

Mitrovicë/Mitrovica

September 2009

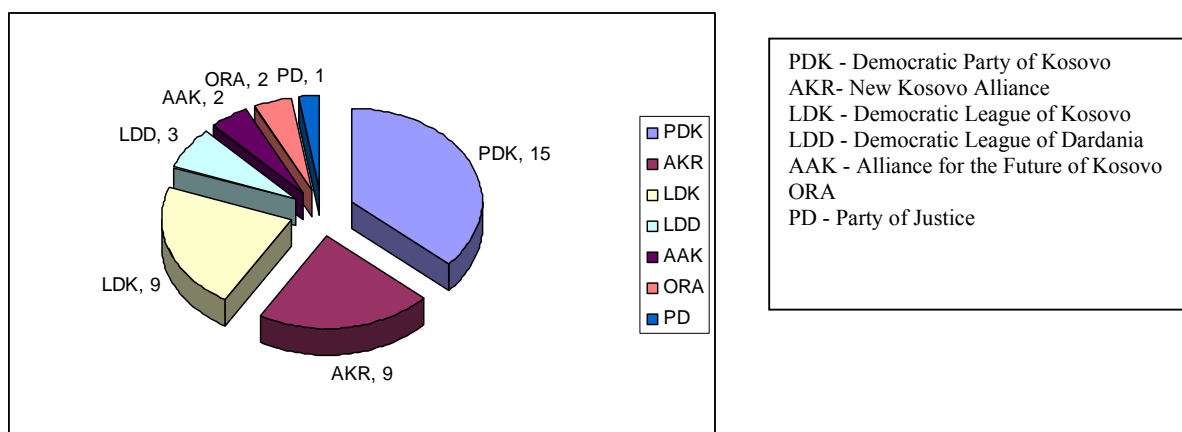
1. Area and population

Mitrovicë/Mitrovica municipality lies approximately 40 km north of Prishtinë/Priština, with a total area of 350 square kilometres. It contains one town and 49 villages. Since the 1999 conflict, the town has been divided along the Ibër/Ibar river. It saw some of the worst violence in March 2004 riots. Today, the overall situation is less tense, though a security presence remains on the main bridge crossing the Ibër/Ibar river. Restricted freedom of movement, a lack of both Kosovo Albanian and Kosovo Serb returns, and related property issues are the main problems faced by Mitrovicë/Mitrovica. In the southern part of town, the overall population is estimated at 110,000 people, predominantly Kosovo Albanian with the presence of Kosovo Bosniak, Turk, Roma, Ashkali, Egyptian and Gorani communities. In the northern part of town, there are approximately 20,000 inhabitants, 17,000 of whom are Kosovo Serbs (5,000 to 7,000 are displaced persons). The remaining 3,000 include Kosovo Albanians, Bosniaks, Turks, Roma, Ashkali, Egyptian and a small Gorani community. In the north lies the ethnically mixed village of Suvi Do/Suhodoll, as well as other ethnically mixed neighbourhoods. The number of Kosovo Bosniaks has significantly declined from the pre-conflict figure of 6,000 and appears to be between 2,000 and 3,000, living on both sides of the Ibër/Ibar River. The pre-1999 Roma population (approximately 8,000) of southern Mitrovicë/Mitrovica has been displaced to northern Kosovo and outside of it, notably to a number of EU countries and Montenegro. Through the multi-stakeholder return project to the Roma Mahala, 462 people have returned to date and 25 families will return to two newly constructed apartment buildings by the end of the year. In June 2009 the municipal assembly approved the new *Urban Regulatory Plan* for Roma Mahala which foresees the construction of 184 houses for returnees to Roma Mahala.

2. Governing structures

• Legislative

PDK holds 15 seats in the Assembly, followed by AKR with nine, LDK nine, LDD three, AAK two, ORA two, PD one. The municipal mayor (who is the former Kosovo prime minister) comes from PDK, as does the appointed deputy mayor. The division of the town complicates the provision of public services. The non-participation of Kosovo Serbs in the municipal elections of November 2007 and their turn out to the municipal elections on 11 May 2008 under the Serbian legal framework led to the creation of separate municipal structures in northern and southern Mitrovicë/Mitrovica. In order to integrate the “parallel” municipality in the north, UNMIK used its administrative authority over the northern part of the municipality in accordance to UNMIK Regulation 2002/26. Consequently, the elected municipal assembly of Mitrovicë/Mitrovica does not have any jurisdiction over the administration in the northern part of town; however, there is a joint budget for both parts of the municipality.



• Executive

The municipality has ten directorates: administration and personnel; health and social welfare; education; finance, economy and development; planning, urbanism, cadastre and property; public services and infrastructure; agriculture and protection of environment; inspections; preparedness and rescue; and culture, youth and sports. In the northern part of the town, the UNMIK administration provides municipal

services. An advisory board composed of local political representatives from northern Mitrovica/Mitrovicë was established to assist UNMIK in managing northern Mitrovica/Mitrovicë.

● **Judicial**

Judicial institutions in Mitrovica/Mitrovicë and surrounding municipalities largely stopped working after Kosovo's February 2008 declaration of independence. The Mitrovicë/Mitrovica district, municipal and minor offence courts and district and municipal public prosecutors' offices were relocated to Vushtrri/Vučitrn municipal court premises and function with a limited capacity. A parallel Serbian court exists in the north but only in name.

● **Security presence**

The municipality has two police stations and one regional police headquarters. In southern Mitrovicë/Mitrovica, 149 Kosovo police (KP) officers and three EULEX police officers are on duty. There is a sub-station in the Kosovo Serb village of Svinjarë/Svinjare with eight police officers. There are 80 KP officers and three EULEX Police officers working in northern Mitrovicë/Mitrovica. For both stations, all operational competencies have been handed over to the KP after UNMIK police left on 9 December 2008. EULEX police officers serve in a monitoring, mentoring, and advising function. French KFOR covers the municipality.

3. Political overview

At present, there are 14 Kosovo Albanian political parties in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica. From 2000 and onwards, LDK used to dominate the political scene in the southern part of municipality. This changed in 2007 elections when PDK won. The Kosovo Bosniak community is politically represented through the Bosniak Party for Democratic Action of Kosovo (BSDAK), the Kosovo Turkish community through the Turkish Democratic Party of Kosovo (KDTP), while the Democratic Ashkali Party of Kosovo (PDAK) represents the Ashkali community in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica. In the northern part of municipality 15 political parties have municipal branches including the Democratic Party of Serbia (DSS), Democratic Party (DS), Serbian National Council (SNC), Serbian Renewal Movement (SPO), Serbian Radical Party (SRS), Social Democratic Party (SDP), G-17 Plus, Yugoslav Left (JUL), Social Party of Serbia (SPS), Liberals of Serbia (LS), and Movement of Serbian Strength (PSS). SPS, SRS, and JUL are less visible, while the opposition parties DSS, DS, SPO, and LS are more active. The main DSS leaders are members of the Serbian National Council, a political group including non-affiliated members which also exercises an unofficial security role in northern Kosovo.

4. Economy

With the closure of the Trepça/Trepča complex, an influx of refugees and DPs, and a lack of investment, unemployment (estimated at 77 percent) has been prevalent among all communities. In May 2008, an office of the Regional Development Agency in North Kosovo was opened in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica with the support of the European Commission Liaison Office to Kosovo. The agency's aim is to provide investment for economic development in the Mitrovicë/Mitrovica region through absorbing donations. The agency covers the three southern municipalities of Mitrovicë/Mitrovica region, but the northern municipalities are strongly encouraged to participate in order to give it a regional scope. In addition, the "Mitrovicasit for Mitrovica" Forum was established in the beginning of June 2009. It claims to lobby all relevant stakeholders to bring greater attention to the daily political, economic, social, and cultural development in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica. The forum's board is comprised of two representatives from local institutions, the business community, civil society, and the media. The forum was established with the support of UNDP and the Kosovo ministry of local government administration.

5. Public services

● **Health**

The health centre in southern Mitrovicë/Mitrovica town provides outpatient services. In-patients are sent to Prishtinë/Priština hospital. The health centre is the hub of an additional eight health centres in town and 13 health care units, including three in the villages of Zvečan/Zveçan, Zubin Potok, and Leposavić/Leposaviq municipalities inhabited by the Kosovo Albanians. In northern Mitrovicë/Mitrovica there is a regional hospital and one health house operating as a part of Serbian health system. The hospital serves as the main health institution for the Kosovo Serb community in all of Kosovo.

● **Education**

The town's division and political situation significantly impact the municipality's education system. In southern Mitrovicë/Mitrovica, there are 27 primary schools (14,012 pupils), five high schools (5,017 students), one kindergarten (360 pupils), one primary musical school (390 students), and one specialized school (55 students). They are attended by Kosovo Albanian, Bosniak, Turkish and Ashkali students. In addition to Kosovo Albanians, the schools employ Kosovo Bosniak and Turk teachers. In northern

Mitrovicë/Mitrovica, there are 11 primary schools (2,950 pupils), four high schools (2,090 students), one kindergarten, and other specialized schools. The majority of the students are Kosovo Serbs with a small number of Kosovo Bosniaks and Roma also attending. The schools in the north are supported by the UNMIK administration but follow Serbian curriculum. (UAM Department of Education.)

In the area of higher education, four faculties of the public university in Prishtinë/Priština are based in southern Mitrovicë/Mitrovica—technology, mining, metallurgy, and geology—reflecting the traditional economic basis of the region. A branch of the private university FAMA is also present. Public university in northern Mitrovicë/Mitrovica has 12 faculties including law, business, medicine, philosophy, mathematics, civil engineering, electrical engineering, and mechanical engineering and is attended by more than 8,000 students. The appointment of Rector Radivoj Papović by the Serbian Ministry of Education in 2004 caused the suspension of the accreditation by UNMIK and more than two years of international isolation. Only in December 2006, with the election of the new Rector, Professor Zdravko Vitošević, in accordance with the university statute, UNMIK reaccredited the university. The reaccreditation had a positive impact on the willingness of donors and international organizations to support the university in the implementation of the Bologna process in order to integrate it in the European Higher Education Area. (OSCE Higher Education Unit.)

6. Map of the region

