



Challenges of Terrorism Prevention Mechanisms in Kosovo



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Abbreviations

Strategy	State Strategy for Preventing and Combating Terrorism 2023-2028
Action Plan	Action Plan 2023-2025
MIA	Ministry of Internal Affairs
MESTI	Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation
MCSC	Municipal Community Safety Council
LPSC	Local Public Safety Council

I.Executive Summary/Main Findings

The State Strategy for Preventing and Combating Terrorism prioritizes terrorism prevention within its strategic objectives. As a new strategy, it aims to create a broader approach to addressing terrorism by expanding its focus to include right-wing extremism.

Early prevention of the driving and promoting factors of violent extremism that lead to terrorism is one of the essential objectives in the field of prevention. In this regard, the strategy has outlined concrete activities designed to create an environment where terrorism is prevented at an early stage

As a new area included in the current strategy, the concept of early prevention is in its initial phase of development. Some of the institutions tasked with implementing these programs are in the process of building internal capacities, while the challenge remains in ensuring ethnic inclusivity due to limited access to schools and cultural activities organized by the Serbian community in Kosovo.

Data collected by BIRN identify serious issues in the implementation of these activities:



Kosovo institutions have not taken concrete steps in the early prevention of all forms of terrorism.

During the years 2023-2024, Kosovo has continued to face terrorism. Domestically, there have been several terrorist attacks instigated by far-right and extremist Islamic religious groups.

BIRN finds that since the adoption of the strategy until the drafting of this report, Kosovo's institutions have continued to focus their efforts on combating and rehabilitating, while neglecting their obligations for early prevention. Most of the planned activities in this area have not been carried out or are still in the preparatory phase before being carried out. BIRN also finds that the institutions' focus on addressing religious extremism has left significant gaps in building capacities to deal with right-wing extremism.

Between 2023 and 2024, Kosovo has continued to face terrorism. Within the country, there have been several terrorist attacks driven by right-wing extremist groups and Islamic religious extremist groups.

BIRN finds that since the adoption of the strategy until the drafting of this report, Kosovo's institutions have continued to focus their efforts on combating and rehabilitating, while neglecting their obligations for early prevention. Most of the planned activities in this area have not been implemented or are still in the preparatory phase for implementation. BIRN also finds that the institutions' focus on addressing religious extremism has left significant gaps in building capacities to address right-wing extremism.



Central and local institutions have serious issues in understanding the strategic message of the strategy and in drafting individual implementation plans.

BIRN has found that the government of Kosovo has not officially delivered the basic document and the strategy's action plan to some of the institutions tasked with implementing the strategy. Serious problems have been identified in municipalities where the strategy and action plan have not been delivered. Of the 26 municipalities contacted by BIRN, 20 municipalities confirmed that they do not have the strategy and action plan, while the other municipalities stated that they have been informed of the strategy's content through alternative means. BIRN finds that in the municipality of Mitrovica, where a referral mechanism has been created, the group has not received the strategic document, whereas in another municipality – Hani i Elezit – the strategy has been received. The lack of the basic document has created additional systemic issues. The municipalities have not drafted specific implementation plans for the strategy, nor have they assigned responsible individuals to handle concrete activities on the ground. At the central level, the strategy has been sent to the line ministries responsible for implementing the activities.



The institutions have failed to identify vulnerable groups and the driving and attracting factors of extremism based on studies.

BIRN has found that a year after the strategy came into effect, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Education, municipalities, and other stakeholders have not conducted empirical studies to identify vulnerable groups in the population susceptible to radicalization and the driving and attracting factors. The implementation of research was destined as the foundation for initiating field activities, and this obligation was clearly outlined in the action plan. In the absence of research, the targeted groups for activities have been determined by the MIA based on case data, while municipalities have almost entirely abstained from participating in this specific activity.



Institutions that carry out activities on the ground have not drafted a comprehensive list of entities that are potential targets for radicalization and those exposed to driving and attracting factors.

BIRN has found that central and local level institutions have failed to create a methodology and mechanism that generates a comprehensive list which records vulnerable entities at risk of radicalization. BIRN data shows that municipalities in this regard are entirely dependent on the central level. At the central level, BIRN finds that the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Ministry of Education group and identify vulnerable groups based on data derived from past cases, but there is no evident focus on right-wing extremism as the data used mainly pertains to religious extremism.



Central institutions have yet to begin work on drafting a guideline for institutions aimed at identifying early signs of radicalization.

BIRN has found that the Ministry of Internal Affairs is in the initial planning phase for drafting a guideline for identifying early signs of radicalization. The Ministry of Education has a handbook drafted in 2018, which is still in use for the needs of teachers, while the Psychology Institute at the University of Prishtina has conducted a study titled “From Syria to Home” that addresses a specific focus group – those returning from Syria. At the local level, municipalities continue to rely on the Police or the Ministry of Internal Affairs as their point of reference, lack specific research for their territories, and, in some cases, refer to the previous Strategy, almost abstaining from their role in identifying early signs, often acting only after incidents have occurred.



The concept of community policing has not been sufficiently developed to fulfill its role in early identification.

BIRN has found that at the local level, full capacities have not been created to use the Community Policing Concept for the purpose of early identification and treatment of terrorism. Of the 26 municipalities that responded to BIRN, only 9 demonstrate that this concept has proper reach and understanding. Furthermore, even in municipalities where this concept is present, they are unable to demonstrate specific results and face organizational and logistical challenges.



Community Safety Councils do not prioritize the implementation of activities within the framework of early prevention.

BIRN's data shows that of the 26 municipalities in the country, only 10 have functional Municipal Community Safety Councils. The data collected indicates that 14 municipalities were unable to provide adequate responses regarding the functionality, role, and impact of these councils in preventing radicalization and its early identification. BIRN's data also reveals that despite serious concerns in the country about religious extremism and right-wing extremism, this issue is ignored at the council level. At the national level, out of 213 meetings, this topic has been discussed in only 7 meetings.



The Ministry of Education has made limited progress in fulfilling the objectives and action plan.

BIRN has found that the Ministry of Education has increased its commitment toward implementing activities. The Ministry has informed the Municipal Education Directorates (MEDs) of their role in the strategy, while MESTI has appointed an internal coordinator and has taken several steps towards implementing the strategy. BIRN finds that most activities have been developed within the R&R (Rehabilitation and Reintegration) program and are not related to the early prevention phase. MESTI is in the early stages of engaging with activities involving parents, while direct field activities with camps and critical thinking have not been carried out, even though they are planned in the action plan



Municipalities have made efforts to increase the number of professionals, psychologists, pedagogues, and their training, but there are many deficiencies regarding the information provided to Parent Councils and meetings with them.

Eight out of 26 municipalities report that they have engaged psychologists and pedagogues during the period covered by the monitoring report, while 9 out of 26 municipalities report that they have not engaged psychologists or have not provided data to confirm such actions.

On the other hand, 18 out of 26 municipalities have not informed the Parent Council about identifying early signs of radicalization, which is one of the obligations outlined in the strategy. Additionally, most schools have not held informational meetings with the Parent Council.

II. Introduction

Kosovo has consistently faced radicalization and terrorism, and the country's institutions, through a multidisciplinary approach, aim to identify the drivers of radicalization, combat terrorism, and rehabilitate and reintegrate individuals involved in terrorist activities. At the national level, activities in the field of terrorism are coordinated by a national coordinator who is responsible for coordinating activities within the counter-terrorism strategy. This document includes all domestic institutions tasked with carrying out activities to implement the strategic objectives.

The State Strategy for Preventing and Combating Terrorism 2023-2028 was approved in June 2023 and is based on four strategic objectives: prevention, protection, prosecution, and response.

Prevention is one of the main pillars of the strategy, encompassing all steps taken by institutions to address the causes of radicalization and to treat individuals involved in terrorist actions.

As a strategic objective, prevention is divided into several activities, and this monitoring report focuses on the third pillar of the Prevention objective, which consists of "Early intervention to protect and support vulnerable individuals from radicalization." This monitoring report assesses early intervention measures to protect and support individuals highly vulnerable to radicalization.

The purpose of the report is to collect and present data on the implementation of planned measures in the State Strategy for Preventing and Combating Terrorism 2023-2028, specifically the third pillar of the Prevention objective, which includes early intervention to protect and support individuals vulnerable to radicalization.

In this regard, this monitoring report assesses efforts such as community policing, school initiatives, and community engagement to prevent radicalization.

Identification and early intervention play a critical role in preventing radicalization. The focus of this report is on an organized approach to assess the effectiveness of early intervention measures.

The monitoring report examines the presence of community policing, the creation of Community Safety Councils, and the engagement of schools and local communities in preventing radicalization.

This monitoring report excludes the measurement and treatment of other protection, response, and prosecution mechanisms, aiming instead to provide a clear overview of activities related to early prevention.

Data research was conducted from July 2023 to May 31, 2024, during a time when Kosovo faced serious challenges to national order and security due to terrorist activities.

During this period, incidents related to right-wing terrorist groups, especially the terrorist organizations “Civil Defense” and “Northern Brigade,” were recorded in the northern region and other areas of Kosovo. The attack in Banjska in September 2023 and dozens of other incidents and attacks against the police and institutions have been attributed to these groups, while in some cases, right-wing extremist supporters from Serbia and Montenegro have appeared at Kosovo’s borders.

On the other hand, at least one serious incident was noted within the Albanian community. In the Podujeva region, some supporters of the Albanian Orthodox Church of Elbasan were arrested after attempting to take over a Serbian Orthodox church and declare it an Albanian church. The incident resulted in the arrest and indictment of several clerics, while a comprehensive analysis of the ideology followed by the activists of this organization is still pending.

In developments related to extremist groups, there were some incidents attributed to religious motives. Radicalized groups supported by radical Islamic ideologies were involved in the burning of the Court in Kaçanik, while another group participated in the armed robbery of a jewelry store in Suhareka. BIRN notes that within the Islamic community, there were conflicts among different imams regarding dominance in certain mosques, and it was observed that specific mosques, such as the mosque in Viti, did not comply with the local authorities of the Islamic Community of Kosovo (BIK). BIRN also found that during this time, group prayer gatherings outside facilities of BIK (Islamic Community of Kosovo) have appeared within the Islamic community, organized in the format of masjids (prayer rooms).

In the political aspect, the country faced significant challenges during this period due to the departure of the Serbian List from the government and other institutions. Supporters of this political party continually voiced opposition to institutional activities and called for a boycott of these institutions in areas where Serbs constitute a majority of the population. As a result, the country’s authorities faced substantial challenges in carrying out investments and serving citizens in these areas.

Statements and actions by the Serbian List aimed at diminishing trust in institutions became a daily occurrence throughout the year.

On the political front, Albanian political parties engaged in heated discussions and opposition regarding the Law on Artificial Fertilization and the Civil Code, which includes provisions for the registration of same-sex marriages.

Movements against the LGBTI+ community within Albanian political parties are assessed to be motivated by elements of the far-right.

III. Methodology

This monitoring report evaluates and reflects Kosovo's process towards developing and functionalizing a system of response and early intervention to protect and support individuals vulnerable to radicalization.

The purpose of this monitoring report is to “collect and present data on the implementation of planned measures in the State Strategy for Preventing and Combating Terrorism 2023-2028”, specifically the third pillar of the Prevention objective, “Early intervention to protect and support individuals vulnerable to radicalization.”

An important aspect of the monitoring approach is assessing the impact of governmental and non-governmental initiatives across all four areas. This assessment examines how these actions contribute to the overarching goal of safeguarding the values and interests of the Republic of Kosovo and protecting its citizens from threats posed by violent extremism and terrorism.

Several methods were used to collect data for the drafting of this report, which serve well the purpose of triangulating the findings. Key methods include:

Primary data sources include government reports, official statistics, other official data from the government, surveys, interviews with key stakeholders, and additional non-governmental studies or reports.

Key methods include:

Desk review: BIRN conducted a comprehensive review of over 30 documents, including academic literature, policy documents, reports, and case studies related to early intervention measures for preventing radicalization. This process identified key themes, theories, and frameworks relevant to early intervention strategies, including factors that contribute to radicalization, intervention approaches, and assessment methods.

Survey: A questionnaire was prepared and distributed to key stakeholders involved in the implementation of the Strategy at both central and local levels.

In-depth interviews with the main stakeholders: 10 interviews were conducted with key stakeholders tasked with implementing the activities of the Strategy's Action Plan, including the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, the Mayor of Hani i Elezit Municipality, and coordinators of two multidisciplinary mechanisms. The interviews were based on a pre-designed questionnaire composed of questions about key indicators. A semi-structured qualitative interview technique was used to ensure comprehensive coverage of the analysis topics while allowing interviewees to independently present important topics related to the issue at hand.

Direct observations: Direct observation of activities was carried out to gain a better understanding of the methodology used in implementing the Strategy. The workshop organized by the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Kosovo was observed on December 4, 5, and 6, 2023, during which the implementation of activities stemming from the Strategy for Preventing and Combating Terrorism 2023-2028 and the Action Plan 2023-2025 was reported.

The data collected from the different stakeholders for the purpose of this report was requested for the period from July 1, 2023, to May 31, 2024, which coincides with the adoption of the Strategy by the Government of the Republic of Kosovo on June 29, 2023.

For the realization of this report, BIRN sent questionnaires to all municipalities in Kosovo, from which 26 responded, including 7 major municipalities in the country and 3 municipalities with a majority Serb population. Additionally, at the local level, there were interviews with the Coordinator of the Multidisciplinary Mechanism in the Municipality of Hani i Elezit, Amir Bushi, and the Coordinator of the Multidisciplinary Mechanism in Mitrovica South, Mr. Bahtir Maxhuni.

Furthermore, the Mayor of Hani i Elezit, Mr. Mehmet Ballazhi, was also interviewed for the purposes of this report. Mehmet Ballazhi.

At the central level, BIRN conducted an interview with Mrs. Aferdita Jaha from the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation and Mr. Mensur Hoti, Director of the Department for Public Safety in the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

Municipalities that did not respond:

1	Suharekë
2	Lipjan
3	Partes
4	Gracanica
5	Mamusha
6	Novoberda
7	Malisheva
8	Zvecan
9	Zubin Potok
10	Vushtrri

IV. Main findings: Analysis of progress at the production level

Identifying target population groups susceptible to radicalization and the driving and attracting factors towards radicalization is one of the primary actions necessary to fulfill the third pillar of the strategic objective “Prevention” in the Strategy for Preventing and Combating Terrorism 2023-2028 and the Action Plan 2023-2025 (hereafter referred to as the Strategy).

With the specific goal of programming and implementing early intervention to protect and support those most at risk of radicalization, the current Strategy has envisioned conducting an empirical study to identify more vulnerable population groups and the driving and attracting factors of radicalization.

This segment of the analysis reflects the current situation at the central level, and especially at the local level, assessing whether they have conducted or plan to conduct such a study, what the findings were regarding vulnerable groups and driving and attracting factors, who designed it, what the design process was, how the findings are being used for the Strategy’s objectives and what is the basis for specific interventions derived from the Strategy if there is no identification of vulnerable population groups.

This monitoring report indicates that at the local level, the municipalities, as key actors in the Strategy, have not succeeded in drafting any document that identifies vulnerable population groups to radicalization, they do not succeed in addressing the driving and attracting factors, and their approach is not being continuously updated. On the other hand, at the central level, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Public Administration primarily operates based on lessons learned from previous cases. The Ministry of Education, Science, Technology, and Innovation on the other hand relies on a document – a handbook drafted around four years ago, which has not been updated and is more dedicated to identifying early signs of radicalization rather than identifying vulnerable population groups.

“MIA does not have a specific list or study that identifies the most vulnerable groups, but we have a list of groups that we consider to be at risk. Our main focus in these cases is on schools, education, and MESTI in general and for this particular issue, the Ministry of Education has a manual that is distributed to all teachers and school directors. This manual is from about 4 years ago”, Mensur Hoti told BIRN.¹

According to Hoti, currently, prevention is a priority for the Ministry of Internal Affairs, as it is an area that has not received significant coverage in the past, primarily because the focus was on Rehabilitation and Reintegration (R&R) and there were few activities on prevention. Now, however, this issue has become the main focus.

Another group in our focus is the youth, which includes the issue of online radicalization, an even bigger challenge. From empirical data and research, our focus is on groups and regions that have been most affected, where our citizens have become involved in Syria and Iraq.

Hoti stated that the Handbook has not been updated and he does not see an urgent need for updating it, as it deals with the early identification signs and with the activities and steps to be taken when teachers identify someone.²

1. Interview conducted by BIRN with Mr. Mensur Hoti – Director of the Department for Public Safety at the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration..

2. Interview conducted by BIRN with Mr. Mensur Hoti – Director of the Department for Public Safety at the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration.

TABLE 1.

Municipalities with an empirical study	Municipalities without an empirical study and without data on their basis	Municipalities without a study but relying on Police and Strategy	Total municipalities that have responded
2	21	3	26
Peja and Obiliq			
Findings	<p>The municipality of Peja reports as a study finding that it does not have an identified population vulnerable to radicalization or other contributing factors to radicalization.</p> <p>The municipality of Obiliq states that, based on their study, young people are the most vulnerable category to radicalization</p>		

Data shows that 22 out of 26 municipalities that responded to BIRN's questionnaire have not conducted any empirical study or research to identify population groups vulnerable to radicalization, as well as the driving and attracting factors.

Only 2 municipalities, Peja and Obiliq, have responded that they have conducted such studies, though neither provided further specific details about the study beyond describing their findings.

Given the strategic vision of the Strategy 2023-2028, which aims to strengthen the role of the local level through the establishment of multidisciplinary mechanisms within municipalities, this finding is quite concerning, especially considering that only 3 of the municipalities that responded refer to the Strategy, the Strategy's Action Plan, or collaboration with the Police as guidance for building their interventions derived from the Strategy.

TABLE 2.

Indikator 1	Municipality	Has any empirical study been conducted? ³	If yes, what are the findings of this research, which are the vulnerable groups, and what are the findings regarding the factors that lead to radicalization and terrorism?	If the answer to point 1 is 'yes,' how are these findings used for the purposes of the Strategy for Preventing and Combating Terrorism?	If the answer to point 1 is 'no,' on what basis are specific interventions built that derive from the Strategy for Preventing and Combating Terrorism?
1	Prishtina	No	n/a	n/a	n/d
2	Prizren	No	n/a	n/a	n/d
3	Peja	No	No identified population for radicalization, nor other factors contributing to the process of radicalization.	No findings	n/a
4	Gjakova	No	Apart from occasional discussions in KKSP meetings, the Municipality has not dealt with this topic as it was addressed at the central level.	n/d	n/d
5	Gjilan	No	n/d	n/d	n/d
6	Ferizaj	No	n/d	n/d	In cooperation with the relevant authorities
7	Kaçanik	No	n/a	n/a	n/d
8	Vitia	No	n/a	n/a	n/d
9	Hani i Elezit	No	n/a	n/a	n/d
10	Shtime	No	n/a	n/a	In the Municipality of Shtime, there have been no occurrences of any form of extremism or terrorism. The MCSC analyzes each case to determine if there are signs leading to terrorism.
11	Istog	No	n/a	n/a	n/d
12	Skenderaj	No	n/a	n/a	n/d
13	Rahovec	No	n/a	n/a	n/d

3. Full Question - Has any empirical study been conducted on the population groups targeted for radicalization and any research to identify manifestations and different forms leading to violent extremism and radicalization?

14	Drenas	No	n/a	n/a	n/d
15	Klina	No	n/a	n/a	n/d
16	Kamenica	No	n/a	n/a	n/d
17	Klllokot	No	n/a	n/a	n/d
18	Ranillug	No	n/a	n/a	n/d
19	Junik	No	n/a	n/a	Through the Strategy, specific activities
20	Obiliq	Yes	Vulnerable groups are young men and women	They are used in prevention	n/a
21	Dragas	No	n/a	n/a	n/d
22	Deçan	No	n/a	n/a	n/d
23	Mitrovica South	No	n/d	n/d	n/d
24	Podujevë	No	n/d	n/d	n/d
25	Fushë Kosova	No	No	No	No
26	Leposaviq	No	No	No	No

Topic - List of Population Groups Targeted for Radicalization and Susceptible to Driving and Attracting Factors towards Radicalization

The Action Plan 2023-2025 of the Strategy has outlined several activities that depend on a prerequisite: a comprehensive, continuously updated list that identifies groups targeted for radicalization and those sensitive to driving and attracting factors. “Capacity building for psychologists for early intervention to protect and support those most at risk of radicalization”, “Visits by social workers to vulnerable and affected families,” and “Lectures for vulnerable groups against narratives” are some of the activities targeting vulnerable groups or individuals most at risk of radicalization.

Based on the data collected for this report – questionnaires – it is reflected that the local level does not have such a comprehensive and continuously updated document or list that identifies these groups or individuals. Consequently, the practice municipalities implement is only 'post-festum'; that is, only after a case arises, it is identified and listed. However, in terms of prevention and early identification, there is no list or set criteria.

Municipalities with a list or document of population groups targeted for radicalization and sensitive to driving and attracting factors	Municipalities without a list or document of population groups targeted for radicalization and sensitive to driving and attracting factors
1	25

Interviews conducted by BIRN with the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Ministry of Education reveal that these ministries also lack a specific comprehensive list of subjects targeted for radicalization. The cases are handled based only on empirical data gathered from cases addressed so far.

According to the information obtained by BIRN, through the interview with MIA, the list of the most vulnerable subjects is initially linked to the area where the subjects live or their family circle. The cases we are dealing with currently are primarily based on family upbringing, meaning that the referred subjects are often more radical in their religious explanations and understanding.⁴

⁴Interview conducted by BIRN with Mr. Mensur Hoti – Director of the Department for Public Safety at the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration.

TABLE 3.

Indicator 2	Municipality	Is there a list or document of population groups targeted for radicalization and sensitive to driving and attracting factors and are they updated periodically?	If yes, how was this list compiled and what was the process the list went through?	How comprehensive and regularly updated are these lists?	How are these lists used to design intervention programs?
1	Prishtina	No	n/a	n/a	n/a
2	Prizren	No	n/a	n/a	n/a
3	Peja	No	n/a	n/a	n/d
4	Gjakova	No	n/d	n/d	This issue has not been within the municipality's competencies.
5	Gjilan	No	n/a	n/a	n/d
6	Ferizaj	No	n/a	n/a	n/d
7	Kaçanik	No	n/a	n/a	n/d
8	Viti	No	n/a	n/a	n/d
9	Hani i Elezit	Yes	The list was created following the occurrence of cases and provision of services.	We have been working on a daily basis and updating it as needed.	Following the occurrence of a case, assessment and subsequently intervention begin immediately.
10	Shtime	No	n/a	n/a	n/a
11	Istog	No	n/a	n/a	n/a
12	Skenderaj	No	n/a	n/a	n/a
13	Rahovec	No	n/a	n/a	n/a

14	Drenas	No	n/a	n/a	n/a
15	Klinë	No	n/a	n/a	n/a
16	Kamenicë	No	n/a	n/a	n/a
17	Klllokot	No	n/a	n/a	n/a
18	Ranillug	No	n/a	n/a	n/a
19	Junik	No	n/a	n/a	n/a
20	Obiliq	Yes	n/a	n/a	n/a
21	Dragash	No	n/a	n/a	n/a
22	Deçan	No	n/a	n/a	n/a
23	Mitrovica South	n/d	n/a	n/a	n/a
24	Podujevë	n/d	n/a	n/a	n/a
25	Fushë Kosova	No	No	No	No
26	Leposaviq	No	No	No	No

Topic - Drafting and the Distribution of a Guideline for Institutions on Identifying Early Risk Factors of Radicalization

The preparation of research to identify various forms and factors that lead to violent extremism and radicalization resulting in terrorism is the first activity of the first pillar of the first strategic objective – Prevention – in the Action Plan 2023-2025 of the Strategy 2023-2028.

Conducting research, holding regular monthly meetings to identify driving and attracting factors, listing these factors, and distributing this document to institutions constitutes one of the most important obligations derived from the Strategy and the Action Plan.

This manual has not yet been drafted, while the Ministry of Internal Affairs is in the early planning stages for this document, which is expected to be developed in cooperation with the Academy of Sciences, universities, and civil society.

According to the MIA, the manual is budgeted for completion by the end of this year, although it is uncertain if it will be finalized this year. It is considered an advantage that the MIA's Public Safety Department also has a Division for Research, Analysis, and Statistics that is tasked with this obligation.⁵

To date, we have not received any input from MESTI, the Academy of Sciences, or others, except from the Psychology Institute of the University of Prishtina. They have drafted a report, and MIA is working with them on designing the next steps in this direction.⁶

This report, titled **“From Syria to Home”**, addresses driving and attracting factors, but it addresses them only from the perspective of a specific focus group, since it only deals with individuals who participated in foreign conflicts.

Until the time of the writing of this document, activities are conducted at the local level within the Municipal Community Safety Councils (MCSC) and particularly the Local Community Safety Councils (LCSC) as mechanisms of the Police, led by Community Policing.

These mechanisms engage in activities with citizens, holding meetings and maintaining contacts, but these activities are broader in scope, focusing on prevention and early identification signs. So far, early identification signs derived from scientific documents have indicated common signs such as behavioral changes, associations, visits, and others.

The MIA particularly values the “Nico” project by the EU Council, from which the Community Police have benefited in terms of training.

5. Interview conducted by BIRN with Mr. Mensur Hoti – Director of the Department for Public Safety at the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration.
6. Interview conducted by BIRN with Mensur Hoti – Director of the Department for Public Safety at the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration.

The MIA also values the primary role of MESTI so far in regards to identifying early signs of radicalization. **MESTI's 2018 manual for teachers, "Preventing Violent Extremism"**, has also been helpful in this direction. This document is still in use and aims to "provide guidance to teachers in Kosovo for addressing specific challenges posed by violent extremism in the school environment."

According to MIA, thanks to this guide and to the cooperation with MESTI, this year alone, four cases have been identified and referred for treatment by the Division for Prevention and Reintegration of Radicalized Persons.

Year	2024
Cases referred and currently handled by the Division for Prevention and Reintegration of Radicalized Persons ⁷	4 cases

However, this is a manual intended for the needs of teachers in order to identify early signs in students, so it has a very focused spectrum, and above all - it is from 2018 and has not been updated.

TABLE 4.

Indicator 3	Municipality	Has a guide been drafted and distributed for institutions on identifying early risk factors of radicalization?	If yes, who drafted it, which institutions was it distributed to, and how was it distributed?	How effectively is it used by relevant stakeholders?	If no, how are institutions guided in identifying early risk factors of radicalization?
1	Prishtina	No	n/a	n/a	n/a
2	Prizren	No	n/a	n/a	n/a
3	Peja	MCSC members attended training on the topic: Strengthening the Municipal Community Safety Council	KCSS "Strategy for Preventing Violent Extremism and Radicalization Leading to Terrorism and the Role of Local Level in Its Implementation"	n/d	KCSS
4	Gjakova	No	n/d	n/d	n/d
5	Gjilan	Yes	The Referral Mechanism conducted various training sessions, including with experts from the UK (NICO) and we use as a Referral Mechanism the "Vulnerability Assessment Framework"	This document identifies 22 indicators.	n/d

6. Interview conducted by BIRN with Mensur Hoti– Director of the Department for Public Safety at the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration.
7. Data from the Interview conducted by BIRN with Mr. Mensur Hoti, Director of the Department for Public Safety at the Ministry of Internal Affairs

6	Ferizaj	No	n/d	n/d	Based on citizen reports or suspicions of specific cases
7	Kaçanik	No	n/d	n/d	n/d
8	Viti	No	n/d	n/d	n/d
9	Hani i Elezit	No	n/d	n/d	n/d
10	Shtime	No	n/d	n/d	Based on the strategy and action plans
11	Istog	No	n/d	n/d	n/d
12	Skenderaj	No	n/d	n/d	n/d
13	Rahovec	No	n/d	n/d	n/d
14	Drenas	No	n/d	n/d	n/d
15	Klina	No	n/d	n/d	Based on reports from relevant institutional leaders
16	Kamenica	No	n/d	n/d	n/d
17	Klllokot	No	n/a	n/a	No early identification practices
18	Ranillug	No	n/d	n/d	n/d
19	Junik	Strategy for the Prevention of Violent Extremism and Radicalisation	Government of Kosovo	n/d	n/d
20	Obiliq	No	n/a	n/a	Awareness and prevention activities
21	Dragash	No	n/a	n/d	n/d

22	Deçan	No	n/a	n/d	n/d
23	Mitrovica South	No	n/a	n/d	n/d
24	Podujevë	No	n/a	n/d	n/d
25	Fushë Kosova	No	No	No	No
26	Leposaviq	No	No	No	No

In this situation, local levels have found different modalities and seem to use various references when it comes to identifying early signs of radicalization. The data in this report shows that only the Municipality of Gjilan responded positively, stating that they have a guide for identifying early signs of radicalization and that they have participated in training under the “NICO” project. Additionally, as a Referral Mechanism, the Municipality of Gjilan uses the **“Vulnerability Assessment Framework.”**

Apart from the Municipality of Gjilan, the Municipality of Peja reports that they do not have a guide but have attended training on the topic “Empowering the Municipal Community Safety Council,” organized by KCSS, however they refer to the previous “Strategy for Preventing Violent Extremism and Radicalization Leading to Terrorism.” The Municipality of Ferizaj declares that local institutions are guided based on “suspicions or reports from citizens,” while the Municipality of Shtime states they do not have a guide but operate “based on the strategy and action plans.”

This data indicates that municipalities have a non-uniform process for handling cases and lack a prepared guide for local needs. Moreover, they do not have a guide that would identify the early signs of radicalization according to the specific needs that Kosovo’s municipalities might have.

Municipalities declaring they have a guide for identifying early signs of radicalization	Municipalities that have a guide for identifying early signs of radicalisation
1 Municipality of Gjilan	25

Topic - Community Policing Extends to Areas with Vulnerable Individuals and Is Regularly Implemented

Community policing is considered one of the preventive police mechanisms against all negative phenomena, especially regarding violent extremism and terrorism, aiming at early identification of signs of these phenomena. This approach is valuable due to the mutual trust that this concept seeks to build between security mechanisms and the community.

Community Policing is an organizational and cooperative strategy that focuses on building connections with the community, allowing the police to work closely with community members on all matters that threaten and endanger public safety.

The purpose of this concept is also to encourage citizens to take responsibility for public safety by coordinating and assisting police actions, as well as enabling the community to closely communicate their security needs to the police, thus building mutual trust.

The Republic of Kosovo regulates the issue of Community Policing through two strategic documents: the **Community Policing Strategy 2017-2021**⁸ and the **Community Policing Strategy and Action Plan 2012-2016**.

In the context of preventing and combating terrorism, the 2023-2025 Strategy and Action Plan places significant emphasis on Community Policing, particularly regarding early identification and prevention.

According to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, future developments in community policing should include staff advancement, continued specialized training, and an increase in staff numbers.

MIA's goal is not only to strengthen the implementation of this concept but also to make community policing the first point of contact for the community regarding issues they may face.⁹

Data from 26 municipalities in Kosovo shows that the concept of community policing is established in 9 municipalities, while in 15 others, it is not present.

None of the 26 municipalities provided specific outcomes, including those where this concept is established. However, the general presence and continuous interaction of the police with the community are considered to contribute to prevention.

In the 9 municipalities that reported having community policing in place, challenges include the limited number of police officers relative to community needs and logistical shortages.

8. Community Policing Strategy 2017-2012 and Action Plan, accessible at the link
- <https://www.kosovopolice.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/1.-Strategjia-dhe-Plani-i-Veprimit-2017-2021-Policimi-ne%CC%88-Bashke%CC%88si-.pdf>

9. Interview conducted by BIRN with Mr. Mensur Hoti – Director of the Department for Public Safety at the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration.

The Municipality of Klina is of particular interest. Responses from this municipality indicate that they have extended community policing to two vulnerable areas: the local community in Sferkë and in Jashanicë. The Municipality of Klinë did not provide an explanation regarding the criteria used to classify these two localities or groups as “vulnerable to radicalization.” Additionally, their completed questionnaire does not indicate any empirical study, list, or manual used to identify these individuals or groups as vulnerable to radicalization.

Community Policing	It is present and is functional	It is not present or there are no data
	9 municipalities	17 municipalities

TABLE 5.

Indicator 4	Municipality	To what extent is community policing implemented in areas with vulnerable populations?	Main results and challenges related to regular implementation of this concept	Level of implementation of community policing	How does community policing contribute to preventing radicalization? Are there any specific results?
1	Prishtina	Yes	LPSCs are established by the Police according to law and work in full cooperation with the Police and Municipalities through MCSC	n/d	n/d
2	Prizren	Not sufficiently	No specific results	Medium	Unsatisfactory
3	Peja	No	No radicalization groups	n/d	No specific cases
4	Gjakova	n/d	n/d	n/d	n/d
5	Gjilan	n/d	n/d	n/d	n/d
6	Ferizaj	n/d	n/d	n/d	n/d
7	Kaçanik	Every locality has local police	n/d	good	No specific research
8	Viti	n/d	n/d	n/d	n/d
9	Hani i Elezit	No	n/d	n/d	n/d
10	Shtime	No specific details as community safety is assessed in coordination with other mechanisms	Recommendations from MCSC meetings and local leaders starting with the mayor	Satisfactory cooperation	The Municipality of Shtime has close cooperation with the Kosovo Police.

11	Istog	None	n/d	n/d	n/d
12	Skenderaj	In certain localities	Logistical challenges	Partially	Partially
13	Rahovec	Community policing contributes in various ways, including regular patrols, citizen contact, contact with businesses, security forums, village safety councils, people with influence in the community, and religious leaders.	Results are effective as there have been no reported cases of this nature, but challenges include: limited number of police officers compared to population density and level of awareness and education in the population.	Medium aiming for high.	Community policing contributes in various ways, including regular patrols, citizen contact, contact with businesses, security forums, village safety councils, people with influence in the community, and religious leaders.
14	Drenas	Awareness lectures held with MED Police collaboration	n/d	n/d	n/d
15	Klina	Community policing is extended to two vulnerable communities, Sferkë and Jashnicë, based on needs assessed in coordination with relevant institutions.	This concept has challenges and outcomes. There are meetings held and data are obtained in the field by the relevant institution and the designated responsible officials.	The offices where the officials operate based on the needs and plans of the responsible institution, where data are collected and meetings are held, have been designated.	This has an important impact on reducing the risk of the spread of radicalisation and serves as a preventive measure.
16	Kamenica	n/d	n/d	n/d	n/d
17	Klllokot	No vulnerable individuals	No results	Good	n/d
18	Ranillug	Yes	Sufficient	n/d	Police presence aids in prevention
19	Junik	Kosovo Police acts according to its plans	No cases of radicalization reported	n/d	n/d
20	Obiliq	Satisfactory	Challenges include case identification	Satisfactory	It contributes since prescribed guidelines are followed
21	Dragash	n/d	n/d	n/d	n/d
22	Deçan	Extended according to Kosovo Police	Awareness information	Sufficient	Coordination with the Police Station
23	Mitrovicë e Jugut	n/d	n/d	n/d	n/d
24	Podujevë				
25	Fushë Kosova	No	No	No	No
26	Leposaviq	No	No	No	No

Topic - Establishment and Functionalization of Community Safety Councils in Areas with Vulnerable Populations

The Municipal Community Safety Councils (MCSC), established by municipal assemblies and led by the municipal mayor, and the Local Public Safety Councils (LPSC), established by the police in regional areas, are critical municipal mechanisms in the context of the Strategy, specifically for prevention and early identification.

The Municipal Community Safety Councils are municipal mechanisms for security, established to enhance safety and stability within communities.

The main objectives of MCSC include raising citizen awareness about the nature of crimes, irregularities, and violent behaviors in the local community; identifying public safety concerns; recommending action plans; addressing citizen concerns with municipal authorities; building trust between the police and citizens through partnerships and joint initiatives to solve security problems in each community; and representing the views and concerns of all citizens on crime and other issues affecting quality of life.¹⁰

According to Administrative instruction no. 27/2012 of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, MCSCs are required to meet at least six times a year, and their members are entitled to financial compensation, which should be covered by the respective municipalities.

The composition of MCSCs starts with the municipal mayor, the police station commander, representatives from each religious community, representatives of each ethnic community, the chair of the community committee, the gender equality officer, the education director, the head of the parent council, representatives from the Kosovo Security Force (KSF), LPSC representatives, the emergency sector, NGOs, media, the business community, and representatives of persons with disabilities.

According to the MIA, these councils are among the most important mechanisms at the municipal level because they are established by the mayor and include all executive directorates of the municipality, which have duties and responsibilities derived from the Strategy for Preventing and Combating Terrorism 2023-2028 and the Action Plan 2023-2025.

Data collected and analyzed by BIRN reveals that out of 26 municipalities that responded, only 10 have functional Municipal Community Safety Councils, while 14 were unable to provide positive responses regarding the functionality, role, and impact of these councils in preventing radicalization.

The role of community safety councils is crucial for implementing the concept of community policing, especially considering the strategic vision and role that the Strategy aims to assign to the local level. Until multidisciplinary mechanisms are established, the lack of functionality of these councils leaves a significant gap in the public safety of the respective municipalities.

9. Administrative instruction no. 27/2012 of the Ministry of Internal Affairs accessible at the link - <https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDetail.aspx?ActID=8204>

Moreover, data collected by BIRN regarding MCSCs' activities and discussions shows that out of 213 meetings held between 2023 and 2024, the issue of violent extremism and terrorism was discussed only seven times.

Number of Community Safety Council meetings ¹¹	Meetings in which violent extremism was discussed as a topic in 2023 and 2024	
2023	149	7 meetings
2024	64	
Total	213	

TABLE 6.

Indicator 5	Municipality	To what extent are Community Safety Councils established and regularly functioning in areas with vulnerable populations?	What role are the Councils playing in preventing radicalization?	How successful are these Councils in areas with vulnerable populations?	How regularly do these Councils function to address the risks of radicalization?
1	Prishtina	Yes	LPSCs are established in all local communities and areas under police station responsibility and express various crime-related issues and factors through the leadership.	n/d	n/d
2	Prizren	MCSCs are functional according to the legal framework	Advisory and recommendatory role	Limited opportunity to contribute to prevention; low success	Not very regularly
3	Peja	MCSC is a body created to address local security issues and functions regularly with representatives from the municipality, police, schools, and other community and religious representatives	MCSC plays a key role in identifying issues and improving safety and quality of life in the community	Has potential to be very effective	At least 6 meetings per year, with more as needed
4	Gjakova	No such councils	n/d	n/d	n/d
5	Gjilan	This activity is handled by the Referral Mechanism	n/d	n/d	n/d
6	Ferizaj	n/d	n/d	n/d	n/d
7	Kaçanik	No	n/d	n/d	n/d
8	Vitia	Yes	n/d	n/d	MCSC activity has diminished over the past year and a half due to unpaid stipends for members.

11. Data obtained by BIRN from the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

9	Hani i Elezit	n/d	n/d	n/d	n/d
10	Shtime	No vulnerable groups identified	n/a	n/a	Meets as needed for security issues
11	Istog	n/d	n/d	n/d	n/d
12	Skenderaj	Funksional	pozitiv	n/d	Në kushte normale
13	Rahovec	MCSCs are established based on community needs and requests, function regularly and hold regular meetings	They play an important role in identifying, addressing, and preventing phenomena that are harmful to society	n/a	Holds regular meetings and schedules meetings as needed
14	Drenas	n/d	n/d	n/d	n/d
15	Klinë	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
16	Kamenica ¹²	n/d	n/d	n/d	n/d
17	Klllokot	n/d	n/d	n/d	n/d
18	Ranillug	Yes	n/a	Shume i suksesshëm	n/a
19	Junik	MCSCs are a key component to implementing community policing strategies in areas with vulnerable populations	Their role is to discuss and recommend in cases of radicalization	We consider they are successful since there are no reported cases of radicalization	Operates based on work plans and as needed but can meet more frequently and discuss other topics
20	Obiliq	The Safety Councils are well-functioning, and we also organize preventive campaigns	They play a significant role in prevention	Projects have been implemented with donors and NGOs	6 times per month
21	Dragash	n/d	n/d	n/d	n/d
22	Deçan	Yes	Coordinates with the Police	n/a	n/d
23	Mitrovica South	n/d	n/d	n/d	As needed
24	Podujevë	No	n/d	n/d	n/d

12. The response of the Municipality of Kamenica to BIRN - The Kamenica MCSC's work plans for 2023 and 2024 do not include terrorism prevention due to the municipality being known for inter-ethnic tolerance

25	Fushë Kosova	No	No	No	No
26	Leposavic	No	No	No	No

Topic - Schools in Areas with Vulnerable Populations Employ Psychologists and Other Professionals to Address Violent Extremism and Radicalization Prevention

The role of the educational system, and schools in particular, in prevention and early identification is crucial. The 2023-2025 Strategy and Action Plan stipulates that schools will have professional capacities for early intervention to protect and support those most at risk of radicalization. For this purpose, a series of interventions and initiatives are planned.

The employment of school psychologists, pedagogues, and other professionals, and their training to identify early signs of violent extremism and radicalization, are critical obligations set by the Strategy to achieve the strategic objective – prevention.

In this regard, data shows that local levels have made efforts by increasing the number of psychologists in some municipalities; however, many municipalities have not been able to demonstrate any action in this direction.

9 out of 26 municipalities that responded to BIRN stated that they have not employed a psychologist or provided any information on hiring psychologists or other professionals in schools.

8 out of the 26 municipalities that responded to BIRN reported that during the period covered by this report, they had employed psychologists. Gjilan 5 psychologists, Kaçanik 3, Obiliq 3, Deçan 4, Hani i Elezit 1, Ranillug 1 and Skenderaj 3, while the Municipality of Podujeva claims to employ 9 psychologists but does not specify how many are relevant to the reporting period.

Municipalities that have employed psychologists or pedagogues during the period covered by this analysis	Municipality of Gjilan	Municipality of Kaçanik	Municipality of Obiliq	Municipality of Podujeva	Municipality of Deçan	Municipality of Hani i Elezit	Municipality of Skënderaj	Municipality of Ranillug
Number of psychologists engaged	5 (12 in total)	3	3	99 psychologists 3 pedagogues	4	1	3	1
Municipalities that plan to employ a psychologist during the year 2024-25	Mitrovica South 6 psychologists Currently there is only 1							

In addition to the employment of psychologists, another obligation set by the Strategy's Action Plan for the local level is informing Parent Councils about the early identification of violent extremism through meetings. At the central level, it is the joint responsibility of MESTI and MIA to draft an informational program for the Parents' Council.

The Parents' Council is a mechanism that represents parents and conveys their opinions to the ministry on all matters of pre-university education in MEST (Parents' Council of Kosovo), in the municipal directorates of education (Municipal Parents' Council) and in schools (School Parents' Council). The same hierarchical reporting logic applies to the Parents' Council, and the functioning of this mechanism is regulated by a sub-legal act.¹³

In the context of the 2023-2028 Strategy and the 2023-2025 Action Plan, the role of parents and families, in general, is crucial for the early identification of signs in children. Two specific activities related to this mechanism have been outlined.

Data collected by BIRN through questionnaires shows that 20 out of 26 municipalities that responded have not fulfilled their obligation derived from the Strategy and Action Plan, while only 6 municipalities have held informational meetings with the Parent Council on this topic.



12. Administrative instruction no. 01/2023. Election Establishment and Operation of the Parents' Council, accessible at the link <https://masht.rks-gov.net/udhezim-administrativ-me-nr-01-2023-lokhja-themelimi-dhe-funzioni-i-keshillit-te-prinderve-2/>

TABLE 7.

Indicator 6	Municipality	What initiatives have been undertaken by schools to employ psychologists and other professionals to address violent extremism? How effective are they in identifying and addressing risks of radicalization?	How many psychologists and other professionals are employed in schools in vulnerable areas?	How does their presence contribute to preventing violent extremism and radicalization?	Number of social workers employed during this period?	Number of school psychologists employed during this period?
1	Prishtina ¹⁴	n/d	n/d	n/d	n/d	n/d
2	Prizren	No such initiatives	No specific individuals	n/d	None	No information
3	Peja	Various awareness campaigns organized	There are no identified areas and people vulnerable to radicalization	School psychologists play a crucial role in early identification and prevention of violent extremism and radicalization, in offering social skill development programs and awareness raising	n/d	n/d
4	Gjakova	Most schools have regular psychologists, who, in addition to other topics, can also deal with issues of radicalization. No statistics	n/d	n/d	n/d	n/d
5	Gjilan	Requests have been made to the Education Department for more psychologists	5 school psychologists were hired this year 12 are in total These psychologists contribute greatly through extracurricular activities and various projects	MED has restructured the positions of school psychologists, dividing them into educational psychologists and school psychologists	4 currently There were no other hirings	n/d
6	Ferizaj	Schools that have psychologists aim to raise awareness and prevent radicalization	n/d	n/d	n/d	n/d
7	Kaçanik	All schools have psychologists	Significant contribution	Very effective	5	3
8	Viti	n/d	n/d	n/d	n/d	n/d
9	Hani i Elezit	1 psychologist employed under a special contract for 1 year	1	Professional presence has had a highly beneficial impact in the process of preventing violent extremism	1	0
10	Shtime	According to action plans	No specific cases	No cases for intervention	0	n/d
11	Istog	None	None	None	None	None
12	Skenderaj	n/d	n/d	n/d	3	5
13	Rahovec	5 psychologists in schools		They have a very important role as they handle individual cases professionally	5	A total of 10 social workers are employed in the CSW.

14. Municipality of Pristina's response to BIRN was "MED", with no further details

14	Drenas	No	n/d	n/d	n/d	n/d
15	Klinë	n/d	n/d	n/d	0	0
16	Kamenicë	n/d	n/d	n/d	n/d	n/d
17	Klllokot	n/d	n/d	n/d	n/d	n/d
18	Ranillug	Psychologists regularly hold lectures on this topic	Effective through various sessions and lectures	n/d	1	0
19	Junik	School Safety Council established	n/d	n/d	1	0
20	Obiliq					
21	Dragash	No	n/d	n/d	n/d	n/d
22	Deçan	Psychologists conduct lectures on radicalization risks in society	4	Positively	0	4
23	Mitrovica South	Planned recruitment of 6 school psychologists for 2024-25 school year where number of students is larger	6 school pedagogues and 1 school psychologist.			
24	Podujevë	Yes	9 psychologists 3 pedagogues	Handle cases in cooperation with the competent bodies	0	30 (including other categories of professionals)
25	No	No	No	No	No	No
26	No	No	No	No	No	No

TABLE 8.

Indicator 6	Municipality	Have Parents' Councils been informed about early identification of signs of violent extremism?	How many meetings have you held with the Parents' Council?
1	Prishtina	No	No
2	Prizren	n/d	n/d
3	Peja	n/d	n/d
4	Gjakova	n/d	n/d
5	Gjilan	n/d	n/d
6	Ferizaj	n/d	n/d
7	Kaçanik	No	0
8	Viti	n/d	n/d
9	Hani i Elezit	n/d	n/d
10	Shtime	No	n/d
11	Istog	n/d	n/d
12	Skenderaj	n/d	n/d
13	Rahovec	Yes	3 meetings

14	Drenas	n/d	n/d
15	Klinë	n/d	n/d
16	Kamenicë	n/d	n/d
17	Klllokot	No	0
18	Ranillug	Yes	1
19	Junik	Yes	3
20	Obiliq	Yes	n/a
21	Dragash	No	No
22	Deçan	Yes	3
23	Mitrovica South	n/a	n/a
24	Podujevë	Yes	2
25	Fushë Kosova	No	No
26	Leposaviq		

Topic - Topic - Neighborhood/Village Meetings Between Local Communities and Law Enforcement Institutions to Build Trust and Partnership as a Response Mechanism to Radicalization

The involvement of the community in combating violent extremism, particularly in prevention and early identification, is essential for a successful process.

Engaging local communities through neighborhood and village meetings with law enforcement authorities helps build trust and partnership, ultimately contributing to the prevention of extremism by identifying, reporting, and addressing issues at their origin.

Community involvement is crucial for all existing local security mechanisms such as MCSCs, LPSCs, CSTs, and Parents' Councils. This role will be even more significant with the implementation of local referral mechanisms envisioned in the Strategy and Action Plan.

Developing activities to inform and educate the community about the role and responsibilities of the local referral mechanism is one of the obligations set by the Strategy and Action Plan, aiming to fulfill the goal of early identification.

While municipal referral mechanisms are currently functional in only three municipalities, and in the process of being established in three additional municipalities, it is essential for municipal safety councils to engage the community in identifying and preventing radicalization.

Data collected by BIRN through questionnaires for this report reveals that 14 out of 26 municipalities have not held meetings or provided data on community meetings for this purpose. Four municipalities reported that they have held community meetings and identified the forum where these meetings took place. Meanwhile, four other municipalities stated that there is community engagement, also providing an assessment of the level of community involvement, but they did not offer specific data.

A common factor among the responding municipalities is that, apart from details regarding the forum where meetings were held and their frequency, they did not provide specific outcomes from these meetings or information on the level of participation and representation in these meetings.

TABLE 9.

Indicator 7	Municipality	How engaged are local communities in their efforts to prevent radicalization through neighborhood/village meetings with law enforcement institutions, to build trust and partnership as response mechanisms to radicalization?	How regularly are these meetings held, what is their composition, how many meetings were held, what was the level of participation and representation?	What is the outcome of these meetings?	What are the main factors that influence community engagement?
1	Prishtina	LPSC and MCSC meetings are held	MCSC meetings are held according to the action plan 6 times a year	Outcomes include issues addressed by LPSC, which the Municipality carries out in various forms for the safety of citizens	Community safety concerns
2	Prizren	No engagement	3 MCSC meetings in 2024	Recommendatory	Poor engagement and follow-up
3	Peja	No	n/d	n/d	n/d
4	Gjakova	n/d	n/d	n/d	n/d
5	Gjilan	n/d	n/d	n/d	n/d
6	Ferizaj	All security-related issues, especially radicalization, are discussed in MCSC meetings	n/d	n/d	n/d
7	Kaçanik	Not at all	None	n/d	n/d
8	n/d	n/d	n/d	n/d	n/d
9	Hani i Elezit	Local communities make continuous efforts to prevent negative occurrences	Frequent meetings held	Positive	Well-being of citizens
10	Shtime	As per the Strategy and Action Plan	No meetings on specific cases Meetings held according to the action plan	Cooperation in education, health, and economic development	None
11	Istog	None	n/d	n/d	n/d
12	Skenderaj	Continuous meetings	According to the law	Informing	n/d
13	Rahovec	Two LPSCs were established and 2 meetings were held where radicalization was discussed CST held 3 meetings	Meetings are held every 3 months	Produce reports and conclusions on the general situation in the municipality	n/d
14	Drenas	n/d	n/d	n/d	n/d

15	Klina	No meetings	n/d	n/d	n/d
16	Kamenica	No meetings	n/d	n/d	n/d
17	Klllokot	None	There are no signs of radicalization	n/d	n/d
18	Ranillug	Engaged	Meetings held as needed and there is participation	n/a	n/a
19	Junik	MCSC has it in the work plan	Meetings are held every 2 months	If there are cases, they are handled according to every member's expertise	Maintaining religious harmony
20	Obiliq	Community very interested in participating in meetings	6 meetings a year	In the meetings, participants inform on the situation	Holding meetings in the area they live increases interest for participation
21	Dragash	n/d	n/d	n/d	n/d
22	Deçan	Sufficient	1 times per month	Positive	A safe environment
23	Mitrovica South	n/d	n/d	n/d	n/d
24	Podujevë	No	n/d	n/d	n/d
25	Fushë Kosova	No	No	No	No
26	Leposaviq	No	No	No	No

Topic - Neighborhood Meetings in Vulnerable Areas to Inform the Public on the Role of Family in Identifying Behavioral Changes That May Be Linked to Radicalization

TABLE 10.

Indicator 8	Municipality	What is the frequency and effectiveness of meetings held in vulnerable areas to inform the public on the role of family in identifying behavioral changes related to radicalization?	How many such meetings have been held, and how often?	What are the outcomes of these meetings?
1	Prishtina	n/d	n/d	n/d
2	Prizren	n/d	At least 1 meeting a year	Informing
3	Peja	n/d	n/d	n/d
4	Gjakova	n/d	n/d	n/d
5	Gjilan	n/d	n/d	n/d
6	Ferizaj	n/d	n/d	n/d
7	Kaçanik	n/d	n/d	n/d
8	Viti	n/d	n/d	n/d
9	Hani i Elezit	6 meetings a year	Each discussion contributes to extremism prevention, but fortunately, no serious threat has been encountered in the municipality	n/d
10	Shtime	No need for such meetings	n/a	As needed

11	Istog	None	n/d	n/d
12	Skenderaj	No data	Several meetings a year	Public safety information
13	Rahovec	Every 3 months	6 meetings a year	n/d
14	Drenas	n/d	n/d	n/d
15	Klinë	n/d	n/d	n/d
16	Kamenicë	n/d	n/d	n/d
17	Klllokot	0	0	0
18	Ranillug	n/d	n/d	n/d
19	Junik	n/d	n/d	n/d
20	Obiliq	1 meeting in 2024 so far	n/d	n/d
21	Dragash	n/d	n/d	n/d
22	Deçan	As needed	Once a month	
23	Mitrovica South	n/d	n/d	n/d
24	Podujevë	n/d	n/d	n/d
25	Fushë Kosova	No	No	No
26	Leposaviq	No	No	No

Topic - Topic - Producing Public Awareness Materials (brochures, leaflets, etc.) for Identifying Behavioral Changes That May Be Related to Radicalization

Data collected by BIRN through questionnaires reveals that 19 out of 26 municipalities that responded have not conducted any awareness activities for preventing violent extremism, early identification, or promoting the Strategy and Action Plan. The Municipality of Rahovec stated in their response to BIRN that they have not held such campaigns because of the “calm situation and the lack of such cases in our municipality.” They further explained that “these activities could have positive effects, but they could also be counterproductive by provoking or agitating certain individuals with prejudices about religion, potentially inciting actions due to misunderstandings”¹⁵ despite the fact that activities are outlined in the Strategy’s Action Plan and are an obligation for both local and central levels to conduct awareness campaigns, especially regarding the prevention pillar—early identification of signs of violent extremism and radicalization.

On the other hand, at the central level, MESTI mentioned in the interview with us that, in collaboration with OSCE-CDF, they have conducted awareness activities on television. Furthermore, in cooperation with the MIA and CDF in the Municipality of Podujevë, informational sessions were provided to 40 teachers on the repatriation and re-integration of children returning from conflict zones.¹⁶

Additionally, MESTI, in partnership with the Jahjaga Foundation, is implementing the “Prospero” project, aimed at providing informational programs for Parent Councils. According to MESTI, terms of reference have been created, two experts have been engaged, and four municipalities with ten schools each have been selected for collaboration under this project.

Moreover, MESTI reported through questionnaires that during the period July 2023 – May 2024, in collaboration with Global Hardware, they have provided the “Promoting Pluralism and Diversity in Education” program.

The Kosovo Correctional Service, through the questionnaire, stated that through Correctional Intelligence, they notify all correctional institutions via “awareness reports” whenever they identify incidents or activities.

Finally, Mensur Hoti, Director of the Department for Public Safety at MIA, highlighted BIRN’s activities, noting meetings in four municipalities with municipal directors and advisors to inform them about the new Strategy, the Action Plan, and the responsibilities that municipalities have under this Strategy.

15. Response from the Municipality of Rahovec on the survey conducted by BIRN, dated 27 of June 2024

16. Response from Ms. Afërdita Jaha – Senior Officer on MESTI, dated 11 of July 2024

TABLE 11.

Indicator 9	Municipality	What public awareness activities (brochures, leaflets) have been undertaken to identify behavioral changes that may be linked to radicalization?	What impact do public awareness materials have on identifying behavioral changes related to radicalization in Kosovo?
1	Prishtinë	n/d	n/d
2	Prizren	None	Could have an impact on early identification
3	Peja	n/d	n/d
4	Gjakova	n/d	n/d
5	Gjilan	8 meetings with LPSC, as well as 3 lectures with 55 student participants	n/d
6	Ferizaj	n/d	n/d
7	Kaçanik	n/d	none ¹⁷
8	Viti	n/d	n/d
9	Hani i Elezit	No actions taken ¹⁸	n/d
10	Shtime	No activities	n/a
11	Istog	None	n/d
12	Skenderaj	n/d	n/d
13	Rahovec	No activities due to calm situation and absence of such cases in the municipality	Could have positive effects, but could also have inciting effects, provoking certain individuals with prejudices to religion, prejudicing their behavior and actions and leading to potential incitement for such action.

17. Kaçanik Municipality's answers to BIRN claim that this issue is discussed at every meeting of the MCSC (once every two months).

18. Hani i Elezit does not report data on activities in the table but has presented data in the numerical questions section of the questionnaire.

14	Drenas	n/d	n/d
15	Klinë	None	None
16	Kamenicë	None	None
17	Klllokot	None	None
18	Ranillug	None	None
19	Junik	An online brochure	They have a positive impact
20	Obiliq	Campaign by displaying messages on notification screens	They have a lot of effect on awareness
21	Dragash	n/d	n/d
22	Deçan	Through the KP unit	Not sufficient
23	Mitrovicë e Jugut	n/d	n/d
24	Podujevë	None	None
25	Fushë Kosova	None	None
26	Leposaviq	None	None

Topic - Identification and Treatment of Inmates Vulnerable to Radicalization

Currently, in Kosovo's Correctional Institutions, there are 17 inmates related to terrorism, while a total of 9 individuals were released during the period from July 2023 to May 2024.

The Correctional Intelligence Unit has 12 trained officers, and according to the Kosovo Correctional Service (KCS), as part of a project sponsored by the Council of Europe (CoE), a "guide on awareness and signs of radicalization" has been prepared, where 100 correctional officers have been trained, including 14 officers who have been trained as trainers (ToT). Since 2022, 5 programs for inmates have been reviewed, and 2 new ones have been added.¹⁹

KCS states that through their units, CIU (Correctional Intelligence Unit) and EMU (Extremism Management Unit), they conducted a study within correctional institutions 'related to identifying certain inmates suspected of embracing and displaying ideologies that lead to radicalization based on the display of certain indicators and ideological beliefs that lead to violent extremism within KCS institutions.'

According to KCS, based on the findings of this study, inmates were identified and subsequently searches were conducted, resulting in the identification of a significant number of methods and tools used by inmates to exchange and convey messages supporting extremist ideology.

KCS also declares that they have a list of individuals or groups vulnerable to radicalization, which is updated as soon as indications arise.

Currently, KCS does not yet have an updated guide for identifying risk factors for early identification of radicalization, but this process is nearing completion and will be distributed after approval.

According to the MIA, the review of this document by the KCS will enable even higher effectiveness in identifying early signs and will allow for a more concise document.

19. In the questionnaire completed by the Kosovo Correctional Service for BIRN

V. Impact Analysis

The Republic of Kosovo has made limited progress in the early identification of vulnerable groups and individuals at risk of radicalization, as well as in the projection and implementation of specific intervention measures to support these groups and individuals, as one of the main pillars of the strategic objective—Prevention—of the State Strategy for the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism.

This monitoring report highlights that the institutions designated to implement activities related to this objective are in the initial stages of capacity development and growth to meet the obligations outlined in the Strategy and Action Plan.

Key actors in implementing the Strategy's activities still lack a list of vulnerable groups or individuals at risk of radicalization and the driving and attracting factors associated with it. Central-level institutions are in the early stages of developing a guide for the early identification of signs of radicalization, while currently, MESTI operates with an outdated 2018 guide.

There is a marked lack of coordination and strategic messaging from the central level to the local level regarding their obligations under the Strategy, leading to a lack of awareness at the local level about their roles, tasks, and responsibilities. This has resulted in unmet objectives of local security mechanisms, such as community safety councils and a limited scope of community policing.

Progress has been made in hiring professionals—psychologists in schools—by municipalities, but there are gaps in coordination and information-sharing with parent councils regarding their role in early prevention.

There is a significant shortfall, particularly at the local level, in implementing awareness campaigns in local communities to inform them about the role and importance of the multidisciplinary mechanism.

Kosovo's institutions have not taken concrete steps towards the early prevention of all forms of terrorism.

This monitoring report reflects how most of the planned activities in this area have not been carried out or are still in the preparatory phase before being carried out. BIRN also finds that the activities of institutions continue to be focused on addressing religious extremism leaving out significant gaps in building capacities to deal with right-wing extremism.

Central and local institutions have serious issues in understanding the strategic message of the strategy and in drafting individual implementation plans.

This monitoring report reflects that the Government of Kosovo has not officially delivered the basic document and the strategy's action plan to some of the institutions tasked with implementing the strategy. The most serious issues have been identified in the local level where the strategy and action plan have not been delivered. Of the 26 municipalities contacted by BIRN, 22 have confirmed they do not possess the Strategy or Action Plan.

The lack of the basic document has created additional systemic issues. The municipalities have not drafted specific implementation plans for the strategy, nor have they assigned responsible individuals to handle concrete activities on the ground.

The institutions have failed to identify vulnerable groups and individuals susceptible to radicalization and the driving and attracting factors of extremism based on studies.

The preparation of research for the identification of individuals and groups vulnerable to radicalization and the driving and attracting factors is a prerequisite for the design and implementation of adequate interventions by institutions for the purpose of early identification and prevention.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Education, municipalities, and other stakeholders have not conducted empirical studies to identify vulnerable groups in the population susceptible to radicalization and the driving and attracting factors.

In the absence of research, the targeted groups for activities have been determined by the MIA based on data from actual cases, while it turns out that municipalities are entirely uninterested in participating in this specific direction.

Furthermore, this report has found that central and local level institutions have failed to create a methodology and mechanism that generates a comprehensive list which records vulnerable entities at risk of radicalization.

Central institutions have yet to begin work on drafting a guideline for institutions aimed at identifying early signs of radicalization.

This monitoring report shows that the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Academy of Sciences of the University of Prishtina are in the initial planning phase for drafting a guideline for identifying early signs of radicalization. The Ministry of Education still works by a handbook drafted in 2018, which is still in use for the needs of teachers, while the Psychology Institute at the University of Prishtina has conducted a study titled “From Syria to Home” that addresses a specific focus group – those returning from Syria and not other entities or forms of extremism.

The local level, which continues to refer to the Police or the MIA, do not have specific research for their territory and in some cases they refer to past strategic documents and do not show any initiative in this direction.

The concept of community policing has not been sufficiently developed to fulfill its role in early identification.

The concept of community policing is one of the main mechanisms in service of early identification of radicalization. This report finds that local-level capacities are not fully developed in this area, limited by the extent of the program’s reach, professional resources, and other constraints.

Of the 26 municipalities that responded to BIRN, only nine show evidence that the concept has been understood and implemented correctly, however, even these municipalities cannot list specific results or a vision for further development of the program.

Community Safety Councils do not prioritize the implementation of activities within the framework of early prevention.

The role of the Municipal Community Safety Councils as forums for local security is crucial in early identification and prevention of radicalization and other phenomena that threaten community safety.

Of the 26 municipalities that responded to the BIRN questionnaire, only 10 reported having functional Community Safety Councils. BIRN's data also reveals that despite serious concerns in the country about religious extremism and right-wing extremism, this issue is ignored at the council level. At the national level, out of 213 meetings, the topic of violent extremism has been discussed in only 7 meetings.

The Ministry of Education has made limited progress in fulfilling the objectives and action plan.

This report has found that the Ministry of Education has increased its commitment toward implementing activities. BIRN finds that most activities have been developed within the R&R program and are not related to the early prevention phase as one of the pillars of prevention. MESTI is in the early stages of engaging with activities involving parents, while direct field activities with camps and critical thinking have not been carried out, even though they are planned in the action plan.

Municipalities have made efforts to increase the number of professionals, psychologists, pedagogues, and their training, but there are many deficiencies regarding the information provided to Parent Councils and meetings with them.

This monitoring report shows that municipalities have attempted to increase professional capacities that enable early identification. In this regard, 8 out of 26 municipalities that have responded to the questionnaire from BIRN report that they have engaged psychologists and pedagogues during the period covered by the monitoring report, while 9 out of 26 municipalities report that they have not engaged psychologists or have not provided data to confirm such actions.

It remains a concern that 18 out of 26 municipalities have not informed the Parent Council about identifying early signs of radicalization, which is one of the obligations outlined in the strategy. Additionally, most schools have not held informational meetings with the Parent Council.

VI. Cross-sectoral issues

Topic - Cooperation between Central and Local Institutions

BIRN has found that the government of Kosovo has not officially delivered the basic document and the strategy's action plan to some of the institutions tasked with implementing the strategy. Serious issues have been identified in municipalities where the strategy and action plan have not been distributed.

Of the 26 municipalities contacted by BIRN, 21 municipalities confirmed that they do not have the strategy and action plan, while the other municipalities stated that they have been informed of the strategy's content through alternative means.

BIRN finds that in the municipality of Mitrovica, where a referral mechanism has been created, the group has not received the strategic document, whereas in another municipality, that of Hani i Elezit, the strategy has been received. The lack of the basic document has created additional systemic issues. The municipalities have not drafted specific implementation plans for the strategy, nor have they assigned responsible individuals to handle concrete activities on the ground. At the central level, the strategy has been sent to the line ministries responsible for implementing the activities.

On the other hand, central institutions, including the Ministry of Education, the Correctional Service, and the Kosovo Probation Service, report that they have been informed about the Strategy, received it formally, developed action plans, and appointed responsible officers.

MESTI also states that both public and private schools, along with municipal education departments, have been informed of the Strategy's adoption and the responsibilities assigned to MESTI and municipalities for implementing activities²⁰

The MIA is aware that there is a communication gap, especially at the local level, but believes that establishing a national anti-terrorism center would help to address these deficiencies. Furthermore, MIA highlighted activities conducted by BIRN Kosovo with various municipalities, where informational meetings about the Strategy and local-level activities were held in Viti, Kaçanik, Gjilan, and Fushë Kosovë. These meetings included participation from municipal directors, municipal councilors, and other municipal officials, with senior officials from the Department for Public Safety present at each session to answer questions related to the Strategy and Action Plan.²¹

20. BIRN interview with Ms. Aferdita Jaha – Senior Official at MESTI

21. BIRN interview with Mr. Mensur Hoti, Director of the Department for Public Safety at MIA

TABLE 13.

Indication 8	Municipality Cetnral institutions	Are municipalities informed of the 2023-2028 strategy for prevention and combating terrorism by the Ministry of Internal Affairs?	Has this Strategy been formally sent to the municipalities?	Has a person responsible for impementing the Strategy activites been appointed?	Has the municipality developed its individual plan for implementing the Strategy Activites?	Is there a formal mechanism for communication and coperation between central and local levels?
1	Prishtina	Yes	No	No	No	No
2	Prizren	No	No	No	No	No
3	Peja	n/d	n/d	n/d	n/d	n/d
4	Gjakova	No	No	No	No	No
5	Gjilan	Yes	No	Coordinator of the Referral Mechanism	No	Yes, MIA Division
6	Ferizaj	No	No	Yes	No	Po
7	Kaçanik	No	No	No	No	No
8	Viti	n/d	n/d	n/d	n/d	n/d
9	Hani i Elezit	Yes	We were notified in meetings	Coordinating Officer of the Referral Mechanism	No	No
10	Shtime	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
11	Istog	n/d	n/d	n/d	n/d	n/d
12	Skenderaj	No	No	No	No	Through the Police
13	Rahovec	No	No	No	No	Through the Police

14	Drenas	I was notified through the website	n/d	Jo	Jo	Përmes KKSB-së me MPB, përkatësisht Divizionin për Siguri në Bashkësi
15	Klinë	Jo	Jo	Jo	Jo	Jo
16	Kamenicë	n/d	n/d	n/d	n/d	n/d
17	Klllokot	No	No information	No	No	No
18	Ranillug	No	No	No	No	Through the Police
19	Junik	No	No	No	No	No
20	Obiliq					
21	Dragash	No			No	No
22	Deçan	We have been notified through the website	No	No	No	No
23	Mitrovicë e Jugut	No	No	No	No	No
24	Podujevë	No	No	No	No	No
25	Fushë Kosovë	No	No	No	No	No
26	Leposaviq	Yes	Yes	No	No	No

The Municipality of Gjakova, in its response, highlights that “the answers are negative because there have been no official activities from the local government regarding this topic. This has occurred for two reasons: first, because this issue has been handled by the central level, and second, because the Municipality of Gjakova is one of the municipalities where radicalism and extremism are almost non-existent, and all religious communities live in complete harmony.”²²

22. Response from the Municipality of Gjakova on the survey conducted by BIRN, dated 26 of June 2024

VII. Conclusions and Recommendations

- National Coordinator to fulfill as soon as possible the obligation of delivering the strategic message to the local level;
- MIA together with NGOs and other actors to continue to hold explanatory meetings with municipal structures to inform them about their roles, duties, and responsibilities in accordance with the Strategy for the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism;
- MIA and Municipalities to pay special attention to the functioning of the newly established referral mechanisms such as in Hani I Elezit, and Pristina, to formalize these mechanisms, and address the responsibilities of local actors in these mechanisms;
- MIA, MESTI and the Academy of Sciences to accelerate and finalize a guiding document that identifies the driving and attracting factors, lists and updates these factors and identifies groups and individuals vulnerable to these factors and includes all forms of extremism;
- Municipalities and MIA to focus on community policing as a tool to build mutual trust within the community, improving both efficiency and effectiveness in early identification;
- MIA, MESTI and Academy of Sciences to develop a guiding document on identifying early signs of radicalization for all forms of extremism, with particular attention to right-wing extremism.
- MESTI to align activities with the Strategy and Action Plan to focus on the early identification of circumstances, update guiding documents, and increase awareness campaigns;
- Municipalities to be more proactive, request information on the Strategy and Action Plan from the MIA, appoint responsible officers, and develop individual implementation plans for Strategy activities.
- Municipalities, through safety forums MCSC and LPSC to prioritize the issue of violent extremism, especially in terms of prevention and early identification;
- Municipalities to continue to increase the number of psychologists, educators, and social workers, strengthening their capacities of recognizing various forms of violent extremism and identification of early signs of radicalization.
- Municipalities to conduct research tailored to their individual needs based on the specific characteristics of each municipality to identify driving and attracting factors, vulnerable groups at risk of radicalization, and early detection methods;



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