



EMPLOYMENT

A CHALLENGE IN

REINTEGRATION AND

RESOCIALISATION





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INTRODUCTION

Kosovo is among the poorest countries in the region. Poverty and lack of economic perspective are estimated to be among the drivers of radicalisation in Kosovo society. The National Strategy Against Terrorism and Action Plan 2018-2023¹, and Strategy for the Prevention of Violent Extremism and Radicalism that Leads to Terrorism 2015 – 2020² identify poverty as one of the key factors driving radicalisation in Kosovo society.

The data show that the unemployment rate and lack of economic prospects remain a problem for the country, especially for people within certain social categories.

Unemployment is one of the most problematic areas of development in Kosovo. The Kosovo Agency of Statistics estimated that in 2020:

- “Two-thirds of the Kosovar population is of working age”;
- “61.7% of these are economically inactive”;
- From “38.3% of the economically active population, only 12.4% are employed”;
- “Unemployment rate is higher for girls/women than for men”.

Given that the lack of jobs or favourable economic conditions are key factors in radicalisation, BIRN has managed to collect statistical but also empirical data, which show that poverty in high-risk areas continues to be evident and consequently can also be identified as a threat to the spread of violent extremism and terrorism.

Over 400 Kosovars were involved, in one way or another, in the war in Syria and Iraq, while dozens more were killed, or continue to be held in prisons in war zones.

In 2019, Kosovo repatriated 32 women and 74 children, while a similar process was developed in 2021 as well.³

These returnees were supposed to be part of a rehabilitation and reintegration process, during which their families would be ensured economic independence and financial sustainability to rebuild their life in Kosovo.

Although data is hidden from the public, field research shows that only a small proportion of the returnees have financial sustainability, as many still do not have secure jobs or revenue from businesses.

In addition, returnees who returned before 2019 are not included in employment programmes. The families of those killed in war zones were also left out of this process.

A very important process is the process of reintegration of convicted persons. The data received from the Kosovo Correctional Service (KCS) show that over 60% of prisoners convicted of terrorism are not involved in any way in professional capacity training and development processes.

¹National Strategy Against Terrorism and Action Plan 2018-2023, Available at - <https://mpb.rks-gov.net/Uploads/Documents/Pdf/AL/46/STRATEGJA%20SHTET%C3%8BRORE%20KUND%C3%8BR%20TERRORIZMIT%20DHE%20PLANI%20I%20VEPRIMIT%202018%20E2%80%93%202023.pdf>, page 4.

²Strategy On Prevention Of Violent Extremism And Radicalisation Leading To Terrorism 2015-2020. Available at: https://kryeministri.rks-gov.net/repository/docs/STRATEG-JIA_parandalim_-_SHQIP.pdf, page 13.

³KALLXO.com. Map of events following the 110 returned Kosovars from Syria. Available at: <https://kallxo.com/shkurt/harta-e-ngjarjeve-qe-percollen-110-kosovaret-e-kthy-er-nga-siria/>

This research presents data indicating that despite the efforts being made, creating a suitable economic climate remains a factor that can influence the creation of a conducive environment for the rehabilitation and reintegration process.

To conduct this analysis, data were collected from the Kosovo Correctional Service, Kosovo Probation Service, and the Kosovo Employment Agency at the central and local levels. Data were also requested from local employment offices and centres for social work in the municipalities of Prishtina, Mitrovica, Ferizaj, Gjilan, Peja, Prizren, Gjakova, Drenas, Skenderaj, Kaçanik, Han i Elezit, Viti, Shtime and Istog, and from the Ministry of Internal Affairs' Department of Public Safety Division for Prevention and Reintegration.

The planned activities range from the governmental to local institutional levels which, over the years, have had to carry out activities that guarantee employment and increase economic well-being.

THE STRATEGIC APPROACH OF KOSOVO INSTITUTIONS TOWARDS THE REINTEGRATION OF RETURNEES

The first strategic document of the Republic of Kosovo that addresses the process of prevention, intervention, deradicalisation, and reintegration was the Strategy for the Prevention of Violent Extremism and Radicalism leading to Terrorism 2015 – 2020.⁴ One of the four main strategic objectives envisaged in this inter-institutional strategic document was the deradicalisation and reintegration of radicalised persons.

In addition, specific actions and measures were foreseen in this strategy to achieve the objective.

Although the strategy elaborates on the process of deradicalisation and reintegration, it is dedicated to persons who risk being involved in prohibited actions or are in the final stages of radicalisation, while the issue of persons who have already violated the law falls under ‘other laws’, referring to the Law on the Prohibition of Participation in Foreign Wars⁵.

Furthermore, the narrative component of the Counter-Terrorism Strategy, which is currently in force, does not address this part at all in the strategic objectives of prevention, protection, follow-up and response, which do not foresee any measures in terms of employment as a means of reintegrating persons who have already violated the law, have been convicted, and are expected to return to society re-socialized.

In this regard, the Draft State Strategy against Terrorism and Violent Extremism 2021-2026 and the action plan of the Draft Strategy constitute steps forward towards the treatment, training, employment, and reintegration of persons convicted of terrorism-related offenses.

The Draft State Strategy against Terrorism and Violent Extremism 2021-2026 and the Action Plan 2021-2026 have foreseen four strategic objectives: a) Prevention; b) Protection; c) Follow-up and d) Response. Specific goals are foreseen as well, whereby in the section, ‘Design and implementation of plans for rehabilitation and reintegration’ 22 specific activities are proposed to achieve the specific goals and strategic objectives of the said Draft-Strategy.⁶

⁴Office of the Prime Minister. Strategy for the Prevention of Violent Extremism and Radicalism that leads to Terrorism 2015 – 2020. Available at: https://kryeministri.rks-gov.net/repository/docs/STRATEGJIA_parandalim_-_SHQIP.pdf

⁵KALLXO.com. Map of events following the 110 returned Kosovars from Syria. Available at: <https://kallxo.com/shkurt/harta-e-ngjarjeve-qepollen-110-kosovaret-e-kthyer-nga-siria/>

⁶The draft State Strategy against Terrorism and Violent Extremism and the Action Plan 2021 - 2026 that BIRN has used for the purpose of this analysis

In the beginning of January 2022, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, issued a decision to establish the working group on drafting the National Strategy Against Terrorism and Violent extremism, thus essentially taking the draft-Strategy to ground zero. This was done with the purpose of drafting a new strategy until October 2022, which would a fusion between the current Strategy against Terrorism and Strategy on Prevention.

In the first meeting for the new strategy which was held on January 22nd, with BIRN representatives being a part of it, the work plan, roles and responsibilities of institutions were discussed, in additional to the thematic content of the new document.

Judging from the content of the specific activities aimed at the realization of the strategic objectives, it ensures that at least 15 specific objectives aim at the rehabilitation and reintegration of returnees, convicted criminals and their families in various forms, including trainings, grants, emergency packages. They also focus on strengthening institutional capacities such as through supporting the Prevention and Reintegration Division with additional staff.

Analysis of the specific activities indicates that the implementation of the strategy evaluated according to the Action Plan is conditioned by donations. Almost all specific activities are foreseen to be financed with the assistance of donations, while five of the concrete activities are foreseen to be financed by donations alone, with no budget provided at all for them.

Beyond the dependence on donations, the Draft Strategy seems to be entirely oriented towards quantitative indicators, which do not necessarily reflect the realization of any specific goals nor, consequently, any strategic objectives.

Also, in relation to this specific purpose, specific activities seem rather generalized, without individuality and sometimes abstract.

While the narrative part of the Draft Strategy stipulates that the Action Plan will contain ‘concrete activities’, in line with the Action Plan Document’s specific purpose of ‘Drafting and implementing rehabilitation and reintegration plans’, many of the ‘concrete activities’, are only described as such without any concrete descriptions of what these ‘concrete’ activities will entail.

To exemplify, in one of the concrete activities foreseen in the action plan named ‘support for emergency packages of entities’, the financing this activity is not foreseen at all.

The remainder of this analysis will reflect the roles, competencies, functions, actions thus far, the coordination of actions between several institutions in terms of rehabilitation and reintegration of returnees and convicted criminals for acts related to terrorism.

THE ROLE OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES IN THE PROCESS OF REINTEGRATION AND RESOCIALISATION OF RETURNEES

Data analysis shows that reintegration and resocialisation programmes in Kosovo prisons are not able to include all prisoners convicted of terrorism. The data show that less than 40% of the prisoners who have already been released from prison had gone through vocational training processes. Others were released without obtaining any training that would prepare them for the labour market.

The Kosovo Correctional Services (KCS) is an Agency functioning within the framework of the Ministry of Justice. According to the Law on Execution of Criminal Sanctions (LECS), the KCS is responsible for organising the supervision and implementation of Criminal Sanctions. The KCS's activity is the resocialisation of individuals convicted with imprisonment and their reintegration into society, thus fulfilling a crucial role in protecting the Republic of Kosovo from the repetition of criminal offences and preventing crime in the future⁷.

Aside from the organisation, implementation, and supervision of the execution of criminal sanctions, the KCS is also responsible to organise programmes that contribute to the re-education, preparation for the period after release, and the long-term supervision of convicted individuals.

One of the aims of the KCS is to contribute to decreasing recidivism through programmes dedicated to the rehabilitation and reintegration of prisoners, as well as offering and enabling prisoners access to education and vocational schooling programmes.

Kosovo Correctional Services also have a Correctional Services Economics Unit, which engages in activities such as fruitery; open field branch; agro-works; farming; and environment maintenance.

Furthermore, in parallel to providing education within the KCS, which is equivalent to that provided outside of the KCS, the Correctional Services also provide some vocational education programmes such as: Information Technology (word-excel); water and sewage installers; machinists; welders, carpet laying, and many construction trades (ceramics, facades, masonry, reinforcing, hewing, etc.).

Furthermore, one of the other opportunities the KCS provides is the organisation of agreements with private economic entities to engage prisoners to work outside of the KCS.⁸

All these opportunities provided by the legislation regulating the activity of the KCS aim for all prisoners during and after serving their sentence to get educated, build skills, get employed, thus contributing to their resocialisation and full reintegration into society. All this aims to decrease the potential for the repetition of criminal offences.

In the context of this analysis, the opportunities and goals of the KCS have an even greater value and importance.

⁷Kosovo Correctional Service. History. Available at: <https://shkk.rks-gov.net/shkk/480/historiku/480>

⁸Kosovo Correctional Service. History. Available at: <https://shkk.rks-gov.net/shkk/480/historiku/480>

In all state strategic documents, as well local and international reports, psycho-social factors are noted as the key drivers for the involvement of Kosovo citizens in the wars in Syria and Iraq.⁹ The dire economic situation, lack of employment perspectives, inadequate education level, and unequal economic opportunities are noted as the most important drivers that contributed to Kosovo youth joining extremist groups.

Therefore, aside from the importance of KCS's role in preventing the radicalisation of other prisoners by the convicted individuals on terrorism offences, their education, training, and professional preparation of the convicted individuals for life after imprisonment is crucial as well.

The role and importance of the KCS are also reflected in the Action Plan of the Draft-Strategy. Six out of eight concrete activities are foreseen in the Action Plan, obliging the KCS with implementation related to rehabilitation and re-integration.

BIRN submitted a request for access to documents/information of the KCS and received data on their work conducted up until now regarding convicted individuals on terrorism charges.

The data in the following table reflect the number of convicted individuals released from the Kosovo Correctional Services from 2018 until the beginning of December 2021.

Number of convicted individuals released from the Kosovo Correctional Services 2018 - 2021.	
2018	14 convicted
2019	14 convicted
2020	19 convicted
2021 (until beginning of December)	9 convicted
Total convicted individuals released/served their sentence	56 convicted
Currently serving out their sentence in the KCS	16 convicted

In addition, the data obtained from the KCS indicate that some of the convicted individuals partook in various vocational trainings whilst serving their sentences.

The following table shows the number of individuals who underwent vocational training in carpet laying, welding, water instalment, etc. whilst serving their sentences, compared to the overall number of individuals who were serving or continue to serve their sentences and who did not undertake any trainings.

⁹Office of the Prime Minister. Strategy for the Prevention of Violent Extremism and Radicalism that leads to Terrorism 2015 – 2020. Available at: https://kryeministri.rks-gov.net/repository/docs/STRATEGJIA_parandalim_-_SHQIP.pdf

Individuals who underwent vocational training while serving their sentence	28 persons
Individuals who did not undergo vocational training while serving their sentence	44 persons

The data obtained by the KCS show that 78% of the individuals convicted on terrorism charges who were serving their sentences in the period covering at least 2018-2021 were released, whereas over 6% of the convicted individuals (those released or still serving their sentence) had not followed any training or vocational training while serving their sentence.

This indicates that these individuals did not learn another vocation or improve their skills, which could have helped to steer their career after being released from jail.

The collected data show that among key challenges for convicted individuals who did not attend the programmes relate to short sentences and lack of attractive programmes.

A portion of the convicted individuals in Kosovo had spent the majority of their sentence already in pre-detention. During the time spent in pre-detention, individuals are not involved in rehabilitation programmes and thus do not attend courses or trainings provided within the correctional facilities.

Kosovo Correctional Services data show that a major part of the training and vocational training programmes within the prisons are oriented towards construction and agriculture. Such programmes are deemed unfavourable considering that a big portion of the returnees, over 50%, are from urban areas where agriculture is not very developed, and they have less affinity for construction.

THE ROLE OF THE PROBATION SERVICE IN THE REINTEGRATION OF RETURNEES

Most women who have returned from war zones are sentenced to probation by Kosovo courts. Any conditional release should be subject to a serious process with many criteria, which measure the activity of the released during his/her time in freedom.

The Kosovo Probation Service (KPS) is, just as the KCS, an Agency within the Ministry of Justice. The KPS's Draft Strategy Action Plan only mentions two concrete activities defined by the Draft Strategy. KPS holds responsibility regarding specific actions with respect to prisoners in the post-release phase but also in cross-sectoral coordination and empowerment in the fight against terrorism and acts related to terrorism.

Within its mandate, the KPS has very important competencies, among them:

- Organising, implementing, and supervising the execution of alternative sentences and the social reintegration of convicted persons (probation);
- Preparation of the social survey and pre-trial reports for perpetrators of criminal offences;
- Assessing the criminogenic risk and determining the needs for treatment of perpetrators of criminal offences;
- Supervising and assisting convicted persons while serving alternative sentences;
- Supervision and assistance to parolees;
- Development of individual supervision programmes;
- Drafting reports on the execution of alternative sentences and persons released on parole for Prosecutors, Courts and the Parole Board;
- Instruction and support to convicted persons at the end of their sentence;
- Maintaining records and registers for the execution of alternative measures and penalties in the electronic data management system;¹⁰

As evidenced by the responsibilities of the KPS, the importance of this institution in terms of supervision, development of individual supervision programmes, guidance, and support for convicts but also evidence of records and measures of alternative sentences, KPS has a crucial role in the rehabilitation, resocialization, and reintegration of those convicted.

In the context of this analysis, the Draft Strategy and Action Plan do not oblige the KPS to exercise its responsibilities to those convicted of terrorism.

Of course, the KPS exercises its mandate in accordance with current legislation for each convict. However, the Draft Strategy, as a cross-cutting state document, should reflect the role and importance of the KPS in the reintegration and resocialisation of those convicted of terrorism offences, in particular given the seriousness, complexity, and dangerousness of those convicted of terrorism offences and the phenomenon of terrorism - both domestically and globally.

For this analysis, BIRN has also requested information from the KPS on the commitment of this institution regarding vocational training, employment, and self-employment of persons convicted of acts related to terrorism¹¹.

¹⁰Kosovo Probation Service. History. Available at: <https://md.rks-gov.net/page.aspx?id=1,19>

¹¹For the purposes of conducting this analysis, BIRN submitted officials requests for access to documents and information as well as direct interviews with Employment Offices and Social Centers in ten municipalities, with the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Employment Agency, Department for Public Safety at Kosovo Police, Ministry of Justice – Correctional Services and Probation Services.

Although this institution emphasises that, in cooperation with the Ministry of Internal Affairs' Division for Prevention and Reintegration (herein after the MIA Division), they have provided support for some, the financial difficulties and the general socio-economic situation in the country are evident. "Obviously, we have to take into account the socio-economic situation and the lack of jobs in general in Kosovo," Metije Ademi, Deputy Director-General of the Probation Service, told BIRN.¹²

Ademi further states that the Kosovo Probation Service does not have special training, employment, or self-employment programmes for perpetrators convicted of terrorism-related offenses.

The KPS states that the identification of the needs of convicts for acts related to terrorism is done during the drafting of individual work plans and the possibility of finding any commitment is examined through partners.

Additionally, the KPS data show that 15 people - mostly women - have been trained in cooperation with the MIA Division, while the rest of the convicts, despite having expressed willingness, could not be trained due to childcare and other family obligations.

The data in the table below show the number of employees/self-employed in relation to the number of parolees.

Number of parolees and number of employees according to the KPS

32 released on parole

15 employed and self-employed

The data of the Kosovo Probation Service evaluates the cooperation between the Correctional Service, the Division of the Ministry of the Interior, and the regional offices of the Employment Agency, while it also emphasizes the need for additional staffing and training.

"The main challenge of the Probation Service is the rehabilitation programmes and the limited number of probation officers to deal with this category. Furthermore, employment issues and their engagement in other activities would help in their smoother integration into society. The need for specialized training for KPS staff is most urgent. This is also due to the fact that acts of this nature require a very professional approach and skills to provide assistance and support in removing them from these acts and their complete resocialisation into society," Metije Ademi told BIRN.¹³

THE ROLE OF THE MIA DIVISION FOR THE PREVENTION AND REINTEGRATION OF RETURNERS

The Division for Prevention and Reintegration of Radicalised Persons (hereinafter referred to as the Division) was established to coordinate, cooperate, communicate, monitor, and evaluate the reintegration process. The Division operates under the umbrella of the Department of Public Safety of the Ministry of Internal Affairs.¹⁴

The role of this institution is to lead the crucial reintegration process in the fight against the phenomenon of terrorism.

BIRN has collected data from this institution to conduct this analysis.

¹²Interview and e-mail response to BIRN dated 7 December 2021.

¹³Interview and e-mail response to BIRN, dated 7 December, 2021

¹⁴Ministry of Internal Affairs. Division for Prevention and Reintegration of Radicalized People. Available at: <https://mpb.rks-gov.net/f/78/Divizioni-per-Parandalim-dhe-Riintegrim-te-Personave-te-Radikalizuar>

The data show that the Division has only one programme “an R&R programme for this category and individual plans for employment and self-employment. One of the elements of intervention in the R&R programme is also the mentoring programme, which is still a draft and would help families in employment and self-employment “.

The data provided by the Division show that 23 persons who were serving their sentences have been self-employed, while 6 persons are in the process of obtaining a grant based on the skills acquired by the R&R programme. In addition, according to the data, the Division has provided professional training for 3 people for financial management after their self-employment. 8 women who were repatriated in 2019 have been trained in tailoring and are in the final stage of negotiating employment in the private sector.

Below, we present the data of the Division regarding the employment of convicts for acts related to terrorism in a tabular form.

Data regarding employment by the Division	
Employed after serving a sentence	23 persons
In the grant application process	6 persons
Repatriated women in 2019 - trained in tailoring	8 persons
Vocational training after self-employment 3	3 persons
Convicted persons who have sought assistance in vocational training, employment, self-employment	46 persons

The data show that a total of 37 people were self-employed and trained, however, 46 people asked for help in total and no data was provided as to why the rest of the applicants were not offered any help.

The difficulty of entering the Labour Market

Data from the Division show ‘excellent’ cooperation with other institutions, while also highlighting the difficulty of employing persons convicted of acts related to terrorism due to their criminal past.

The answers of the Division ascertain, in particular, the difficulty of employment in those positions where the certificate of one’s criminal past is required (in the public sector for instance), while some businesses that have offered cooperation for their employment are mentioned as positive cases.

A very important issue stemming from the Division data turns out to be the lack of budget for handling these cases and fulfilling responsibilities.

It is evident that thus far, the financial needs have been covered by the implemented R&R programme and by international donors.

In addition to the issue of the lack of a special budget for the needs of the Division in relation to convicts for terrorism and returnees, the cases of convicts for terrorism-related offenses and returnees who have not sought and received vocational training or have not participated in any of the training/employment/self-employment programmes should also be addressed.

As the Division operates on a voluntary basis only - at the request of the entities - it should be kept in mind that among those convicted of terrorism-related offenses, there may be cases that do not know about any of Kosovo's institutions, do not seek any assistance, and in this way, they can fall prey to financiers and recruiters for committing terrorist acts.

In this way, in addition to not achieving the purpose of the sentence, we do not have resocialization and reintegration of convicts for acts related to terrorism, and there is a risk of repetition of criminal offences by the same perpetrators.

THE ROLE OF THE CENTRAL EMPLOYMENT AGENCY AND CENTRES FOR SOCIAL WORK ON THE REINTEGRATION OF RETURNEES

The Central Employment Agency and its local offices in the municipalities, as well as Centres for Social Work operate within the scope of the municipal departments of healthcare and have a supplementary role in regard to the rehabilitation and reintegration of convicted individuals related to criminal offences of terrorism as well as their families.

BIRN requested data from the Employment Agency and the Centres for Social work in regard to treating cases, counselling, vocational training, employment, or self-employment of individuals convicted on terrorism charges, however, some of the Centres seem to abstain altogether from their responsibility to counsel these cases as called upon.

In addition, it has resulted that the Employment Agency does not possess a track record of people convicted on criminal offences related to terrorism to whom it provides services.

This is based on information obtained by BIRN from the Employment Agency¹⁵, "as the Employment Agency, we do not possess evidence or track records concerning individuals on terrorism charges. At the Employment Agency, we do not provide employment services for this category".

This situation is harmful on two fronts – firstly, individuals involved in criminal offences related to terrorism do not obtain adequate services, because they are not noted as fitting the criteria, the difficulties in their employment are not evidenced, their needs are not addressed and thus there is a risk for the process of vocational training and employment or self-employment. In addition, this risks the entire process of their rehabilitation, resocialisation, and reintegration due to the inability to secure financial wellbeing through their own employment.

On the other hand, the second damage caused comes from the lack of communication and lack of enabling an inter-sectorial approach to these cases, as individuals who received training through the trainings of the KCS and KPS, do not have continuity at the Employment Agency. Thus, a chain that ought to be very useful for the professional development of the convicted individuals for terrorism charges and their rehabilitation and reintegration are halted.

¹⁵Response of Drin Haraçia – General Director of the Kosovo Employment Agency, provided to BIRN through e-mail on December 6th 2021.

In this regard, despite the Employment Agency and Correctional Services having a cooperation obligation concerning the quality of trainings, testing, and certification of the convicted individuals – there is no specific track record on the individuals convicted for terrorism, meanwhile the complexity of these cases differs substantially when compared to cases of other natures.

For example, a case was referred by Probation Services to the Employment Office of Gjakova and was employed after having gained new skills, yet the Central Employment Agency did not have such a record for specific cases, thus the case in Gjakova is an exception.

The Employment Office in Gjilan stated to BIRN that they do not have any cases of individuals involved in criminal offences related to terrorism as “parties we serve do not tell us everything about themselves”, thus noting the lack of cooperation with other relevant institutions, with the purpose of evidencing the cases and capacitating individuals convicted of terrorism with new skills to rehabilitate and reintegrate them through vocational trainings.

In its responses provided to BIRN, the municipality of Drenas said that they did not have any cases of counselling or training individuals convicted on terrorism charges.

The Centre for Social Work in Mitrovica despite being located in an area where tens of citizens were involved in criminal offences related to terrorism stated to BIRN that they had no cases of providing counselling.

This proves that the Centres for Social Work fail to properly complete their professional role and responsibility.

In contrast to the Centre for Social Work in Mitrovica¹⁶, the Centre in Prishtina has identified 12 adults and 28 children involved in cases related to terrorism, and according to the latter, all these cases are in the social welfare assistance scheme.

The CSW in Prishtina¹⁷ stated that social workers apart from the social and psychological counselling they offer, when it comes to employment and vocational training, they refer cases to the Employment Office, however, they do not have further information concerning eventual employment.

This indicated a lack of communication between the CSW and the Employment Office, which can result in harming the budget as any of the subjects can be employed while the Centre for Social Work would not have such information back from referred cases to the Employment Office.

Other municipalities are not noted in this part and although they received questions from BIRN, they have not responded to any of the questions.

The data collected from the Employment Office and the Regional Employment Offices and Centres for Social Work reflect a lack of coordination between the Employment Agency and other relevant institutions in evidencing, training, and employment and self-employment cases of individuals convicted of criminal offences related to terrorism.

¹⁶Gani Mustaga – Director of the Center for Social Work in South Mitrovica, response through email to BIRN dated December 6th 2021.

¹⁷Vehbi Mujku - Director of the Center for Social Work in South Mitrovica, response through email to BIRN dated December 6th 2021.

In addition, data obtained from the Centres for Social Work, with some exceptions, show that there is a lack of adequate cooperation with other institutions, Employment Offices, Correctional Services, and Probation Services. Furthermore, in some cases, the Centres for Social Work are not included in the process of rehabilitation and reintegration through the provision of psycho-social counselling.

Outside of the process

Data show that aside from the abovementioned problems, there are other categories in Kosovo which have been left out of the resocialisation and reintegration process.

Families of individuals killed during the wars are not included in any of the programmes that aim to address the economic drivers of radicalisation in their families.

Children are an important part of this process. Children who were returned in an organized manner from the war zones in 2019 and 2021, were part of various MIA programmes, aiming for their reintegration and resocialisation, however children whose parents were killed in Syria and Iraq or whose parents returned before 2019 on their own and not as part of organised repatriation have been excluded from these programmes.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Kosovo institutions should collect periodic data on the level of employment of convicted persons or those who have shown radical tendencies;
- Certain categories, such as children and families should be included in concrete rehabilitation programmes;
- The Draft Strategy should include clear, concrete, and tax-listed activities and provide safe and long-term forms of funding to support the vocational training, employment, and self-employment of returnees and convicts for terrorism-related offences;
- The Draft Strategy should reflect and include more broadly the role and responsibilities of the Correctional Service and the Probation Service in handling cases of returnees and those convicted of terrorism-related offences;
- The Draft Strategy should include the role of the Employment Agency in the professional training of convicts for terrorism;
- Create a centralized and common database of the Correctional Services, Probation Services, Central Employment Agency that is led by the MIA Division, which includes data related to training, education, vocational training, employment and self-employment of those convicted of acts related to terrorism;
- The Kosovo Correctional Services, in cooperation with the Central Employment Agency, and the Probation Services should encourage and enable all those convicted of terrorism-related offenses to be trained and certified while serving their sentence or probation period;
- Kosovo Probation Service should have special training, employment, and self-employment programmes for convicts of terrorism but also to design individual programmes for these persons;
- A special budget should be allocated to the Correctional Services, the Probation Services, and the MIA Division to carry out their responsibilities towards persons convicted of criminal offenses related to terrorism;
- There should be an increase in the number of staff of the Kosovo Probation Services responsible for the cases of convicts for acts related to terrorism;
- Additional and specialised training is needed for KPS staff in relation to persons convicted of terrorism-related offenses;
- The MIA Division in coordination with the Central Employment Agency should encourage private businesses to employ terrorism convicts in the areas in which they are trained;
- The MIA Division in coordination with the KCS, KPS, the Central Employment Agency, and the Centres for Social Work should provide opportunities for training, employment, self-employment for all those convicted for acts related to terrorism.