



KCSS
Kosovar Centre for Security Studies

KOSOVO SECURITY BAROMETER

Special Edition:

The citizens' views against violent extremism
and radicalization in Kosovo





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The information presented in this report is a summary of data collected from respondents and should be treated only as such. The report is in no way a definitive assessment of the quality of work of the institutions or the conclusion of risk in the country. This report serves researchers and institutions as an instrument for addressing potential shortcomings.

The views expressed in this report are perceptions of respondents and do not necessarily represent the views of the Kosova Centre for Security Studies or NED.

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WHAT IS KOSOVO SECURITY BAROMETER?

Kosovo Security Barometer (BKS) is a special program of the Kosovo Centre for Security Studies (KCSS), designed to serve as an annual publication. Apart from general findings, the program issues special editions in areas previously defined. The main focus of the BKS is to measure the perceptions of the public about the institutions and policy-making in the field of security. It also measures the public perception of internal and external threats to security in Kosovo. BKS is one of the biggest and the first initiatives designed, implemented, and communicated by a local research institute. BKS is unique in its methodological approach, adapting qualitative and quantitative methods with the aim of providing real results on public perception issues related to security.

WHO IS THIS SPECIAL EDITION AIMED AT?

This special edition of BKS is aimed at a wide range of stakeholders interested to follow citizens' perceptions of violent extremism and radicalization in Kosovo. Specifically, it addresses an audience that is interested to follow the trends of public opinion in Kosovo with special emphasis on Kosovo citizens' trust in and contact with religious institutions in Kosovo; threats and risks arising from the terrorist formations such as ISIS and al-Nusra; perception of the rehabilitation of returnees from Syria and Iraq as well as perceptions of the Kosovar Government's strategy to deal with this phenomenon. In general, BKS is aimed at the state level policy makers, international actors in Kosovo, as well as local organizations, religious communities, civil society, academia and media.

METHODOLOGY

BKS special edition reflects citizens' perceptions of trust in religious institutions, threats and dangers emanating from extremist groups, and refugee crisis in the Middle East. The report embraced a comprehensive approach, measuring the perception not only from the viewpoint of violent religious extremism on religion grounds but also other extremist actions and potentials in Kosovo. Also, a comparison between citizens' trust in state and religious institutions is made, reflecting the status and credibility in these institutions. This has made it possible for data interpreters to conduct a detailed analysis from the public perception viewpoint, filling professional assessments coming from policymaking circles or the academic community. Data interpretation reflects a

set of political and social factors that have influenced the respondents' opinions. The citizens' opinion analysis is based on direct involvement of data interpreters in face-to-face interviews with respondents. Moreover, the KCSS team's efforts for further interpretation and analysis of the opinions contained in this special edition are supported by focus groups and field researchers.

Responses for BKS questionnaire were collected through direct interviews conducted in the entire territory of Kosovo. Most of the questions were of closed type, observing Likert's five grade scale. Yet, there were open questions giving respondents an opportunity to express their opinion without having to choose from previously set options. Sampling, piloting, and interviews were conducted by KCSS team composed of 35 researchers in the field. National sample, on the basis of which the research was designed, comprised 1,070 households, following a representative sample of the population over the age of 18 in Kosovo. The ethnic composition of the respondents was as follows: 88.4 percentage Albanians, 7 percentage Kosovar Serbs and 3.9 percentage others (of which 1.4 percentage Turks, 0.6 percentage Bosnian, 1.0 percentage Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian and others included Gorani, Croats and Montenegrins).

The sampling frame is based on telephone area codes and as such included seven regions: Ferizaj, Gjakova, Gjilan, Mitrovica, Peja, Prishtina, and Prizren. The first phase of geographical grouping was based on the Kosovo Census Report of 2012, while the second phase included grouping samples according to the municipal areas of village/city stratified sample, according to the number of households. In the last phase the random sampling method was implemented using closest "birthday method". Random sampling ensures that each resident in Kosovo has equal opportunity to be selected for interview. With the sample used for this study, the survey results reflect trends in attitudes and perceptions of the entire adult population of Kosovo in general. The margin of error is 3 percentage, with a confidence interval of 95 percentage.

Prior to working on the ground, in early October 2015, a pilot interview was conducted in order to test the feasibility of the questionnaire. The research team later reported that the pilot interview had been successful and that there were no problems encountered with the questions asked. All interviews were conducted from 21 to 29 October 2015. The processing and data analysis were made using SPSS software.

INTRODUCTION

Violent extremism is a new term used globally, which in its narrow interpretation refers to the phenomenon of persons who have joined or may potentially join extremist or terrorist formations, such as the recent ISIS and Al-Nusra organizations. So far several countries that have lined up in the fight against ISIS and other terrorist groups are facing the consequences of direct attacks by those groups. As one of the ally countries of "Global Coalition against War of Terrorism"¹, having become a member officially in 2015, Kosovo has not had any direct threats. However, Kosovo is seen as possessing a high potential for recruitment and spread of radical ideology. This is attested by the profiles of Kosovar participants in Syria and Iraq that encompass various elements and motifs.

The key factors for this are largely considered to be socio-political and economic, such as: the degraded education system, unemployment among young people (60 percentage in Kosovo)², social and individual isolation, the existence of extremist ideology in different regions, and socialization and grouping of young people around these circles. However, an important role was played by the inefficiency of state and religious institutions to prevent the spread of extremist ideology in the Republic of Kosovo, a problem encountered in other countries in the Balkans and Europe. One of the factors that cannot be neglected which has contributed to attracting young people is their isolation in rural areas, induced with lectures by some imams who have already been arrested for recruitment and association with extremist groups.

This special KCSS edition of the security barometer will disclose the level of citizens' trust in and their contact with religious institutions as well as their perceptions of the threats posed by extremist groups and the risks from people who have returned from the Middle East conflict to Kosovo.

1 Country Reports on Terrorism: <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/239631.pdf>

2 Kosova Statistical Agency /Results of the Labor Force Survey 2014: <https://ask.rks-gov.net/images/files/Anketapercentage20epercentage20Grupimevepercentage20tepercentage20Treguesvepercentage20tepercentage20Shumefishtepercentage20nepercentage20Republikenpercentage20epercentage20Kosovespercentage202013-2014.pdf>

MAIN FINDINGS:

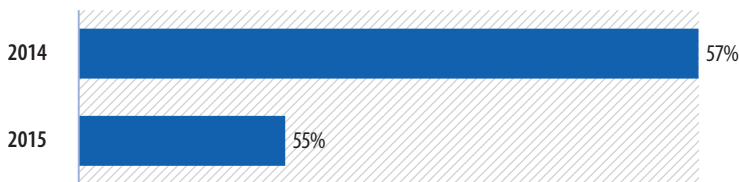
- The general trends show that civilian respondents share more positive perceptions towards religious institutions than state ones. Citizens who claimed they trust the Government's work amount to 14 percentage, those trusting the courts to about 22 percent, compared to the religious institutions where the trust is at 57 percentage.
- Traditionally Kosovar citizens have respected religious institutions in Kosovo, but their views do not necessarily reflect the work conducted by these institutions. A closer examination of the results shows that there are differences between rural and urban areas in terms of trust in religious institutions. E.g. about 65 percentage of the interviewed citizens living in rural areas trust religious institutions, compared to 49 percentage of those living in urban areas. However, contacts with religious institutions are of a low level.
- About 76 percentage of citizens see terrorist organizations like ISIS and Al-Nusra as very dangerous while 8 percentage see these organizations as posing a medium threat.
- About 55 percentage said that Kosovar citizens who returned from the Syrian and Iraqi wars should be subjected to strict programs of reintegration, rehabilitation, and deradicalization. Another 22 percentage of the respondents think they should be arrested at the very moment of their return to Kosovo, while 15 percentage think they should be banned from returning to Kosovo.
- Lastly, about 57 percentage of respondents said the Kosovar Government has failed to combat violent extremism and radicalization in Kosova, on the other hand about 35 percentage of the respondents see the Government's work as somewhat successful in combating and preventing violent extremism in Kosovo.

1. PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS ON RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS

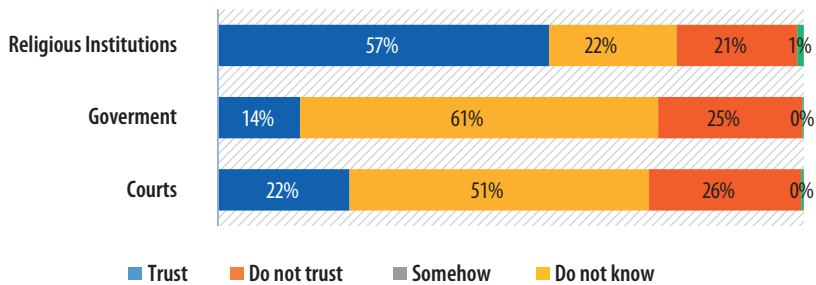
While measuring the perceptions of citizens' trust in religious institutions, this edition of the Kosovar Security Barometer (BKS) compares the level of trust in these institutions as opposed to state ones, including the government and the courts.

The findings show that from 2014 to 2015 there has been a slight increase of citizens' trust in religious institutions. From 55 percentage who expressed their trust in 2014, the number has increased to 57 percent in 2015. However, citizens also expressed their views on state institutions negligence, and this has very likely contributed to increased contacts of many young people with religious leaders, which in turn has had a direct impact on the assessment of trust in religious institutions in Kosovo.

Figure 1: The citizens' trust in religious institutions in Kosova 2014/2015 expressed



A better indicator of this is the finding showing that 61 percentage of citizens are not satisfied with the Government performance. Only 14 percentage stated that they trust the Government and are satisfied with its performance. Only 22 percentage of citizens trust the courts in Kosovo, while about 51 percentage of them do not trust the courts at all. The respondents justify their low trust in the Kosovar Government and courts with the high levels of corruption within these institutions, the high unemployment rate, especially among youths, dissatisfaction with the rule of law, education, and the low economic development.

Figure 2: Trust in religious and state institutions

Shown below is the level of trust in religious institutions at the regional level: *Albania, Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina (B&H), and Serbia*. It appears from the findings that there has been a growing trust in religious institutions in Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina. While 44 percentage of Albania's citizens trusted religious institutions in 2014³, in 2015⁴ the figure reached 52 percentage. In Bosnia and Herzegovina from 51 percentage in 2014⁵, the figure reached 65 percentage in 2015.⁶

The level of trust in religious institutions during 2014 in Macedonia was 68 percentage. Data for 2015 is not yet available. Serbian citizens have shown moderate trust in the Orthodox Church. During 2014 the research shows a 32 percentage of Serbian citizens said they trust the work of the Orthodox Church in Serbia.

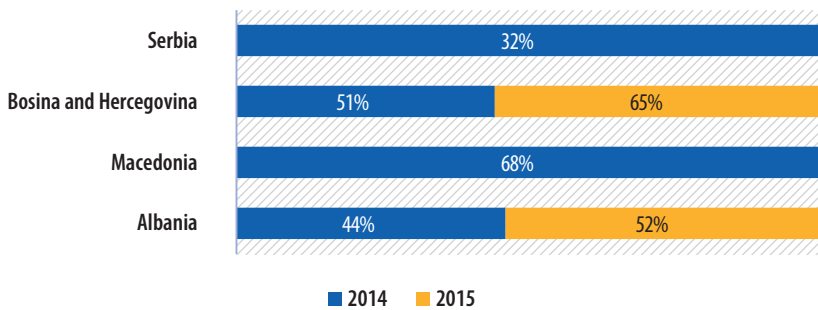
3 Pasos Poll 2014: <http://pasos.org/pasos-poll-citizens-of-six-balkan-countries-identify-political-parties-as-the-most-untrustworthy-institution-in-their-respective-countries/>

4 Report from IDM 2015: http://idmalbania.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Opinion-Poll_trust-in-government_2015.pdf

5 Report from Analitika/ Center for Social Research, 2014 (BIH): http://pasos.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/povjerenje_fact_sheet_english.pdf

6 Report from Analitika / Center for Social Research, 2015 (BIH): [file:///C:/Users/User/Downloads/povjerenja_gradana_u_vlast_eng%20\(1\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/User/Downloads/povjerenja_gradana_u_vlast_eng%20(1).pdf)

Figure 3: Citizens' trust in religious institutions around the region



There are indications that have led to increased trust in religious institutions in the Balkans. In the case of Albania, citizens who have starting to practice religion are mainly young people after the fall of communism and this is because during the transitional political period in Albania citizens began to find support from religious institutions due to the negligence on the part of state institutions. In the case of Macedonia it is mainly the political issues which lead citizens to have greater trust in religious institutions. Political discord made the Macedonian and the Albanian communities establish more contacts with their religious institutions than with the state ones. In Bosnia there is a slightly different reason behind the increased trust in religious institutions. Initially, it was the war in Bosnia that caused an identity crisis with the Bosniac community, as well as an ethnic division with the establishment of the Serbian Republic inside Bosnia's territory. Then the influence of the Orthodox Church started. Also, the war that occurred in B&H has had elements of a religious war alongside the mainly nationalistic war. Consequently, Bosnia is seen today as one of the countries with the highest trust in religious institutions compared to other countries in the region. However, the reasons in all Western Balkan countries behind the increased trust in religious institutions are: high corruption in state institutions (although it also exists in the religious ones), high unemployment rate, poor education systems, and the lack of rule of law.

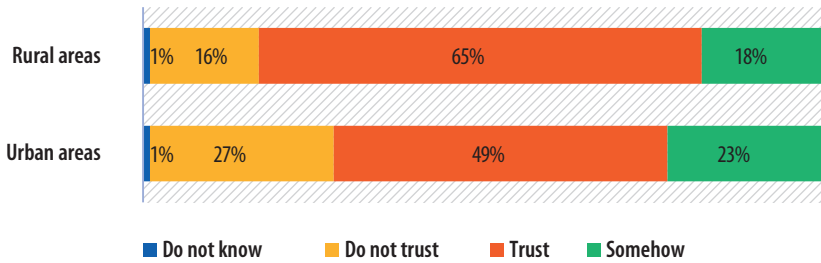
2. ANALYSIS OF TRUST IN RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS BASED ON MAIN DEMOGRAPHIC STRATIFICATION OF KOSOVO CITIZENS

This part of the report deals with Kosovar citizens' trust in and contact with religious institutions in more detail, presenting findings by area (urban/rural), by sex, and by region. Field findings show that Kosovar citizens regardless of their religion face similar problems primarily in terms of trust in and contact with religious institutions. Therefore, this section pays special attention to citizens' trust in religious institutions, as well as the neglect of these institutions in relation to citizens. Below rural and urban areas are compared, showing that citizens of rural areas tend to trust religious institutions more than those living in urban areas. This is because most people in rural areas are isolated, not visited by any state officials leading them to express their needs and dissatisfactions to religious institutions and its leaders.

2.1 Level of trust in religious institutions

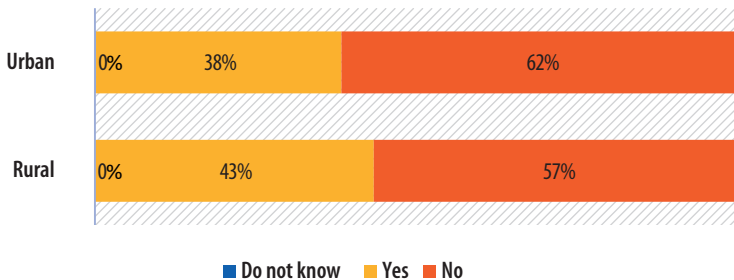
BKS data shows that in 2015 people in rural areas have trusted more in religious institutions compared to those who lived in urban areas. About 65 percentage of people in rural areas trust in religious institutions compared to 49 percentage who live in urban areas. While 19 percentage of respondents in rural areas said they *somewhat* trust in the work of religious institutions, 22 percentage of those in urban areas claim the same. About 16 percentage of those in rural areas said they *do not trust* the work of religious institutions, compared to 27 percentage of those in urban areas.

Figure 4: Kosova citizens' trust in religious institutions according to area (rural/urban)



An important role in citizens' trust in religious institutions comes from their direct contact with officials or representatives of these institutions. About 43 percentage of people in rural areas have had contact with religious institutions in Kosovo, compared to 38 percentage of those living in urban areas. About 57 percentage of respondents in rural areas said they have had no contact with religious institutions in Kosovo, compared to 62 percentage of respondents in urban areas who have not had contact with religious institutions. Traditionally Kosovar citizens' respect religious institutions yet their views do not necessarily reflect on the work these institutions conduct in Kosovo. With the emergence of violent extremism the number of voices who criticize religious institutions has risen. Previously, citizens did not have the courage to challenge the authority of religious establishments.

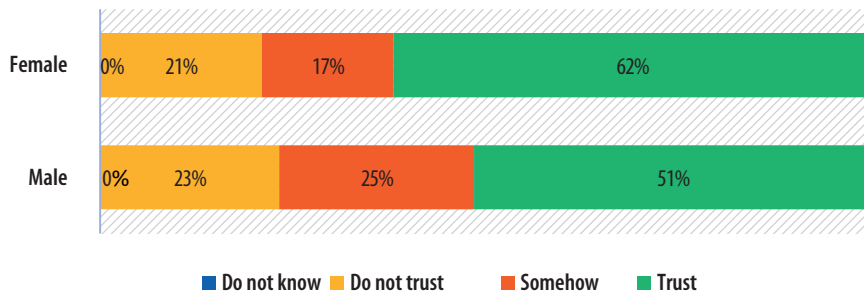
Figure 5: Kosovar citizens' contact with religious institutions according to areas (rural/urban)



Worth mentioning is the fact that most women in Kosovo are on one side completely excluded and neglected by religious institutions and their leadership, and on the other hand they have more trust than men in the work of religious institutions. About

62 percentage of respondents stated they trusted in these institutions, with about 51 percentage of men saying they also trusted in the work of religious institutions. Regarding their distrust about 21 percentage of women surveyed said they *do not trust* in the work of religious institutions, compared to 23 percentage of surveyed men.

Figure 6: Citizens' trust in religious institutions according to sex



Asked about their contact with the relevant institutions, about 48 percentage of men said they have had contact with religious institutions, compared to 33 percentage of women who claimed to have had any contact with religious institutions. While 52 percentage of men deny they have had contact with religious institutions in Kosovo, 67 percentage of women claim the same. According to field observations, citizens expressed dissatisfaction with conditions of the mosques in Kosovo. It is especially women of rural areas who are not seen within these institutions, even during prayers, and there are no women participating in decision-making processes. Another part of citizens have stated that religious institutions show irregularities and corruption within their leadership.

Looking at trends according to religion: *Muslim, Catholic, and Orthodox*, the findings show that 59 percentage of the Muslim community in Kosovo trusts in the work of religious institutions, compared to 57 percentage of the Catholic community and 46 percentage of the Orthodox one. On the other hand, community perceptions about distrust in religious institutions are roughly similar. About 21 percentage of the Muslim community does not trust in the work religious institutions conduct, and about 20 percentage of the Catholic community and about 22 percentage of the Orthodox community have no trust in the performance of their religious institutions.

Figure 7: Citizens' trust in religious institutions according to religion (Muslim, Catholic and Orthodox)

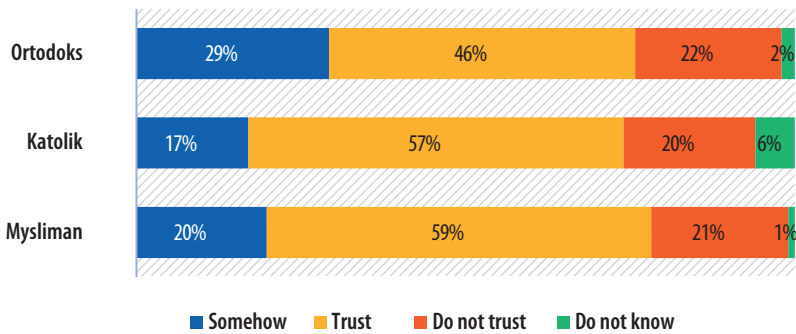
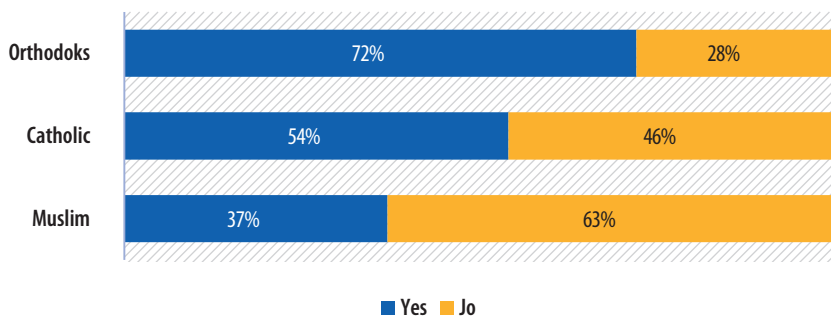
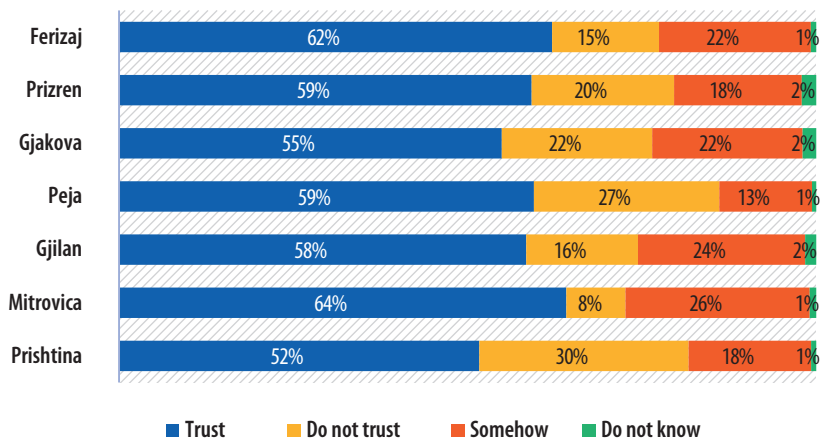


Figure 8 below shows that although the interviewed citizens trust in religious institutions, they do not have contacts with them or their official representatives. Regarding the contact with religious institutions, 63 percentage of the Muslim community claim not having any contacts with them. 46 percentage of the Catholic community and 28 percentage of the Orthodox community claims no contacts. This speaks of the type of connection these communities have with their respective religious institutions, indicating that the Orthodox community maintains a much greater contact with its religious institutions than the Catholic and the Muslim ones.

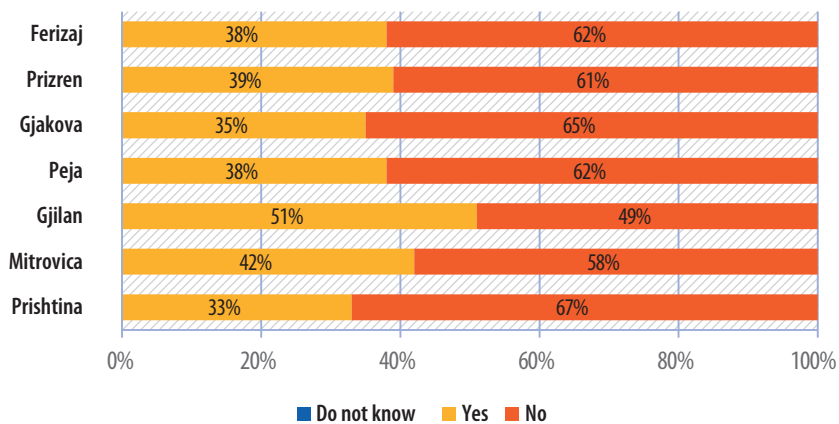
Figure 8: Kosova citizens' contact with religious institutions according to religion (Muslim, Catholic, and Orthodox)



In the terms of *trust* in religious institutions by region, these percentages emerge: Ferizaj (62 percentage), Prizren (59 percentage), Gjakova (55 percentage), Peja (59 percentage), Gjilan (59 percentage), Mitrovica (64 percentage) and Prishtina (52 percentage). While respondents who *do not trust* the work of religious institutions emerge with the following: Ferizaj (15 percentage), Prizren (20 percentage), Gjakova (22 percentage), Peja (27 percentage), Gjilan (16 percentage), Mitrovica (8 percentage) and Prishtina (30 percentage).

Figure 9: Citizens' trust in religious institutions according to regions

Regarding the contact of citizens with religious institutions by region, the percentages are: *Prishtina* (33 percentage), *Mitrovica* (42 percentage), *Gjilan* (51 percentage), *Peja* (38 percentage), *Gjakova* (35 percentage), *Prizren* (39 percentage) and *Ferizaj* (38 percentage), while a relatively large percentage of respondents have no contact with religious institutions. Citizens divided by regions who have no contact with religious institutions as follows: *Prishtina* (67 percentage), *Mitrovica* (58 percentage), *Gjilan* (49 percentage), *Peja* (61 percentage), *Gjakova* (65 percentage), *Prizren* (61 percentage) and *Ferizaj* (62 percentage).

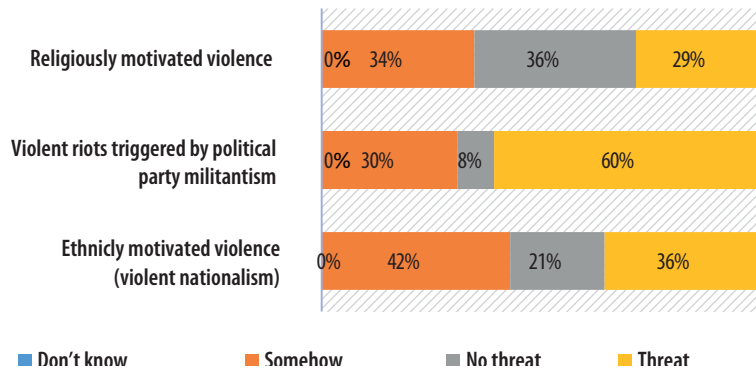
Figure 10: Kosova citizens' contact with religious institutions according to regions

3. PERCEPTIONS ON THREATS AND RISKS FROM VIOLENT EXTREMISM, FOREIGN FIGHTERS AND REFUGEE CRISIS

The last year's report published by the Kosovo Center for Security Studies (KCSS), on "Causes and Consequences of Kosovo Citizens' Involvement as Foreign Fighters in Syria and Iraq" led governmental security institutions, civil society, and religious community in Kosovo to address this phenomenon more seriously. Analysis have shown that the problem of violent extremism and radicalization calls for a special and specific approach as the manner of understanding and further treatment of this phenomenon, i.e. individuals who were part of this conflict.

Respondents were also asked about forms of violent extremism in Kosovo. There were three options which interviewers could choose from: (1) violence on national/ethnic grounds, (2) violence on religious grounds; (3) unrest driven by party/political militancy (escalation of government/opposition relations). About 36 percentage of respondents stated that violence on national/ethnic grounds poses a threat while on the other hand, about 42 percentage of the respondents view this phenomenon as somewhat dangerous, and 21 percentage of respondents assessed violence on national/ethnic grounds as not at all dangerous. About 60 percentage of respondents assessed party/political militancy (the escalation of government/opposition relations) as a threat, while 30 percentage of respondents assessed it as a somewhat dangerous phenomenon, and the rest, namely 8 percentage, did not see it as a risk.

Citizens see religious violence as a lesser risk compared to the other two; for example, about 29 percentage of the respondents saw religious-based violence as a risk, while 34 percentage saw this phenomenon as medium type risk. The remaining 36 percentage saw religious-based violence as not dangerous at all. Recent developments in the Kosovar Assembly, between the government and the opposition, violent protests and the political crisis in the country have made citizens of the country see political extremism as the highest risk for the country in comparison to the two other risks which they were able to choose from.

Figure 11: Citizens' perceptions on different extremism in Kosova

3.1. Risks and threats from extremists groups (ISIS, AL-Nusra) and Middle East refugee wave crisis

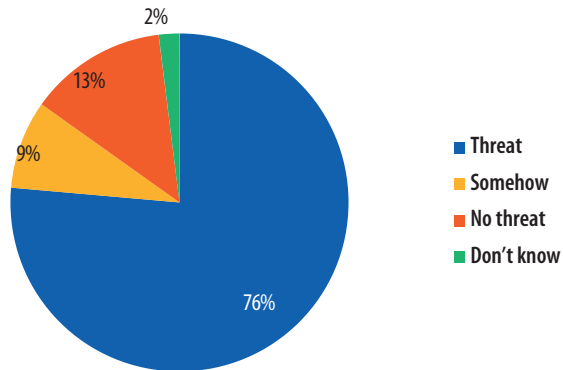
Citizens were also asked about how directly they feel threatened by extremist organizations like ISIS and Al-Nusra. About 76 percentage of people see a *great threat* from these organizations, and 8 percentage see in them an *average threat*. About 13 percentage of them do not see any *threat* from them. These assessments come due to the conflicts in Syria and Iraq, involvement of Kosovar citizens as foreign fighters in them, as well as the alarming media discourse. These data shows no significant differences from those published in last year's report about the causes and consequences of Kosovar citizens' engaged in these foreign conflicts; confirming the trend previously presented where the recruitment process, the influence many young people may encounter, the lure and methods used by extremist groups.⁷

Citizens have expressed their concerns about the threats and risks posed by these organizations, and estimated that these groups see Kosovo more as a "potential" recruitment country for youngsters than as a target of a possible terrorist attack. The aim of extremist groups, ISIS specifically, is to attack the countries that have an impact on international relations, their final goal being to spread fear and insecurity to the people of Europe and wider. On the other hand, the threat posed to Kosovo is due to the fact there are individuals active in extremist groups or radicalized, who may be able to recruit other citizens of Kosovo. The Balkan region might suffer the threat from extremist groups in largely underdeveloped areas, making it easier to have continuous recruitment in countries that are faced with a troubled past, like Kosovo in 1999. The

⁷ Report on causes and consequences from Kosova Center for Security Studies: <http://www.qkss.org/sq/Botime-tpercentageC3percentageAB-VeperspectiveC3percentageA7anta/Raport-per-shkaqet-dhe-pasojat-e-perfshirjes-se-qytetareve-te-Kosoves-si-luftetare-te-huaj-ne-Siri-dhe-Irak-408>

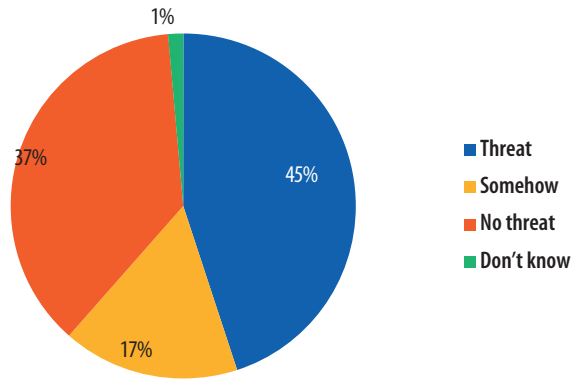
spread of their ideology focuses more on countries where there is a lack of proper education, in countries where there is not enough political stability and rule of law, with lack of economic development, which are the causes of different radicalism, not just religious one. These groups present their radical nature where they aim to recruit.

Figure 12: Citizens' perceptions on threats and risks from extremist groups (ISIS and Al-Nusra)



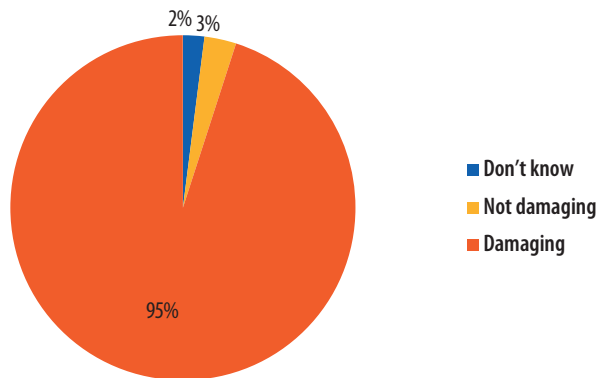
Citizens were also asked whether they see a threat from Middle Eastern refugees. About 45 percentage of respondents stated that the arrival of Middle Eastern refugees poses a threat to the country's security, while 17 percentage of respondents had reserved opinions regarding the refugees in Kosovo. This high percentage of citizens' negative perceptions on refugees shows that our society is not ready to accept foreigners, a trend generally spread in Eastern Europe. However citizens point out the media linkage between ISIS and refugees confuses their assessment about a possible refugee influx. On the other hand, 37 percentage of respondents think that the arrival of the Middle Eastern refugees does not pose a threat to Kosovo and there is no problem or threat to the security of the country from their arrival. Citizens who positively assess their arrival do so due to the fact that Kosovar citizens were once refugees themselves in various countries.

Figure 13: Citizens’ perceptions on threats and risks form Middle East refugees



Since Kosovo has had about 300 citizens involved in conflicts of Syria and Iraq ever since the beginning of hostilities, the majority of respondents share a negative opinion about the involvement of Kosovar citizens as foreign fighters in wars in Syria and Iraq. About 95 percentage of respondents consider that the involvement of Kosovar citizens as foreign fighters in Syria and Iraq was and remains harmful for Kosovo. Only a negligible percentage thinks differently or has no opinion.

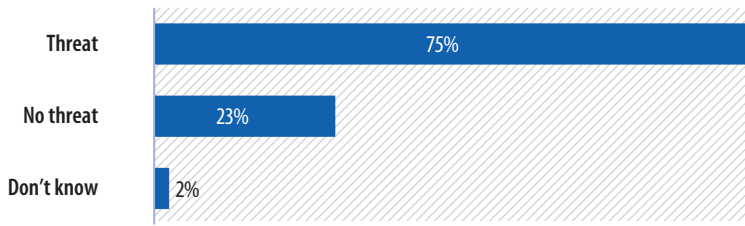
Figure 14: Citizens’ perceptions on Kosovar citizens’ participation in Syria/Iraq conflicts



3.2 Citizens' perceptions on individuals returning from Syria and Iraq to Kosovo

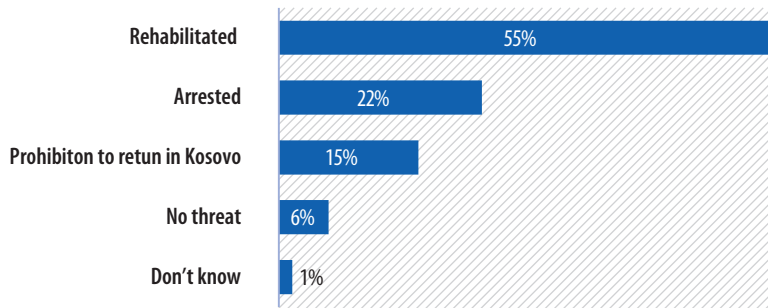
A good part of Kosovar citizens involved in the Syria and Iraq wars as foreign fighters have returned to Kosovo motivated by different reasons. Respondents were asked about the risks they think that returnees from Syria and Iraq wars pose to the country. Statistically, 75 percentage of respondents said that their return to Kosovo is a threat to state security, while 23 percentage of them said that the returnees from the wars in Syria and Iraq pose no threat to our country. On the other hand, about 2 percentage had no opinion about their threat to our society.

Figure 15: Citizens' perceptions about the threats from Syria/Iraq conflict returnees



Asked about the treatment of individuals returning from the wars in Syria and Iraq, 22 percentage of respondents think that returnees should be *arrested* as soon as they re-enter Kosovo, while 15 percentage of respondents think the citizens of Kosovo who are involved in the conflicts of Syria and Iraq should be *barred from returning* to Kosovo. Citizens expressed their concerns about some returnees from the conflicts in Syria and Iraq, about the purpose of their return, the risk they present to the country, and the possibility that they may spread violent extremism in Kosovo, as well as the possibility of recruiting other young people to join organizations like *ISIS* and *al-Nusra*.

Given the fact that some of the returnees were interviewed by international and local media, some respondents felt reassured and about 6 percentage of them stated that citizens returned from Syria and Iraq pose *no threat* while about 1.5 percentage were hesitant in expressing a thought about their possible treatment. Despite the fact that some citizens see their return as a threat to the country, another part of citizens have a very positive opinion about their treatment after returning to Kosovo, as well as the measures to be taken by state institutions with such foreign fighters. About 55 percentage said that returnees from the Syria and Iraq wars should be subjected to strict programs of *reintegration*, *rehabilitation*, and *deradicalization*.

Figure 16: Citizens; perceptions about returnees from Syria and Iraq

3.3 Kosovar citizens' perceptions about the Government's struggle to combat extremism

In 2015 Kosovar Assembly passed the “*Law on prohibition of joining armed conflicts outside the country territory (Law Nr. 05 / L-002)*”⁸ with the purpose of protecting the interests of the state. The Law defines criminal provisions on joining or participating in foreign military or police outside Kosovar territory. The provisions of this law are penalties against any person who participates, organizes, recruits, or financially helps people to participate in conflicts outside Kosovar territory. After this law the Government of Kosovo drafted the document “*Strategy for the prevention of violent extremism and radicalization that leads to terrorism 2013-2020*”⁹, paying special importance to persons who have returned from Syria and Iraq as well as their treatment which must be provided by government institutions.

An important role in combating extremism was played by the Kosovo Police which initiated their arrests and carried out raids in various locations of the country identifying among them imams who were potential recruiters and some suspected participants and collaborators in foreign conflicts. The strategy envisages the stage of identifying violent extremism, that of preventing, deradicalization, and their integration in society. Special importance within the strategy is paid to comprehensive cooperation by law enforcement authorities, civil society, the media, and religious community in fighting and preventing violent extremism in Kosovo.

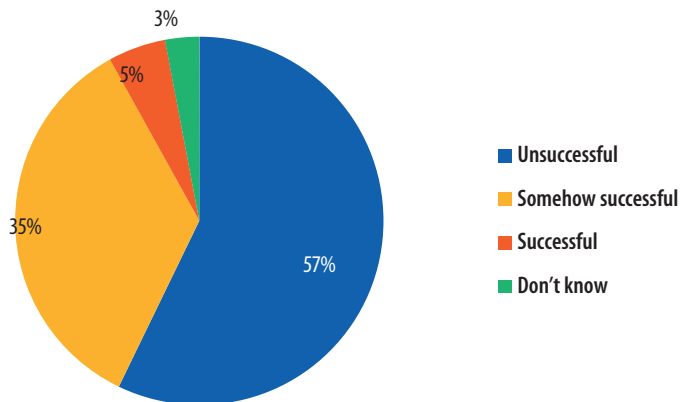
⁸ Law on prohibition of joining armed conflicts outside the country territory: https://www.mpb-ks.org/repository/docs/LIGJI_NR.05_L_002_PER_NDALIMIN_E_BASHKIMIT_NE_KONFLIKTE_TE_ARMATOSURA_JASHTE_TERRITORIT_TE_VENDIT.pdf

⁹ Strategy for the prevention of violent extremism and radicalization that leads to terrorism 2013-2020: http://www.kryeministri-ks.net/repository/docs/STRATEGJIA_parandalim_-_SHQIP.pdf

The citizens did not assess positively the current efforts of the Kosovar Government combating and preventing violent extremism in Kosovo. About 57 percentage of respondents said the Kosovo government has not been successful in combating violent extremism and radicalization in the country, while about 35 percentage of respondents found the work of the Government in fighting and preventing violent extremism in Kosovo as somewhat successful. However, the public perception on the issue is no different from the perception of other issues that continue to be seen with a negative light.

Regarding the Government's struggle against this global phenomenon that has affected Kosovar citizens, only 5 percentage of the respondents see the Government's struggle for preventing extremism in Kosovo as successful, as well as the methods applied to date which includes the strategy adopted by the Government and their rehabilitation after their return from Syria and Iraq. Only 3 percentage of them have no opinion on the Government's efforts in combating extremism and radicalization in Kosovo. These low percentages are due to the fact that the Kosovar Government has not yet started to implement any plan or approved strategy about individuals who were part of the conflicts in Syria and Iraq.

Figure 17: Citizens' perceptions on the Kosova Government work in combating extremism



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