the DEM had taken an institutional form, even to this day (when the DEM has been transformed into the Agency for Emergency Management AEM), acts, regulations (chapter V, article 5.5 of the Constitutional Framework, regulation 2000/61, 2000 /19 For the Executive branch of the PSGI as well as regulation 2000/45 on the self-government of the municipalities of Kosovo), Article 3, paragraph 3.1. point e, from the context of the treatment, also defines the field of emergencies as part of local government institutions, in the relevant paragraph, I quote "*Article 3. Responsibilities and power of municipalities 3.1. Each municipality within its own territory and within the existing laws regulating each activity is responsible for the following activities: among others, point (e) Public services including fire and emergency services*".

From this context, communication in crisis was an integral part of the system at the two levels of the country's government, while embracing the values of developed countries with the integration of the unique European emergency number 112, which in itself contained the idea and effort of communication integrated by several numbers and services, in a single number 112.

## **Integrated Communication in emergency and crisis situations**

Data-informations in the service of loss reduction in a crisis situation.

(lessons learned from the situation with COVID-19: Kosovo case) - The coordination

Integrated Communication in an emergency situation in Kosovo is applied through the ideation, and then the implementation in developing of the emergency communications platform through a communication channel and a single emergency number 112. Concept accepted by the developed models, which as a genesis, in addition to the support of friendly states within the mission of the civil administration of the United Nations - UNMIK, was also vigilance in local efforts by a professional and visionary, in order to implement the principle well known by UNDRR BBB (Build Back Better), whose principle from this aspect, thanks to many circumstances after the war, but also dedication with a vision, Kosovo began to implement in terms of communications in emergency and crisis situations. <sup>1</sup> The preliminary reference is an indication of the role of emergency communications in the professional training program, designed and integrated into the



professional development curriculum for EOC (Emergency Operation Centers) 112, now implemented and functional throughout the country 24/7 and in harmony with the mission of emergency communications in Europe. Quality improvement, and development for sustainability and accountability, is a process in which the country must invest. (AKSP, 2019).

The stages of development and extension with emergency communication based on the unique European Emergency number 112 in Kosovo, date from 2001. While the progress of development and increase, as in most developing countries, has been accompanied by continuous challenges, but the presence of this capacity was not invisible even in professional publications from this aspect at the European and international level. In the 2012 edition of the annual publications on the state and sustainability of emergency communication systems based on the number 112, from (European Emergency Number Association) EENA The following reference is a fact, from pages 159-166, which Kosovo and organizational development from this point of view it is presented as in the scheme below<sup>1</sup>.

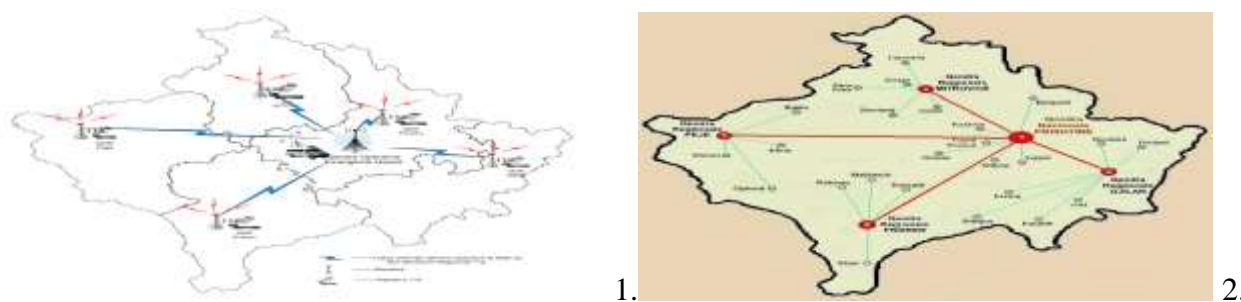


Figure 1. and 2. The geographical extent of the emergency communication system based on the unique emergency number 112 in Kosovo, from the presentation of the Master's thesis in 2014, by n.k.

Annual publications on the platform of the European Organization for Emergency Communication EENA, follow the development trend in the countries and the relevant communication systems throughout Europe and beyond, presenting the progress and integration of services and communication systems within the emergency communication system, referred to the unique European emergency number 112.

The architecture of the network of 112 emergency operation centers was originally designed with the primary aim of serving citizens in an emergency as the main and only point (after an assumed and well-planned transition, from that development period) from which it was intended to pass, from the possibility of calling several emergency numbers (such as 192,193,194), to a single emergency number 112. Reference (EENA, 2022) The main duty and responsibility of the system based on the unique European Emergency number 112 in Kosovo is to accept calls from the entire territory of the country in case of disaster (for which condition the challenge of enabling incoming telecommunications capacity was and still continues), and which must provide access to the emergency number 112 even in the most serious scenario (in crisis or disaster). After acceptance, it must verify the authenticity of the caller (avoiding false calls), and search for the location (as

long as the protocols and the database with technological development do not automatically enable the location of the call), and finally the description of the emergency event, the number of people involved and the current consequences, visible from the caller at number 112. After receiving the call for help, the next or even parallel step of the receiver in the 112 Center is the notification of the emergency event to the professionalized Structures for Protection, Rescue and Aid, SPRA (reference, (MIA, 2015) which in Kosovo after the war are recognized and categorized as first responders.<sup>1</sup> (GRK, REGULATIONS (GRK) - NO. 18/2015, 2015)

Integrated communication through a single emergency number 112, among others, ensures response in the most optimal time, avoids excessive and overloaded capacities, focuses adequate actions for specific incidents, is easy to remember in emergency cases and above all coordinates the integrated response with all the necessary assets for the scene of the incident.

### **Dealing with the Pandemic situation with SARS COV-2, known as COVID-19**

The typology of the pandemic with SARS COV-2, around the globe severely challenged the systems and governments, consequently also the institutions of public safety, and in particular those responsible for communication and assistance to the affected and family members.

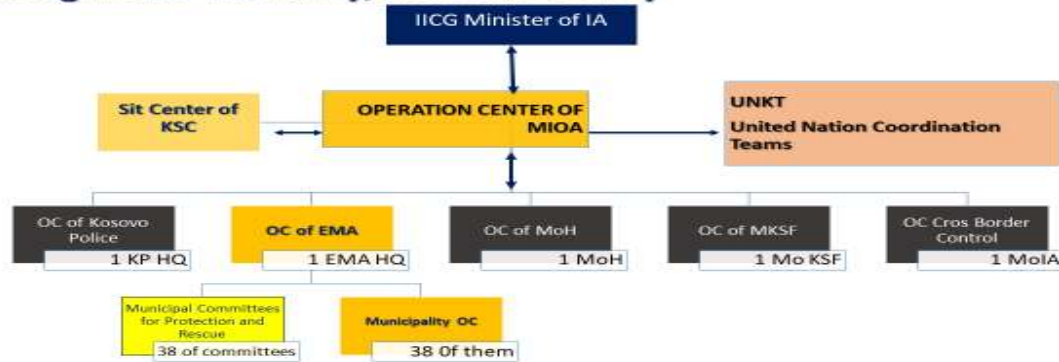
Kosovo with the institutions responsible for managing the COVID-19 situation, based on the legislation in force during the warning period of the contagious disease, took actions and activated the available local resources.

The actions taken before the appearance of the first case of COVID-19 infection were the activation of the state advisory and preparatory mechanism for dealing with the expected threat (in February 2020, the committee for prevention and dealing with the contagious disease SARS COV-2 is convened), which integrates all relevant central factors led by NIPH MOH), which integrates all relevant central factors led by NIPH MOH.

While from the aspect of management with an expected situation, with a government decision, the NRP National Response Plan is activated, which defines the framework of coordinated inter-institutional action, and therefore also initiates the activation of the Operational Centers in the MOH (Ministry of Health) and the OC of the Ministry of Internal Affairs PA (Ministry of Internal Affairs and Public Administration), as two main links for management of situation. While the rest of the management and coordination system, such as EOC 112, those of the Kosovo Police, KPC (Kosovo protection Corps) and LEOC (Local Emergency Operation Centers) in Kosovo Municipalities are instructed to raise readiness and are supplemented with liaison officers from the relevant departments-institutions for adequate management of the pandemic.

- ❖ Scheme 3. below clearly shows the organization and functioning of the coordination and support system from the Operational Center of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Public Administration - OC MIA PA, organizational and functional product supporting the act-decision for the activation of the PRK in managing with COVID-19.

**Information Flow in the COVID-19 Pandemic Situation Management-Vertically, and Horizontally**



Scheme 3. Horizontal and vertical management in the coordination of support for the situation with the COVID-19 Pandemic, the epilogue of the development of the situation in reference (Decision, 2021)

Scheme 3, in an organizational and functional way, presents the readiness of the state structure based on legal acts and full powers, which as such represents a unique case in the region, based on the simplicity of the organization and the logic of support in the situation, which as such in societies and states with advanced systems in the future are likely to serve as an example, which example they are supposed to advance and improve in compliance with their system or systems in crisis management.

From this implementation model, which is a product of the implementation of the National Response Plan in Kosovo, from the scheme presented in a real situation like COVID-19, logically are explained also the planes and levels of practical, structural and institutional management.

- ❖ The three planes/levels of Management with the COVID-19 Pandemic in Kosovo can be considered:
  1. The Municipal Level,
  2. The Governmental Level, and
  3. International aid to the state

” Lessons Identified with potential recommendations for improvements.

- Constitutional obligations and fulfillment in the period of Management with COVID-19, political developments, parliamentary decisions, the law for recovery and others, (topics for discussion)

- The obligations originate from the relevant Law such as the Law on Protection from FN and FT, the Activation of the National Response Plan, and other relevant reference sources for crisis situations with an impact on public health.
- Implementation of the Leadership functions by: the Committee for the Prevention of the spread of contagious diseases COVID-19, with relevant factors from this aspect such as: Ministry of Health, NIPH with WHO

- Implementation of ESF Emergency Support functions based on the document in force: Activation of the NRP National Response Plan, Establishment and staffing of the Operational Center in the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Public Administration - OC MIA PA, Operational Center of the Ministry of Health - OC MOH, System of Emergency Operational Centers - SEOC 112, and LOEC (Municipal) and "crisis headquarters" until those within the legal regulation are known as Municipal Committees for Protection and Rescue, the case of activation and the actual role in the Municipality since the beginning of the pandemic,

- Implementation of Operational functions - Supervision of the implementation of measures, by: Kosovo Police, Health Inspectorate and other Inspectorates (activated) in the situation of management with COVID-19, as well as,

- Implementation of support at a distance or in known terms "on-line", established centers for psychological help, on-line calls, and other advisory and guidance support from relevant institutions for this function.

- Support from NGOs and structures in the field such as; The Red Cross of Kosovo, Caritas Kosovo, Mother Teresa Association, other associations (to be identified correctly, as lack of study resources on this topic), how much and how was the participation in the operational management of the situation for help and support to families or even social groups and representatives of organizations and families of international representatives present in Kosovo, marginalized groups (communities with special needs, minority communities, and other social groups based on age, gender, and status, such as pregnant women and puerperal, patients with chronic diseases, etc.)

Cases for study and analysis to derive adequate planning in the future, and specific involvement in evaluation and emergency operational plans at the Municipal and National level. Support of the affected, vulnerable parts of the population (the elderly, children, schools, nurseries, etc.).

- The impact of coercive measures and the reflection of the situation on economic, social, commercial, cultural, religious, sports movements, migrations, displacements from within the state to abroad, and from the diaspora returns within the territory, etc.

- Indicators extracted from local publications and the voice of international sources related to management from the current available structures and system. Actions based on regulatory acts (laws and strategic documents in force), measuring efficiency and compliance with accepted international norms and standards.

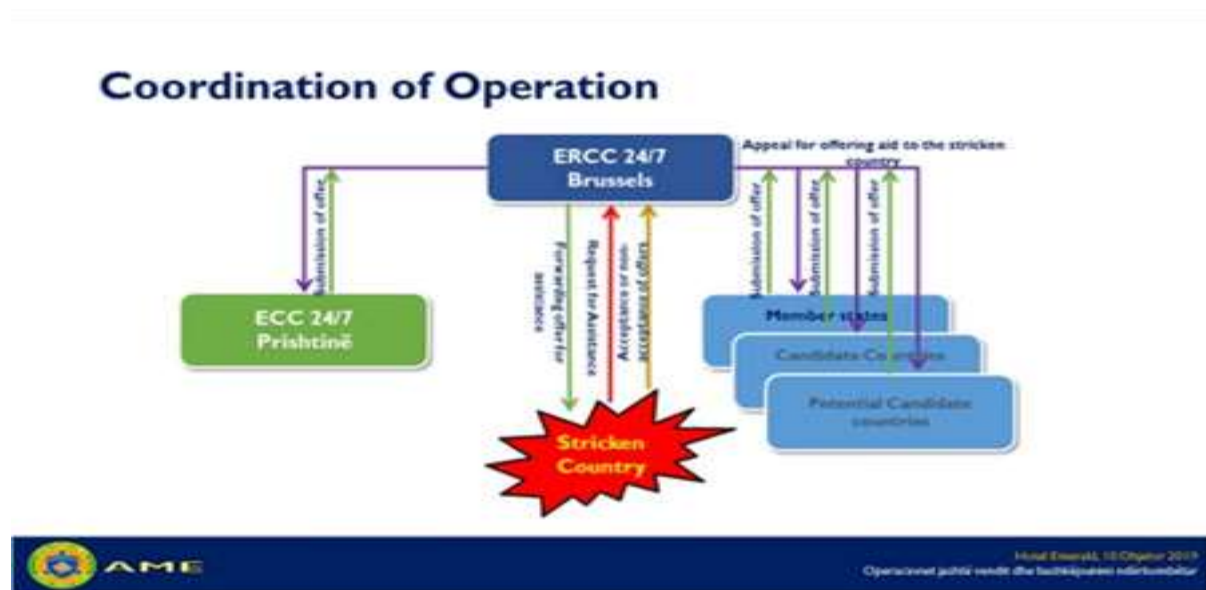
- Completion and impact of mitigating measures - such as allowing withdrawing the trust, 10% of citizens' savings on their welfare. Other mitigating measures, such as: The decision to operate the administration with essential staff at the workplace. Other restrictions from public enterprises, remote work and effects, closure of workplaces with the size of factors in the economy, and that from family to corporations.

- Coordination of support for the implementation of coercive measures in order to stop or reduce the spread of infectious diseases, the role of the Operational Center of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Public Administration - OC MIA PA and the Representatives of the Ministries in the capacity of liaison, the role of the KPC, EMA and other institutions at the Municipal level,

- Support from DG ECHO and friendly countries - Agencies for International Development UNDP, US AID, JICA, TIKA, SIDA etc.

### 5.7. Others

While the aspect of international aid and support from the EU, is according to the example presented below, in scheme 2. In the organization.



Scheme4. Typical sample of the provision and acceptance of international aid and assistance through the European civil protection mechanism (English -UCPM Union Civil Protection Mechanism) with the main European coordinating node (English ERCC-Emergency Response and Coordination Center), Coordination of humanitarian operations. Reference

Model from concept built in the EU for Support by DG ECHO implemented and integrated into the local system - Kosovo through EMA MIA and the coordinating organization system with OC (Operational Centers) 112, existed now for more than two decades in the country, operational 24 /7 free of charge and accessible throughout the territory of Kosovo by providers of electronic communication services.

## Conclusions

From the analysis of the presented facts and reference sources in the paper, some conclusions are reached. Among the particular, this stage of the treatment in the work, highlights:

- The structural and organizational model proved even in a real emergency situation that the local system can prove stability and reliability, with all inclusion and within accepted international standards. Here referring to the activation of state mechanisms based on legal documents (Laws and strategic documents).
- The parts of the model within the organizational system responsible for management proved to have basic gaps; as such those basic gaps forced the institutions to act and operationalize certain capacities in a way and time "on the spot" or forced action as a result of the reaction in situation! (QC established and activated in the main institutions)
- The Community and the Municipalities, implemented the principles that originate from the law for protection from FN and FT especially, therefore also the "Crisis Headquarters" from the relevant law Municipal Committee for Protection and Rescue, as a basic mechanism for management and leadership in crisis and emergency situations, with all the health structures available as well as the structures of help and support in the situation.
- Finally, the chain of the system put into action at all levels, was based on legal acts in force and acted with legitimacy. The local and international public safety structures present in the country proved their full readiness to act and harmonize actions based on a framework, which was supported by the law and the national response plan.

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## Recommendations

The public safety system in Kosovo was undoubtedly challenged in several aspects, from those of the lack of capacities as a result of the threat with many unknowns, among the most prominent from the context of the treatment of the topic according to the point of view in the study, were those as in following: the regional closure of states and nations, especially in the first phase of the outbreak, this phenomenon which revealed the marked lack of the basic principle on which structures and mechanisms are built, invested and developed to demonstrate **solidarity between nations and states** for help in case of mutual need in disaster. From this created situation, the country, Kosovo, especially in the context of dealing with the situation, mobilization and readiness to face and support the local capacity in the disposition, in a similar situation or crisis of a non-health nature but with dimensions and rapid extension throughout the territory of the country, opened the issues which to this day still do not have legal support! The declaration of the State of Emergency, even though it is a constitutional category, has not been able to have a legal regulation.

From this conclusion as above the initial recommendation. While the universal recommendation for which even the developed countries reflect is, the readiness and capacity to face the unexpected should be placed in the development priorities from the community level in each country. And

finally, the installation and practice of standard operating procedures adapted to the developmental level of the society where they must be applied must be planned and applied without wasting time, taking into account the unexpectedness and speed of the spread of the contagious disease SARS COV-2, which situation ercets the global level of decision-making. Climate change and the consequences that it manifests on a global level day by day, is an obvious challenging situation, where the capacity of each state and system would have to review the real possibilities for confrontation, from which context the study as in reference (KAPUCU, 2006) was extracted on the surface (KAPUCU, 2006), quote focus on topic THE EVOLVING ROLE OF THE PUBLIC SECTOR IN MANAGING CATASTROPHIC DISASTERS Lessons Learned 2006 “(Therefore, high performance in catastrophic disasters requires an ability to assess and adapt capacity rapidly, restore or enhance disrupted or inadequate communications, utilize uncharacteristically flexible decision making, and expand coordination and trust of emergency response agencies despite the hurly burly of the response and recovery efforts. These requirements are superimposed on conventional bureaucratic systems that rely on relatively rigid plans, exact decision protocols, and formal relationships that assume uninterrupted communications.) A statement which also concluded with a message the treatment on the subject!

The impact of disasters with catastrophic consequences requires rapid assessment and adaptation of capacities, above all the possibility of recovery and restoration of damaged and inadequate communications, to enable flexible decision-making and increased coordination with strengthening of trust in emergency management agencies, beyond the feeling of rapid response and recovery from disasters.

## **Acronyms**

EMA	Emergency Management Agency
EU	European Union
DG ECHO	General Directorate of European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Operations
UCPM	European Civil Protection Mechanism
ERCC	Emergency Response Coordination Center
KPC	Kosovo Protection Corps
MIA	Ministry of Internal Affairs
MH	Ministry of Health
WHO	World Health Organization
UNDP	United Nations Development Organization
NIPHK	National Institute of Public Health of Kosovo
EOC	Emergency Operations Center
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NRP	National Response Plan
ESF	Emergency Support Functions (Based on the National Response Plan)
USAID	The United States Agency for International Aid
JSAIC	Japan State Agency for International Cooperation
TIKA	The State Agency of Turkey for International Aid
SIDA	Swedish government agency for development cooperation
UNMIK	United Nations Interim Administrative Mission
UNDRR	United Nations Disaster Risk Reduction
BBB	Sustainable Reconstruction after Disasters (Recovery)
PSSP	The Special Representative of the United Nations (Administrative Director UNMIK)
KPC	Kosovo Protection Corps
IEMS	Integrated Emergency Management System



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