

## Novobërdë/Novo Brdo

September 2009

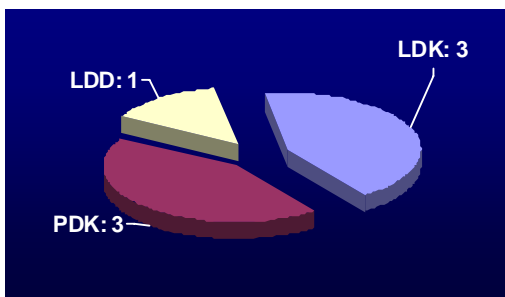
### 1. Area and population

Novobërdë/Novo Brdo is a small, entirely rural municipality located southeast of Prishtinë/Priština. The municipality consists of ten villages and dozens of “mahallas”(small neighbourhoods). Lacking basic infrastructure and employment opportunities, Novobërdë/Novo Brdo is one of the poorest municipalities in Kosovo. Roads are in poor condition and systems for distributing water and electricity are inadequate. While in several villages access to water and electricity has improved due to recent investments, many areas of the municipality still lack running water, plumbing and electricity. Telephone cable has not yet been laid in all villages; however, most of the municipality is now covered by a mobile network. The population has been decreasing since the 1999 conflict and is currently around 3,900. While the population was thought to be evenly split between Kosovo Serbs and Kosovo Albanians, municipal officials from both communities estimate that the population currently residing in the municipality is now approximately 61 % Kosovo Albanian and 39 % Kosovo Serbian. There are ten Roma families living in the village of Bostan/Bostane. A total of 356 Kosovo Serbs, 64 Kosovo Albanians and 13 Roma returned between 2000 and mid-2009. Most of these returns were of a spontaneous nature, with the exception of 32 Kosovo Serbs who returned in July 2009 as part of the organized returns project to Kllobukar/Klobukar village. Compared to other ethnically-mixed areas, there is a relatively low level of tension between the different communities with full freedom of movement throughout the municipality.

### 2. Governing structures

#### • Legislative

After the boycott of the November 2007 municipal elections by the Kosovo Serb community, the UN Special Representative to the Secretary General issued Executive Decision No. 2007/63 on the Establishment of the Municipal Government in Novobërdë/Novo Brdo municipality. The decision appointed ten Kosovo Serb municipal assembly members and confirmed election results for seven Kosovo Albanian municipal assembly members. The mayor became Mr. Bajrush Ymeri (LDK). The municipal assembly currently has only seven Kosovo Albanian members due to the fact that Kosovo Serb appointed members never took the inaugural oath. Nevertheless, municipal assembly sessions take place regularly with the seven members. The municipality has established all mandatory committees. Participation of Kosovo Serbs in the communities committee and the participation of several Kosovo Serb residents at recent public meetings may indicate a steady increase of interest from Kosovo Serbs to participate in the public affairs of the municipality.



LDK - Democratic League of Kosovo  
PDK - Democratic Party of Kosovo  
LDD – Democratic League of Dardania

#### • Executive

The mayor's cabinet includes the deputy mayor and deputy mayor for communities,<sup>1</sup> and five Kosovo Albanian and two Kosovo Serbian directors of departments. The number of Kosovo Serb civil servants is steadily increasing since February 2008, and the replacement of the boycotting Kosovo Serbs civil servants is ongoing.

<sup>1</sup> The deputy mayor for communities has not reported to work since his appointment by the mayor in December 2008.

- **Judiciary**

The municipality has no court of its own. Gjilan/Gnjilane municipal and district courts handle all cases for Novobërdë/Novo Brdo. There is no plan to establish a municipal court for Novobërdë/Novo Brdo.

- **Security presence**

Novobërdë/Novo Brdo has a Kosovo police station, which is staffed with 35 officers (17 Kosovo Serbs, 16 Kosovo Albanians, one Kosovo Turk, one Roma; among them 34 are males and one female). There are also three EULEX police monitors. The station commander is a Kosovo Serb. As for the international military presence, United States KFOR is in charge of the area.

### **3. Political overview**

The boycott of the November 2007 elections by the Kosovo Serb community brought on a transfer of power in the municipal leadership. After 17 February 2008, Kosovo Serb appointees to the municipal assembly were unwilling to participate in the municipal assembly and all Kosovo Serb staff in the civil service began a boycott of municipal institutions and started working in parallel municipal administration. On 11 May 2008, Kosovo Serbs from the municipality participated in the Serbian local elections, and a parallel municipal assembly was established.

### **4. Economy**

Prior to the 1999 conflict, the local economy was dependent on agriculture, a mining complex and other Gjilan/Gnjilane-based industries. Since the conflict, all of these industries have shrunk and unemployment and poverty have become prevalent. Currently, the main employer is the municipality with a total of 166 employees.

### **5. Public services**

- **Health**

A health house is located in the village of Novobërdë/Novo Brdo and three health units are function in the villages of Prekovce/Prekoc, Jasenovik and Llabjan/Labljane. Only two doctors (one full-time and one part-time) work in all these facilities. For hospital care, Kosovo Albanians go to Gjilan/Gnjilane or Prishtinë/Priština. For major medical treatment, Kosovo Serbs generally go outside Kosovo, Gračanica/Gračanice or to northern Mitrovicë/Mitrovica. [Source: village leaders, municipal staff]

- **Education**

There are five primary schools in the municipality with 452 pupils (311 Kosovo Albanian and 141 Kosovo Serbs) and some 55 teachers. The school in the village of Jasenovik is used by both Kosovo Albanian and Kosovo Serbs, although they attend in separate shifts. A secondary economics school was constructed in 2008 (construction was funded by the British government). However, the 2008/2009 school year saw very low enrolment – only 18 Kosovo Albanian students currently attend the school (no Kosovo Serb or Roma students). [Source: municipal department of education]

### **6. Map of the region**

Novobërdë / Novo Brdo

