

# PUBLIC PERCEPTION TOWARDS PUBLIC SAFETY, INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL THREATS IN ALBANIA





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The data presented in the report derive from the Western Balkans Security Barometer (WBSB) survey. WBSB is a new regional initiative launched by KCSS in 2020, implemented in cooperation with the Belgrade Centre for Security Policy (BCSP) in Serbia and Center for the Study of Democracy and Governance (CSDG) in Albania, supported by the National Endowment for Democracy (NED). WBSB serves as an instrument to measure public perceptions in Albania, Kosovo and Serbia on different security-related issues. The findings demonstrate how citizens percept or are informed about the issues presented in this report. As such, the views presented in this report do not necessarily represent the views of the KCSS, BCSP, CSDG or NED.

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# **PUBLIC PERCEPTION TOWARDS PUBLIC SAFETY, INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL THREATS IN ALBANIA**

December 2022

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# 1. INTRODUCTION AND MAIN FINDINGS

The Western Balkans Security Barometer (WBSB) is a regional project that measures public perceptions in Albania, Kosovo and Serbia for a wide range of security, rule of law, justice, regional cooperation and peacebuilding issues, implemented by local civil society organisations in the respective countries.

WBSB has an identical methodology in all three countries, and it also measured simultaneously the perceptions of the citizens of Kosovo and Serbia on the same issues. The results of the WBSB will be published in four different reports for each country.

CSDG has implemented WBSB in Albania for the second year since 2021. Along with the National Security Barometer which CSDG has produced since 2019, this project has produced a wealth of data that are used by a wide range of actors from policy makers, security practitioners, academia, the media, the international donors, etc.

The regional edition measures not only the perception of Albanian citizens towards their institutions and security issues, but also their perceptions on regional cooperation and specifically the relations between Albania, Kosovo, and Serbia. This first report of the WBSB 2022, focuses on public safety, internal and external threats that Albania faces as viewed from the citizens' perspective.

The report has been produced based on data collected from a survey based on multi-layered random sample of 1120 adults conducted between 23 September and 2 October 2022 through face-to-face interviews.

Surveys were proportionally distributed among 61 municipalities of Albania, taking into consideration the rural/urban areas, gender, and age quotas. Based on this multi-layered sampling approach an accurate geographic and demographic representation of Albania's adult population has been achieved, while maintaining a sampling error lower than  $\pm 2.9\%$  for the overall sample.

## 2. PUBLIC'S PERCEPTION OF PUBLIC SAFETY

This section provides all the survey results related to the perception of responders towards public safety issues.

The public safety issues that this report refers to include: perceptions on personal safety, such as robberies, accidents, violence in schools, murders, sexual harassments, gender discrimination, domestic violence, illegal use of weapons, use of drugs, human trafficking, street harassment, online violence and perceptions on various threats to community such as brain drain, poor infrastructure, construction safety, lack of public lighting, air pollution and poor public health.

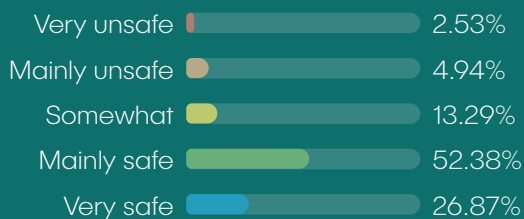
Same as results of the previous year, Albanians feel mostly safe at their homes, neighborhoods, cities, and country in general. The significant majority of responders feel either mainly safe or very safe at their home, neighborhood, village/city. The percentage of responders who felt somewhat safe in Albania while using internet/online space is higher than the percentage of them who feel somehow safe in their home, neighborhood, and village/cities. (Graph no. 1).

**GRAPH 1** EXTENT FOR FEELING SAFE AT HOME/NEIGHBOURHOOD/VILLAGE, CITY/ COUNTRY/INTERNET, ONLINE SPACE

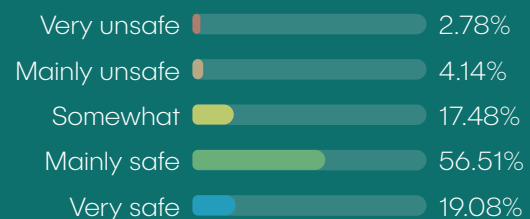
PLEASE RATE TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOU FEEL SAFE AT YOUR:



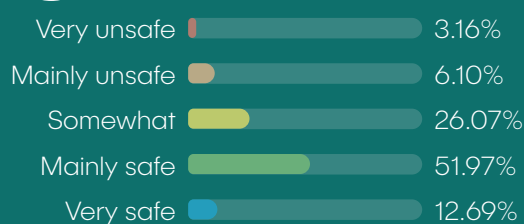
### HOME



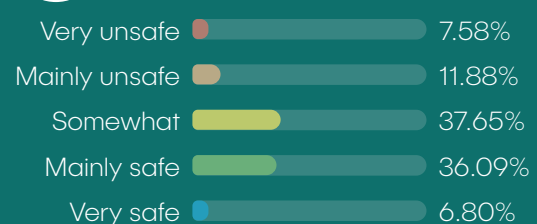
### NEIGHBORHOOD



### VILLAGE / CITY

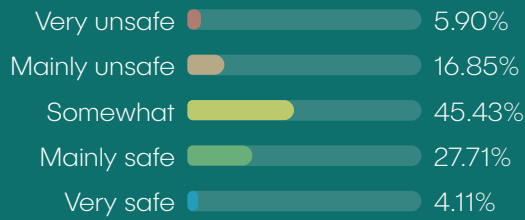


### COUNTRY





**INTERNET / ONLINE SPACE**



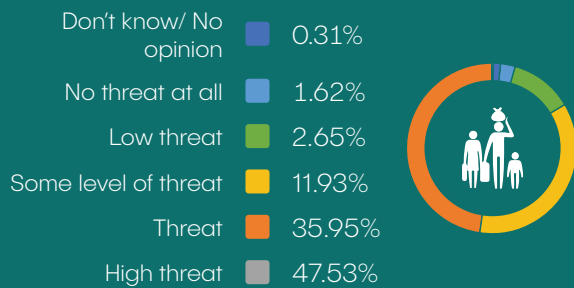
Responders were asked to what extent they perceived their communities to be threatened by a list of potential challenges (Graph no 2).

Brain drain (83.48%), poor health services (53.61%) and air pollution (51.48%) are perceived by responders as the biggest threats to their communities. In contrary, poor infrastructure (44.96%), lack of public lighting (40.60%) and lack of safety measures in the construction sites and/or surrounding areas (34.14%) are considered as the least threats to their communities.

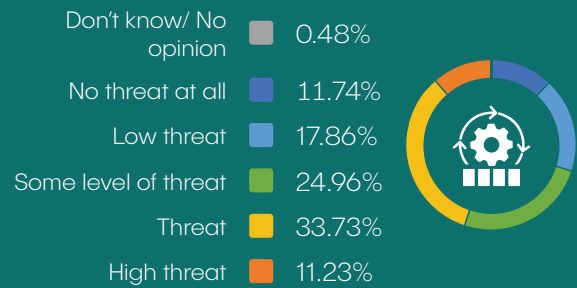
**GRAPH 2 ASPECTS THAT THREATEN THE COMMUNITY**

**TO WHAT EXTENT DO THE FOLLOWING ASPECTS THREATEN YOUR COMMUNITY?**

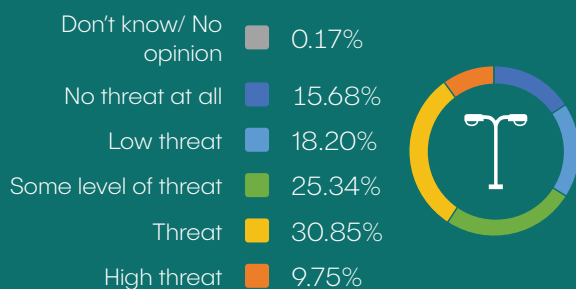
**MIGRATION OF PROFESSIONALS/SKILLED WORKERS (BRAIN DRAIN)**



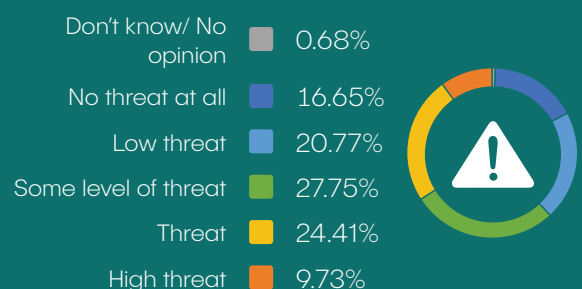
**POOR INFRASTRUCTURE (ROADS, ELECTRICITY ETC)**



**LACK OF PUBLIC LIGHTING IN THE CITY/VILLAGE/NEIGHBORHOOD**

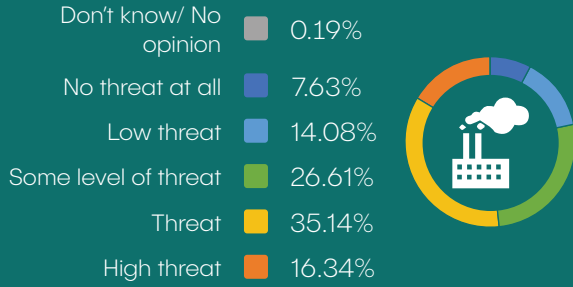


**LACK OF SAFETY MEASURES IN THE CONSTRUCTION SITES AND/OR SURROUNDING AREAS**

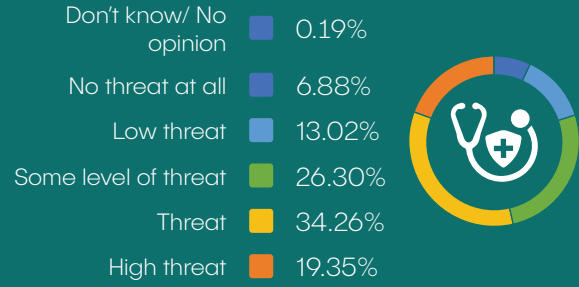




**AIR POLLUTION**



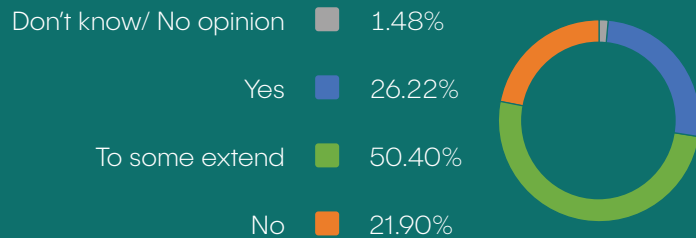
**POOR PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES**



Half of the respondents (50.40%) think that the police and the judiciary have up to a certain amount of capacity to deal with the various threats to national security. Meanwhile, 26.22% of respondents think that the police and the judiciary have full capacities and 21.90% think that these institutions do not have sufficient capacities to deal with community safety threats. A considerable number of respondents (65.73%) think that State Police has contributed only partially to improve the community safety in the last 12 months.

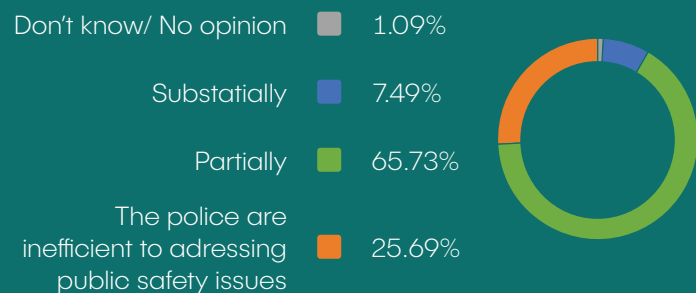
**GRAPH 3 CAPACITIES OF STATE POLICE AND JUDICIARY TO ADDRESS THE COMMUNITY SAFETY THREATS**

**DO YOU THINK THAT STATE POLICE AND THE JUDICIARY HAVE THE NEEDED CAPACITIES TO ADDRESS THE COMMUNITY SAFETY THREATS?**



**GRAPH 4 CONTRIBUTION OF STATE POLICE IN IMPROVING THE COMMUNITY SAFETY**

**HAS STATE POLICE CONTRIBUTED TO IMPROVING YOUR COMMUNITY SAFETY IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS?**



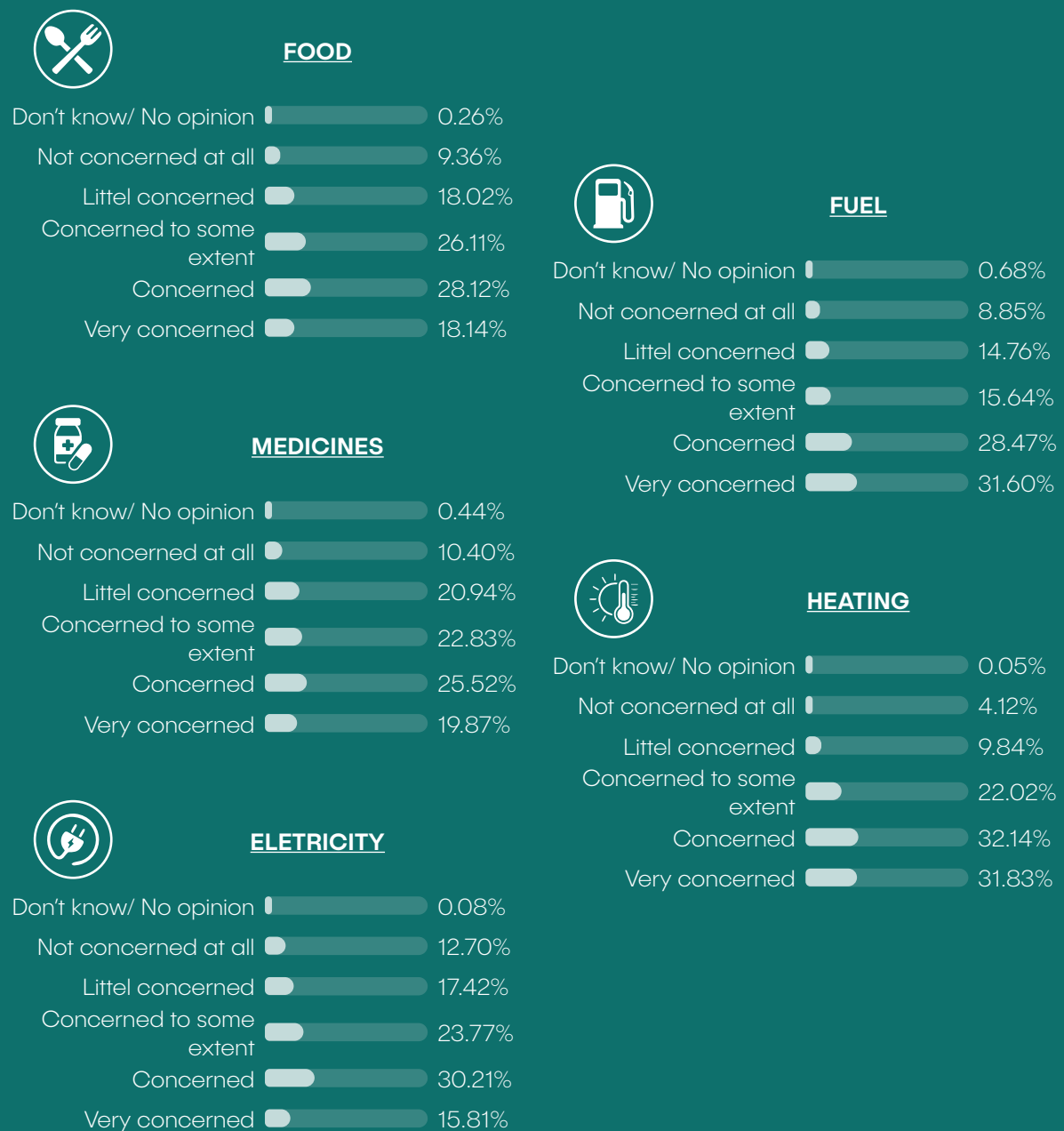


Considering the new global developments, including the war in Ukraine and the energy crisis, Albanians were asked if they feel concerned about the lack of some necessity goods. Shortages of heating (63.97%) and fuel (60.07%) are perceived as the biggest concerns by Albanians.

While shortage of medicines (45.39%), electricity (46.02%) and food (46.26%) bring less concerns to Albanians, but still almost 1 in 2 of them is concerned about these shortages.

**GRAPH 5 CONCERNED LEVEL ABOUT SHORTAGES**

**IN A SCALE FROM 1 (NOT CONCERNED) TO 5 (VERY CONCERNED), TO WHAT EXTENT ARE YOU CONCERNED ABOUT SHORTAGES:**



Responders were asked what they perceived to be their main threat to their personal safety/security. (Graph no.6)

Drug use (58.64%) is considered as the highest threat to responders' personal safety, possession of illegal weapons (56.65%) as the second highest threat to their personal security. Also, more than half of responders consider murders (54.92%) and traffic accidents (53.71%) as threats to their personal safety.

35.81% of the responders consider house/apartment robberies as either a low threat to their personal safety or no threat at all.

43.29% of responders consider sexual harassments either as a low threat to their personal safety or no threat at all. No major differences were noted among male and female responders. But more (10%) younger responders (18-49) considered sexual harassment as a threat or high threat to their personal safety as to older responders (50+).

45.7% of responders consider violence in schools either as a low threat to their personal safety or no threat at all. But more (10%) of those with a university degree younger responder (18-49) considered violence in schools as a threat or high threat to their personal safety as to responders without a university degree.

47.31% of responders consider gender discrimination either as a low threat to their personal safety or no threat at all. No differences were noted among male and female responders. But more (10%) younger responders (18-49) considered gender discrimination as a threat or high threat to their personal safety as to older responders (50+).

23.68% of responders consider online violence either as a low threat to their personal safety or no threat at all. While 34.17% of responders consider online violence to have some level of threat to their personal safety.

This section provided the survey results pertaining to the public and personal safety issues in Albania. The following chapter provides the survey results for the public perception of internal threats in the country.

**GRAPH 6 ASPECTS THAT THREATEN PERSONAL SAFETY/SECURITY**

**TO WHAT EXTENT DO THE FOLLOWING ASPECTS THREATEN YOUR PERSONAL SAFETY/SECURITY?**

**PROPERTY THEFT/ROBBERY**

Don't know/ No opinion	■	0.40%
No threat at all	■	12.97%
Low threat	■	22.84%
Some level of threat	■	27.60%
Threat	■	24.47%
High threat	■	11.72%



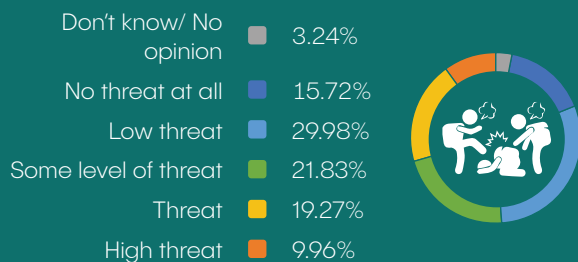
**TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS**

Don't know/ No opinion	■	0.48%
No threat at all	■	7.04%
Low threat	■	12.45%
Some level of threat	■	26.32%
Threat	■	34.57%
High threat	■	19.14%

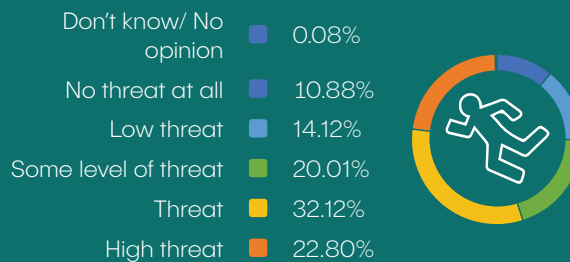


## Public's perception of Public Safety

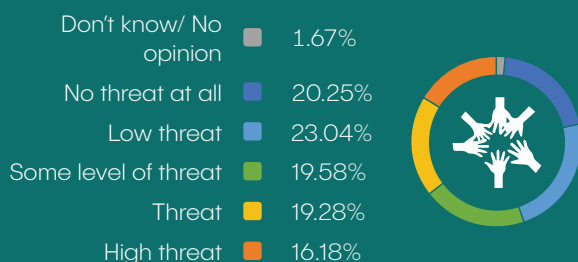
### VIOLENCE IN SCHOOL



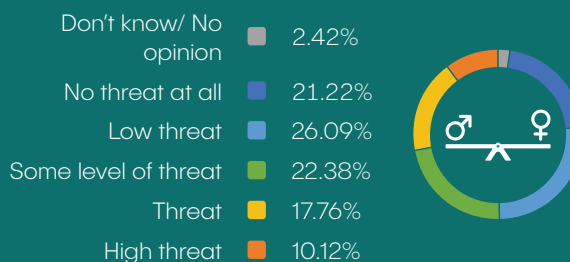
### MURDERS



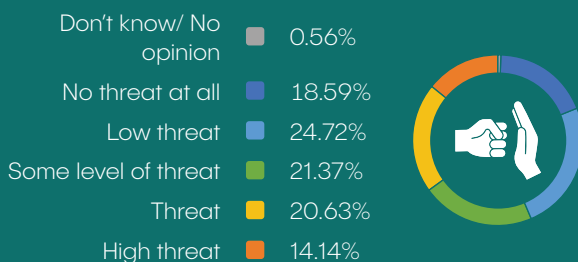
### SEXUAL HARASSMENT/RAPE



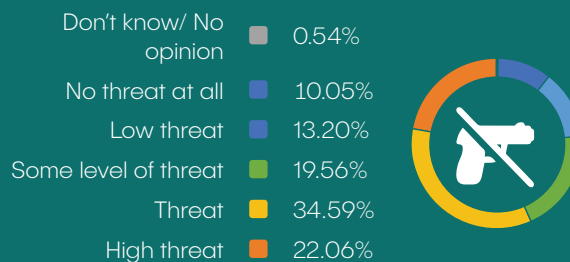
### GENDER DISCRIMINATION



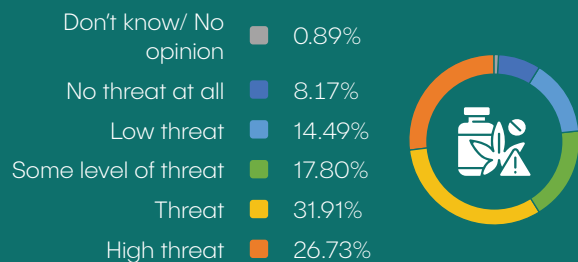
### DOMESTIC VIOLENCE



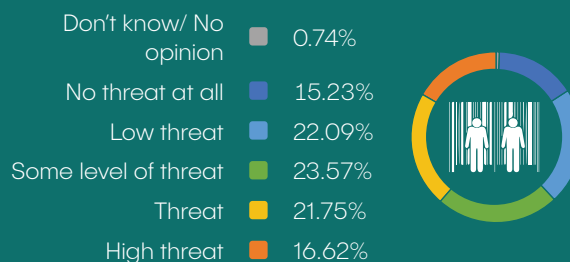
### ILLEGAL POSSESSION OF WEAPONS



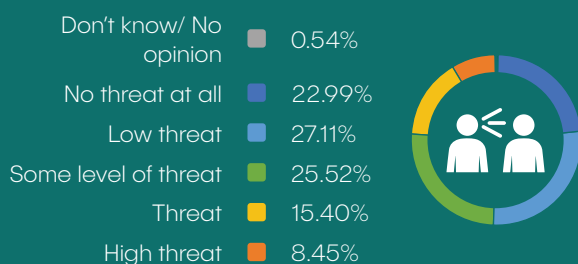
### DRUG USE AND ADDICTION



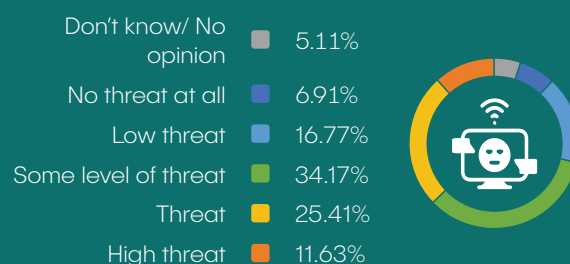
### HUMAN TRAFFICKING



### STREET HARASSERS



### ONLINE VIOLENCE



### 3. PUBLIC'S PERCEPTION OF INTERNAL THREATS

This section provides all the survey results related to the public perception of internal threats.

The internal threats that this report refers to include corruption, organized crime, illegal firearms trafficking, drug trafficking, unemployment, COVID-19 pandemic, violent extremism and terrorism, brain drain, economic crisis and fake news.

Economic crisis (88.82%) is considered as the first threat to national security by Albanians. While, organized crime (83.3%), brain drain (82.88%), unemployment (81.32%) and corruption (79.91%) are also considered as major internal threats to the national security of Albania.

In contrary, COVID-19 pandemic (21.43%) fake-news (51.95%) and violent extremism (56.98%) are considered as the least significant threats to the national security of the country (Graph no. 7).

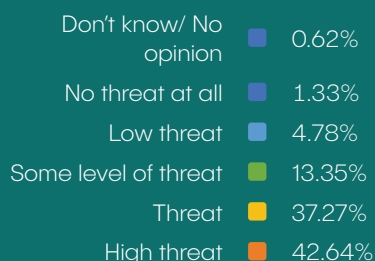
Graph 8 shows graphically some of the comparisons on internal threats, where an almost two-fold increase is observed in terms of corruption and organized crime as internal threats to national security of Albania. There is also an increase of over 25% of respondents who think that arms and drug trafficking pose a threat to national security.

On the other hand, Covid-19 is considered by respondents as a less threat (21.43%) to national security than last year (39.34%). Considering different categories, it is worth to mention that those with a university diploma consider unemployment and violent extremism as a threat to national security more than those without a high degree diploma (12%+).

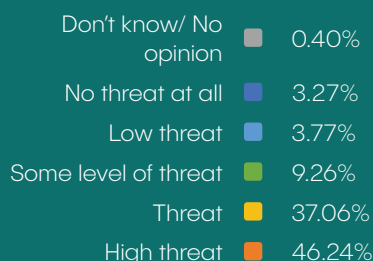
#### GRAPH 7 INTERNAL THREATS TO NATIONAL SECURITY OF ALBANIA

##### HOW DO YOU RATE THE FOLLOWING INTERNAL THREATS TO NATIONAL SECURITY OF ALBANIA?

###### CORRUPTION



###### ORGANIZED CRIME



## Public's perception of Internal Threats

### ILLEGAL ARMS TRAFFICKING

Don't know/ No opinion	1.25%
No threat at all	6.75%
Low threat	6.33%
Some level of threat	16.67%
Threat	41.70%
High threat	27.30%



### ILLEGAL DRUGS TRAFFICKING

Don't know/ No opinion	0.54%
No threat at all	4.59%
Low threat	6.13%
Some level of threat	15.51%
Threat	36.64%
High threat	36.59%



### UNEMPLOYMENT

Don't know/ No opinion	0.14%
No threat at all	1.77%
Low threat	3.68%
Some level of threat	13.10%
Threat	30.62%
High threat	50.70%



### COVID-19

Don't know/ No opinion	0.08%
No threat at all	20.75%
Low threat	33.91%
Some level of threat	23.82%
Threat	14.35%
High threat	7.08%



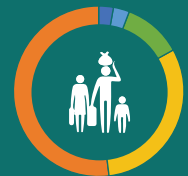
### VIOLENT EXTREMISM AND TERRORISM

Don't know/ No opinion	1.12%
No threat at all	8.54%
Low threat	10.88%
Some level of threat	22.47%
Threat	33.72%
High threat	23.26%



### BRAIN DRAIN

Don't know/ No opinion	0.24%
No threat at all	2.57%
Low threat	3.28%
Some level of threat	11.03%
Threat	31%
High threat	51.88%



### ECONOMIC CRISIS

Don't know/ No opinion	0.08%
No threat at all	0.35%
Low threat	1.79%
Some level of threat	8.95%
Threat	33.61%
High threat	55.21%

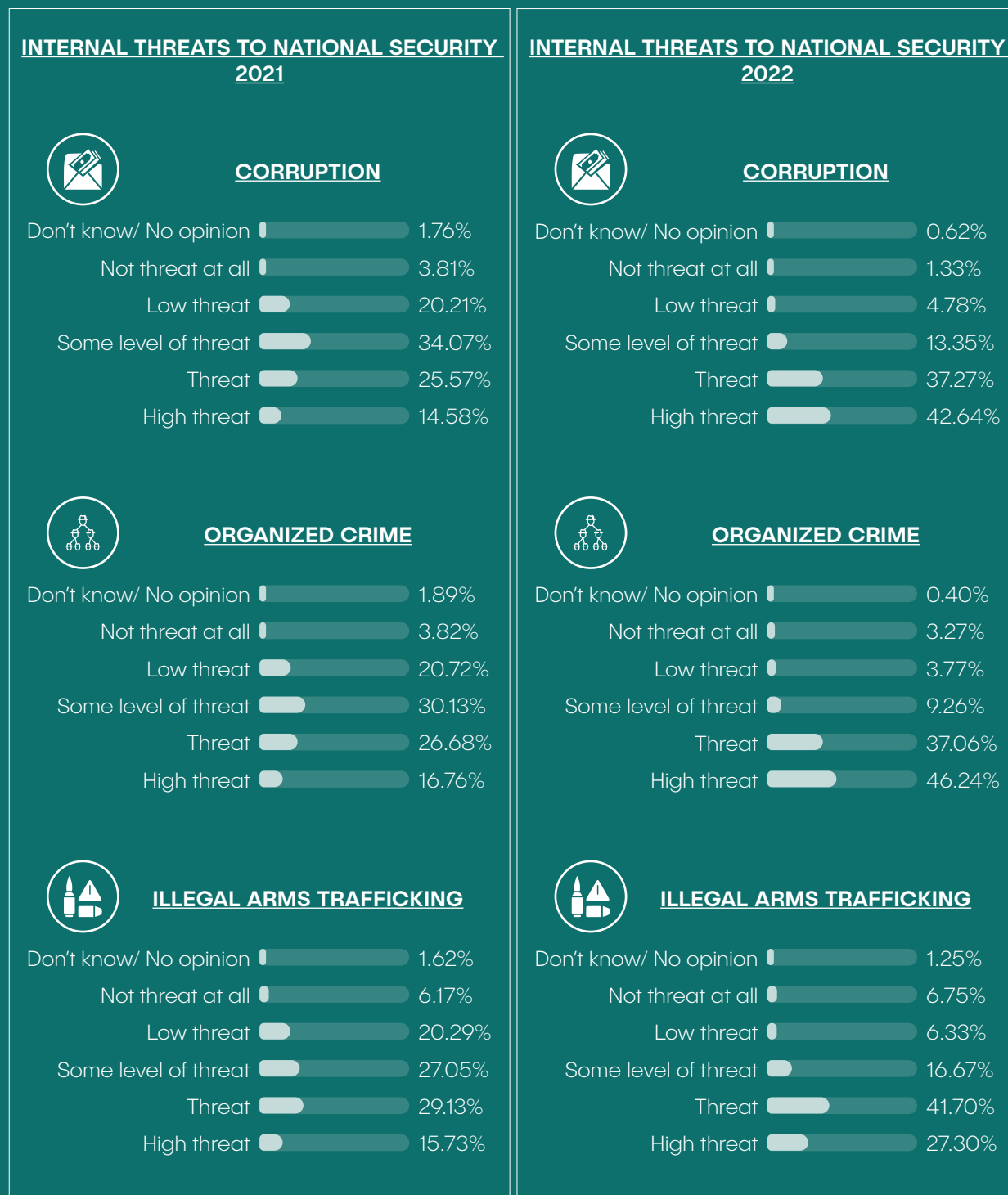


### FAKE NEWS

Don't know/ No opinion	0.78%
No threat at all	2.54%
Low threat	12.05%
Some level of threat	32.68%
Threat	34.73%
High threat	17.22%



**GRAPH 8** INTERNAL THREATS TO NATIONAL SECURITY OF ALBANIA IN 2021 AND 2022



**INTERNAL THREATS TO NATIONAL SECURITY**  
**2021**



**ILLEGAL DRUGS TRAFFICKING**



**UNEMPLOYMENT**



**COVID-19**



**VIOLENT EXTREMISM AND TERRORISM**



**INTERNAL THREATS TO NATIONAL SECURITY**  
**2022**



**ILLEGAL DRUGS TRAFFICKING**



**UNEMPLOYMENT**



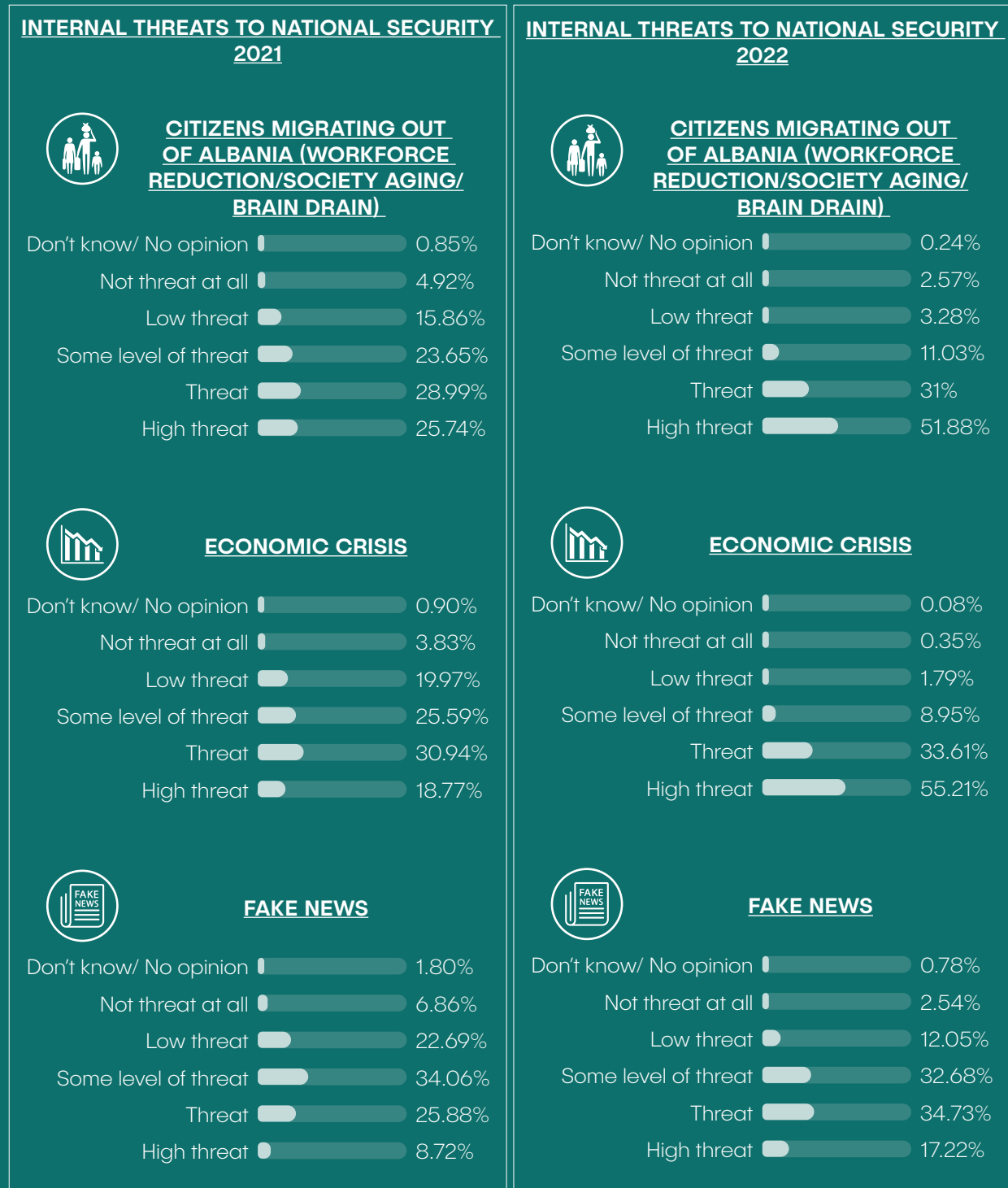
**COVID-19**



**VIOLENT EXTREMISM AND TERRORISM**







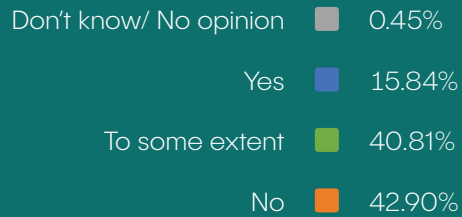
Regarding the respondents' perceptions on the effectiveness of vaccines to stop the Covid-19 pandemic, almost half think that to some extent vaccines have contributed to stopping the pandemic. (Graph no.9)

Those who were not yet vaccinated, responded that didn't do so, chiefly due to the lack of trust in any of the COVID-19 vaccines, due to their belief in natural immunity post-infection, and the lack of trust in the available vaccines in Albania.

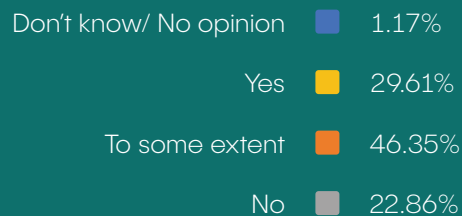
**GRAPH 9** COVID-19 AS A THREAT TO PERSONAL HEALTH & EFFECTIVENESS OF VACCINATION AGAINST COVID-19 TO STOP OR CURB THE PANDEMIC

DO YOU THINK THAT COVID-19 STILL CAN BE A THREAT TO YOUR HEALTH AND THAT VACCINATION AGAINST COVID-19 CONTRIBUTED TO STOP OR CURB THE PANDEMIC?

**DO YOU THINK THAT COVID-19 CAN BE A THREAT TO YOUR HEALTH?**



**DO YOU THINK THAT VACCINATION AGAINST COVID-19 CONTRIBUTED TO STOP OR CURB THE PANDEMIC?**



While this section provided the survey results pertaining to the perceived internal threats to Albania, the following section presents the findings on perceived external threats to the country.

# 4. PUBLIC'S PERCEPTION OF EXTERNAL THREATS

Responders were asked to provide their perceptions with regards to the external threats to Albania.

The external threats that this report refers to include the perceived threats of climate change and pollution, cyber security issues, war in Ukraine, escalations of regional issues, increased prices and energy crisis.

The increase in price of products is considered by 83.85% of the respondents as the major external national security threat to Albania. Following latest events, 75.05% of the respondents consider cybersecurity issues either as a threat or high threat to national security which is much higher than the perception in 2021 (39.08%).

Energy crisis is considered either as a threat or high threat by 73.21% of respondents. More than half of the respondents consider war in Ukraine (58.89%) and climate change (54.94%) as a threat or high threats to national security.

Compared to previous year where 33.12% of respondents consider climate change and pollution either as a threat or high threat, this year a larger number of respondents (53.94%) consider it as a threat or high threat to national security.

Whereas escalation of regional issues (45.15%) is considered as the least significant external threat to the national security of the country.

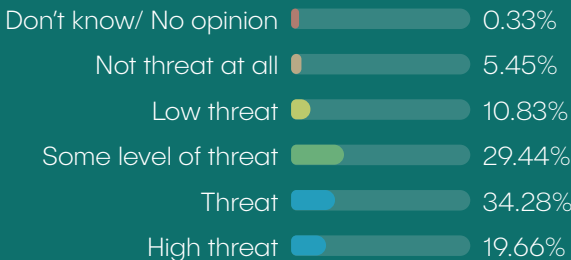
This section presented the citizens perceptions about external threats in the country. This was the third and last section of this report. The following conclusion reflects upon the survey results.

## GRAPH 10 EXTERNAL THREATS TO NATIONAL SECURITY OF ALBANIA

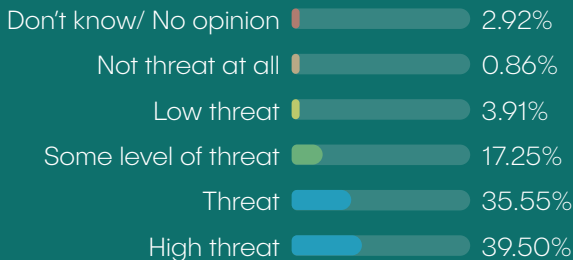
### HOW DO YOU RATE THE FOLLOWING EXTERNAL THREATS TO NATIONAL SECURITY?



#### CLIMATE CHANGE AND POLLUTION

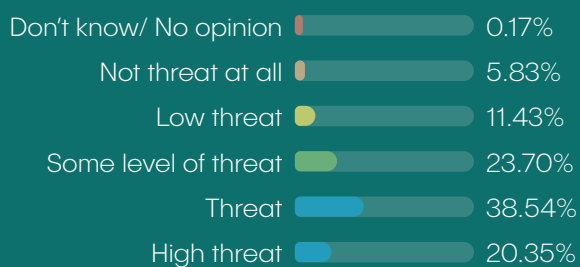


#### CYBERSECURITY ISSUES/ THREATS

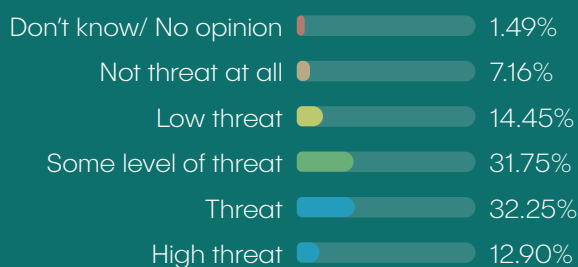




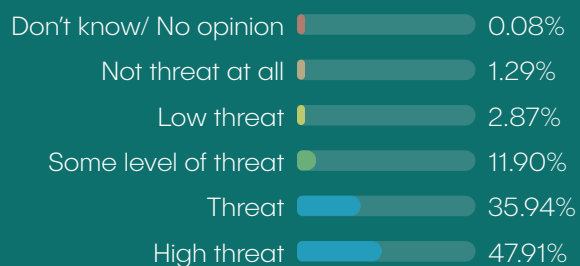
**WAR IN UKRAINE**



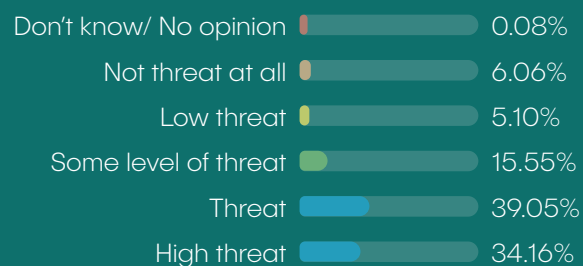
**THE POTENTIAL FOR ESCALATIONS IN THE REGION**



**INCREASE IN PRICE OF DIFFERENT PRODUCTS**



**ENERGY CRISIS**



## 5. CONCLUSION

This report examining the attitudes of Albanian citizens towards public and personal safety issues, internal and external threats.

Due to the continuous development of technology and the increase of dangerous online activities, even though most citizens feel safe in their online space, 1 out of 5 Albanians feel unsafe while navigating the Internet. The vast majority of Albanians feel safe in their home, neighbourhood or in their village/city. Although most feel safe in Albania, an increasing trend of insecurity is observed compared to living at home or in their community.

Citizens consider brain drain, poor public health services, and air pollution as the biggest threats to their communities. In contrary, poor infrastructure, lack of public lighting and lack of safety measures in the construction sites and/or surrounding areas are considered as the least threats. Drug use, possession of illegal weapons, murders and traffic accidents have been identified as the biggest threats to their personal safety, while violence in schools, gender discrimination and street harassment are considered the lowest threats.

During 2022, a series of global events, including the Russian aggression in Ukraine, the energy crisis and the inflation have affected daily life, but have also caused uncertainty about global peace and order. As a result, the Albanian citizens see in 2020 the economic crisis as the biggest threat to national security. However, threats such as organized crime, brain drain, unemployment and corruption continue to be viewed as main threats by over 80% of the citizens. COVID-19 pandemic is considered as the least significant national security threats to the country.

These data lead to the conclusion that even though a larger number of citizens view the external developments as more threatening their security, internal threats such as corruption, organized crime, unemployment, etc. continue to remain essential in shaping the views in personal and national security by Albanians. The polarized political climate, the lack of concrete results from the justice reform, make internal threats more relevant.

As regards to the external security threats to the national security of Albania, the three major external threats identified are the increased prices, cyber threats and energy crises. More citizens consider cyber-attacks as threatening national and community security than a year ago. In general, there is an obvious change in the perception of the respondents on internal threats to national security from 2021 to 2022.

Katalogimi në botim **(CIP)**

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