

Kamenicë/Kamenica

April 2008

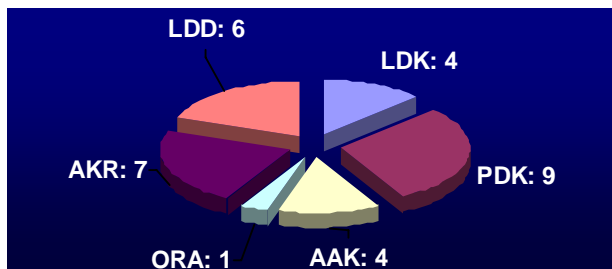
1. Area and Population

- Kamenicë/Kamenica municipality is the most eastern municipality and borders with Serbia proper. The municipality covers an area of 523 square km and consists of 76 villages. The roads are generally in bad condition. Less than 25 per cent of the population is connected to the public water supply, namely in Kamenicë/Kamenica town and the surrounding villages.
- The total population is estimated at 63,000, with approximately 82 per cent Kosovo Albanian, 17 per cent Kosovo Serbs and a small number of Kosovo Roma (approximately 500). There are three Kosovo Serb areas in the municipality; the main area consists of eight villages to the south of Kamenicë/Kamenica town, bordering Serbia proper and is home to about 5,000 inhabitants. The other two areas are around and to the north of Kamenicë/Kamenica town inhabited by some 6000 Kosovo Serb.
- According to UNHCR, since 2000, 397 Kosovo Serbs and 89 Kosovo Roma have returned to the municipality. However, many in the minority community appear to have departed the municipality due to economic hardship. [Source: UNHCR and Municipality Community Office]
- Sharing a border with Serbia proper has been a source of tension, with violence breaking out in the boundary region during the 2001 conflict in the Preševo Valley. Yet, despite the delicate geographical circumstances and the mixed ethnic composition, the overall situation in the municipality is calm.
- The municipality's website is: www.kamenica-komuna.org

2. Governing Structures

● Legislative

The Municipal Assembly is comprised of 31 members elected after the November 2007 municipal elections, out of which nine are women. Even though few Kosovo Serb political parties and citizens' initiatives were registered to run for the last elections, the elections were massively boycotted by the Kosovo Serb community. As a consequence there are no Kosovo Serbian representatives in the Municipal Assembly. A new political leadership and balance emerged from the elections: LDK, after 8 years as leading party, is now in the opposition. There is a political agreement between PDK and AKR to govern together during this mandate. Other political parties left in opposition such as LDD, LDK, AAK and ORA that altogether have 15 members represent a solid basis for a lively democratic debate in the Municipal Assembly and its bodies. The Mayor, Mr. Begzad Sinani (PDK), is the Chairperson. The Vice-Chairperson is Mr. Bajram Dërmaku (PDK). The Second Vice-Chairperson is Mr. Gradimir Mikić (Kosovo Serb)..



PDK - Democratic Party of Kosovo,
AKR - Alliance New Kosovo
LDD - Democratic League of Dardania
LDK - Democratic League of Kosovo
AAK - Alliance for the Future of Kosovo
ORA - Reformist Party ORA

● Executive

The Board of Directors consists of the Mayor, Head of Administration and Personnel, five Directors (all Kosovo Albanians) and the Head of the Municipal Community Office (Kosovo Serb). Out of 198 municipal employees, 149 are Kosovo Albanians, 45 Kosovo Serbs, three Kosovo Roma and one Macedonian. Out of them, 13 Kosovo Serbs and one Roma work in the Municipal Community Office.

● Judiciary

Kamenicë/Kamenica municipality has a Municipal Court (three Kosovo Albanian judges) and a Minor Offences Court (three Kosovo Albanian judges).

● Security Presence

The Kosovo Police Service in Kamenicë/Kamenica municipality is comprised of 133 officers (101 Kosovo Albanian, 30 Kosovo Serb, one Kosovo Turk and one Roma; 111 are male and 22 female). The Captain/Station Commander is a Kosovo Serb. There are also six UNMIK police staff working in the station. The station was transferred from UNMIK to the Kosovo Police Service in December 2004 and UNMIK police has since been monitoring its work. In Kamenicë/Kamenica municipality, ethnically mixed Kosovo Police Service patrols have been operational. US KFOR provides internal military presence.

3. Political Overview

After eight years of LDK dominance and the split at the central level, out which derived a solid LDD at the local level, the November 2007 elections brought PDK into the lead at the Municipal Assembly. A surprising result at the local level was also achieved by AKR (New Kosovo Alliance). Namely, PDK received 30 per cent of the votes, AKR 22 per cent, LDD 18 per cent, LDK 14 per cent, AAK 11 per cent, ORA 2 per cent. Eleven political entities, among them four representing the Kosovo Serb community, were certified to run for the November 2007 municipal elections in Kamenicë/Kamenica municipality. However, the Kosovo Serb community did not participate in the elections and remains unrepresented in the Municipal Assembly. Over 35 per cent of the registered voters in the municipality cast their ballots.

4. Economy

Most of the socially-owned enterprises no longer function and some are in the process of privatization. The brick factory was put up for 10-year lease in 2002 and Vëllezerit Borovci began production in 2003 with 76 employees (50 per cent Kosovo Albanian and 50 per cent Kosovo Serb). Hugo's Brewery is another fairly successful business with 16 employees and investment from Sweden.

5. Public Services

● Health

The primary Family Health Care Centre is located in Kamenicë/Kamenica town and provides first aid and general assistance. In addition, there are four Family Health Care Centres located in the villages of Hogosht/Ogošte, Rogoçicë/Rogačica, Ranilug/Ranillug and Kamenicë/Kamenica (Kosovo Serb populated suburb in the vicinity of the church). There are also 20 ambulantas that serve the population: one in Kamenicë/Kamenica town, ten in Kosovo Albanian villages, eight in Kosovo Serb villages and one in the mixed village of Strezoc/Strezovce. The closest hospital is in Gjilan/Gnjilane, but for serious cases, most Kosovo Serbs go to the Serbia proper. Due to bad road conditions, access to health facilities is a major problem for all communities. [Source: Municipal Department of Health and Social Services]

● Education

There are 25 schools in the municipality. Nineteen are primary schools (14 Kosovo Albanian and five Kosovo Serb with Roma students), four secondary schools (one Kosovo Albanian and three Kosovo Serb), two technical high schools (one Kosovo Albanian and one Kosovo Serb) and three kindergartens (one Kosovo Albanian and two Kosovo Serbs). The educational system in the municipality is divided into "Albanian" and "Serbian" systems. [Source: Municipal Department for Education]

6. Map of the region

