Albanian community

Community profile

Figures as at the 2011 census; the 2024 census results are at **Kosovo Agency of Statistics (ReKos 2024).**

The profile supplements its 2011 census figures with OSCE data for northern Kosovo.

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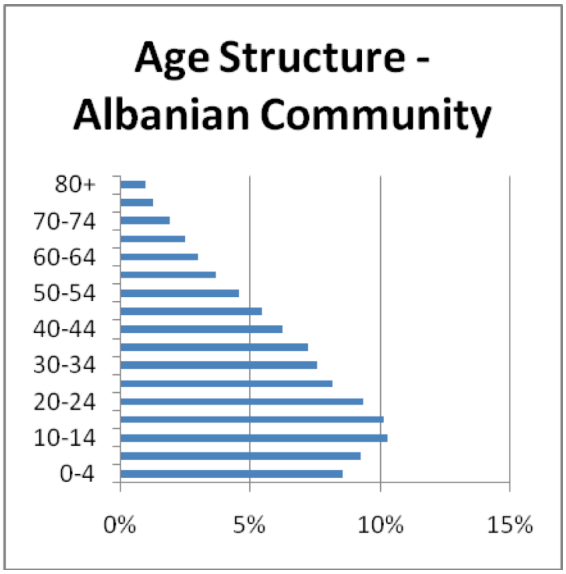
COMMUNITY PROFILE: ALBANIAN COMMUNITY

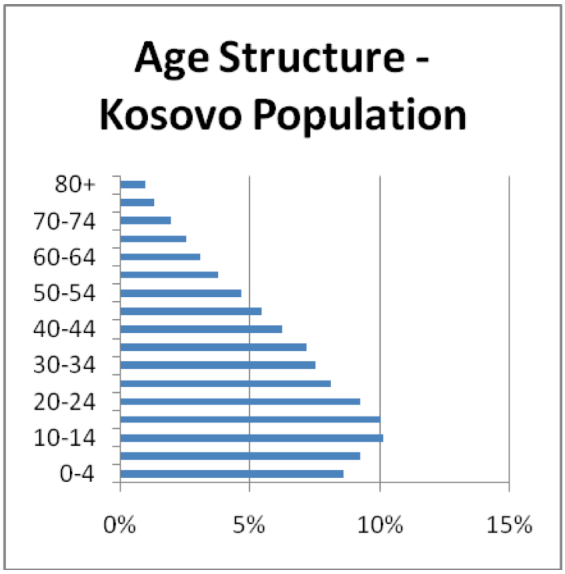
1. POPULATION SIZE AND LOCATION

Based on the 2011 Kosovo census results, supplemented with OSCE data for northern Kosovo, ECMI Kosovo estimates that there are around 1,623,419 Albanians living in Kosovo, making up roughly 86.63% of the total population. Although Kosovo Albanians constitute a majority Kosovo-wide, they are considered a numerical minority in nine municipalities, with the largest Albanian minority communities located in: Mitrovica/Mitrovicë North, Štrpce/Shtërpcë, Novo Brdo/Novobërdë, and Gračanica/Graçanicë.

Albanian minority municipalities in Kosovo according to the 2011 Census*		
Municipality	**Percentage**	**Number of community members**
Mitrovica/Mitrovicë North	16.63%	4,900
Štrpce/Shtërpcë	29.14%	3,757
Novo Brdo/Novobërdë	37.33%	3,542
Gračanica/Graçanicë	9.44%	2,474
Klokot/Kllokot	27.72%	1,362
Zubin Potok	6.61%	1,000
Zvečan/Zveçan	2.06%	350
Leposavić/Leposaviq	1.59%	300
Mamuşa/Mamushë/Mamuša	5.89%	327
Ranilug/Ranillug	2.79%	164
Total in municipalities listed	**12.08%**	**18,176**
Total in Kosovo	**86.63%**	**1,623,419**

** The 2011 Kosovo census did not cover northern Kosovo. Therefore the 2013 OSCE Municipal Profiles were used as source for the data on the northern municipalities with Albanian communities. For all southern municipalities, the official 2011 Kosovo census was used as a source.*





The average age among the Albanian population is almost the same as the population as a whole, with an average age of 29.4, compared to the Kosovo average of 29.5.

2. CULTURE AND RELIGION

The Albanians in Kosovo consider themselves descendents from the Illyrian tribes that inhabited the region in Roman times.[1] The majority of Kosovo Albanians are Sunni Muslim, although there are some adherents to the Islamic dervish sect known as Bektashism. There is also a considerable minority of Roman Catholic Albanians. The 2011 census estimates the total number of Catholics at 38,438, or approximately 2.37% of all Kosovo Albanians.[2] Albania's Independence Day, 28 November, is recognised as the day of the Albanians in Kosovo and as an official Memorial Day.

3. LANGUAGE

Albanian is a unique Indo-European language, with no close relation to any other modern language. Albanians in Kosovo speak a variant of the Gheg dialect of Albanian, typical of northern Albania and Kosovo. However, schools teach Standard Albanian, which closely reflects the Tosk dialiact spoken in southern Albania. As a consequence, standard Albanian is also used for formal written communication. The Albanian language is spoken in Albania, by Albanian communities throughout former Yugoslavia and by the large Albanian diaspora. Historic Albanian dialects can be found in a number of places, such as Italy and Greece, with Albanian descendant communities.

[1] Malcolm, Noel, 'Kosovo: A Short History', London: Pan Macmillan Ltd, 1998, p. 28.
[2] This number covers all communities. However, taking into account the small of Croats in Kosovo and the low number of Catholics among other communities, it can be considered a reliable aproximation of the number of Albanian Catholics in Kosovo.

Albanian is one of the two official languages of Kosovo, along with Serbian. Older generations of Albanians educated under the Yugoslav education system speak Serbian as a second language and some Albanian community members also speak Turkish, particularly in the Prizren region.

4. POLITICAL REPRESENTATION

Given that Albanians constitute a majority in Kosovo, most political parties cater to their needs. The 'Partia Demokratike e Kosovës' (PDK), 'Lidhja Demokratike e Kosovës' (LDK), 'Vetëvendosje', 'Aleanca Kosova e Re' (AKR), and 'Aleanca për Ardhmërinë e Kosovës' (AAK) have been some of the most dominant political subjects in Kosovo elections in recent years.

In municipalities where Albanians constitute a numerical minority, they generally remain fairly well represented in the political process, and are usually represented in the Municipal Assembly.

5. RETURNS

Although the 1999 conflict caused a huge number of Albanians, UNHCR estimates around 848,100,[3] to flee Kosovo to neighbouring countries and Western Europe, the vast majority of Albanian refugees returned to their places of origins within a year. However, the Mitrovica /Mitrovicë North region forms an exception. UNHCR estimates that around 7,182 Albanians remain displaced within Kosovo,[4] primarily from North Mitrovica /Mitrovicë, where security concerns and active resistance from local communities have prevented any significant returns. From January 2000 until June 2013, 1,062 Albanians returned voluntarily.

Voluntary and forced returns within the Albanian community, Jan. 2000 – June 2013 (UNHCR)

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Voluntary	0	27	294	245	8	49	53	15	43	86	99	27	67	49

6. SECURITY AND FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT

According to a United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) survey (2013), 62% of Albanians are satisfied with Kosovo's security institutions. The Albanian community feels safe to travel throughout southern Kosovo both with private vehicles and public transport. Albanian communities living in Serb-majority municipalities in southern Kosovo largely share these positive security perceptions.

Security and freedom of movement concerns exist primarily in relation to northern Kosovo. Albanians from southern Kosovo generally do not feel safe to travel to or through this part of Kosovo. Moreover, Albanian communities in northern Kosovo report considerable security concerns and obstacles to their freedom of movement.

[3] UNHCR 1999, Refugees 3, (116), retrieved at: http://www.unhcr.org/3c6914bc5.pdf.
[4] UNHCR Office of the Chief of the Mission, Pristina, Kosovo, 'Statistical Overview: Update at end of June 2013'.

7. ECONOMY

The unemployment rate for the Albanian community is 47.02%, slightly higher than the overall 45% unemployment rate in Kosovo,[5] and only 6% of the Albanian community is satisfied with Kosovo's economic direction.[6] Employment opportunities remain an issue for Albanians throughout Kosovo, particularly in rural areas, which includes most of the municipalities where Albanians are a minority community. The Albanian community is relatively well represented in public institutions in municipalities where they are a numerical minority.

8. EDUCATION

The Albanian community makes use of the Kosovo education system and faces no particular difficulties in accessing education. However, they face a number of issues related to the quality of education offered:

- A lack of qualified teachers;
- An absence of high-quality school infrastructure;
- A lack of equipment (school books, computers, etc).

9. ACCESS TO PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

In general, the Albanian community faces no serious obstacles to accessing public institutions and services. However, Serb-majority municipalities do not always comply with their obligations under the *Law on the Use of Languages*, leading to communication difficulties between Albanians and municipal institutions that predominantly operate in the Serbian language.

In northern Kosovo, the access of the Albanian community to public institutions is considerably hampered due to the tense security situation, related restrictions in freedom of movement and the limited presence of Kosovo institutions.

[5] UNDP, 'Kosovo Human Development Report 2012: Private sector and employment.'
[6] UNDP, 'Public Pulse Report 6', August 2013.

