



EUROPEAN CENTRE  
FOR MINORITY  
ISSUES KOSOVO

4 NOVEMBER 2014

## AN OVERVIEW OF THE RECENT SECURITY SITUATION IN KOSOVO

INFORMATIONAL BULLETIN

### About ECMI Kosovo

ECMI Kosovo is the principal non-governmental organisation engaged with minority issues in Kosovo, with the overarching aim to develop inclusive, representative, community-sensitive institutions that support a stable multi-ethnic Kosovo. ECMI Kosovo contributes to the developing, strengthening and implementation of relevant legislation, supports the institutionalisation of communities-related governmental bodies, and enhances the capacity of civil society actors and the government to engage with one another in a constructive and sustainable way.

ECMI Kosovo has become aware of several incidents involving minority communities, most of which are clearly ethnically motivated. The incidents include damage to private property and stone-throwing at homes owned by Kosovo Serbs. ECMI Kosovo would like to take the opportunity to condemn them and call on the police authorities to investigate these incidents and, where appropriate, apprehend their perpetrators.

While the overall security situation remains calm and stable, the political stalemate in the Parliament, five months after elections, has produced an atmosphere where there is a perceived lack of authority and legitimacy of the institutions among the population in general, creating a heightened sense of lack of security among minority communities in particular. The Serbia vs. Albania football match on October 14<sup>th</sup> provoked this situation further, as indicated in our report *ECMI Kosovo Calls for Calm in Face of Escalating Ethnic Tensions*.<sup>1</sup> The following is a short summary of some of the incidents involving minority communities in the past two weeks.

The first incident, which occurred on October 12<sup>th</sup>, was the graffiti on the external walls of the property belonging to the Serbian Orthodox Monastery in Dečan/Dečani. The graffiti contained the words “ISIS” and “UÇK”. The Minister of Interior Rexhepi quickly issued a statement saying that those responsible had been apprehended and were minors and not part of an organised campaign, as Father Sava of the monastery was quoted to have said earlier.<sup>2</sup> Similar graffiti has also been reported on October 30<sup>th</sup> near the hydroelectric plant in a Serb municipality in the North of Kosovo, Zubin Potok, referring to “ISIS” and “AKSH” [Albanian National Army].<sup>3</sup> Zubin Potok is a municipality with scarce Kosovo Police presence and there has been no apprehension of suspected perpetrators thus far.

Following these incidents, the representatives of the three biggest religious communities in Kosovo – the Serbian Orthodox Church, the Catholic Church and the Islamic Community – met in Prishtina/Priština, together with the KFOR commandant Francesco Paolo Figliuolo, unanimously denouncing the recent acts of vandalism in the immediate vicinity of the monastery.<sup>4</sup>

According to some media reports, within a week – from October 23<sup>rd</sup> to October 30<sup>th</sup> – various incidents happened which involved throwing of what appeared to be a Molotov cocktail<sup>5</sup> and stones at houses of Serbian returnees in Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.ecmikosovo.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/English.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.shekulli.com.al/web/p.php?id=57822&kat=111>

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.kossev.info/strana/arhiva/grafiti\\_quotaksh\\_quot\\_i\\_quotisis\\_quot\\_u\\_zubinom\\_potoku/2741](http://www.kossev.info/strana/arhiva/grafiti_quotaksh_quot_i_quotisis_quot_u_zubinom_potoku/2741) and <http://www.kosovapress.com/sq/siguri/grafite-aksh-dhe-isis-ne-zubin-potok-27930/>

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.b92.net/info/vesti/index.php?yyyy=2014&mm=10&dd=30&nav\\_category=640&nav\\_id=917836](http://www.b92.net/info/vesti/index.php?yyyy=2014&mm=10&dd=30&nav_category=640&nav_id=917836)

<sup>5</sup> [http://kossev.info/strana/arhiva/%EF%BB%BFna\\_lokal\\_u\\_kosovu\\_polju\\_bacen\\_molotovljev\\_koktel\\_/2719](http://kossev.info/strana/arhiva/%EF%BB%BFna_lokal_u_kosovu_polju_bacen_molotovljev_koktel_/2719)

Polje and the regions of Klina<sup>6</sup> and Istog/Istok.<sup>7</sup> The Minister of Communities and Return, Dalibor Jevtić, condemned the attacks saying that he believes these developments could put the process of return in danger, and that they are part of the events following the Serbia-Albania game.<sup>8</sup> Despite numerous attempts over several days, ECMI Kosovo was unable to verify these reports with the Kosovo Police.

Additionally, uninhabited houses belonging to a Serb family in Gjakovë/Djakovica were demolished according to a municipal decision. The municipality issued a statement saying that the houses were demolished following numerous requests from citizens fearing for their safety. Mayor Kusari-Lila gave an interview to local media saying that the owners and relevant institutions were notified of these decisions and all proper legal procedures were followed.<sup>9</sup> The family whose property the municipality demolished issued a statement to media in Serbia saying that they were the owners of these five houses, that they were not notified of any problems with the houses, and that they were not notified that they were endangering the lives of citizens. They expect full restitution from the municipality. The Minister of Communities and Return, Dalibor Jevtić, condemned this incident as well, adding that he wants to help Serbs return to Gjakova/Djakovica, but that this city is “forbidden to Serbs”.<sup>10</sup>

Recent incidents underline the fact that much remains to be done by the relevant authorities and civil society towards further stabilisation of inter-ethnic relations in Kosovo. Incidents like those during the football match can easily lead to unpredictable situations. In particular, some of the latest episodes highlight once again the vulnerability of returnees living in Albanian-majority areas and the fact that great work remains to be done in properly re-integrating these communities once they are returned to Kosovo. Last, but not least, a perceived lack of authority due to a prolonged political crisis has negatively impacted already fragile ethnic relations in Kosovo.

ECMI Kosovo strongly condemns recent incidents and calls upon the authorities to bring their perpetrators to justice as well as to provide proper protection, not only for returnees to Kosovo, but for all Kosovo citizens regardless of their ethnicity. As an organisation committed to community sensitive issues, ECMI Kosovo takes this opportunity to again reiterate its unwavering support for the protection and

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<sup>6</sup> [http://www.danas.rs/danasrs/iz\\_sata\\_u\\_sat/napad\\_na\\_srpsku\\_kucu\\_u\\_klini.83.html?news\\_id=84663](http://www.danas.rs/danasrs/iz_sata_u_sat/napad_na_srpsku_kucu_u_klini.83.html?news_id=84663)

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.vesti-online.com/Vesti/Hronika/443172/Napad-na-kucu-Srbina-Imam-problema-sa-novim-Albancima>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.kosovalive360.com/sulmet-ndaj-familjeve-serbe-rrezikojne-procesin-e-kthimit.html>

<sup>9</sup> [http://www.b92.net/info/vesti/index.php?yyyy=2014&mm=10&dd=30&nav\\_category=640&nav\\_id=917819](http://www.b92.net/info/vesti/index.php?yyyy=2014&mm=10&dd=30&nav_category=640&nav_id=917819)

<sup>10</sup> [http://www.b92.net/info/vesti/index.php?yyyy=2014&mm=10&dd=30&nav\\_category=640&nav\\_id=917740](http://www.b92.net/info/vesti/index.php?yyyy=2014&mm=10&dd=30&nav_category=640&nav_id=917740)

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promotion of human rights in Kosovo, for all of its citizens, regardless of their ethnic or cultural background.