



EXERCISE YOUR RIGHTS!

A Catalogue of Remedies and Assistance for Community Members



CENTRAL LEVEL MECHANISM

LOCAL LEVEL MECHANISM

GENERAL / COMMUNITY RIGHTS

GENDER

RETURN

MEDIA

SECURITY

PUBLIC SECTOR EMPLOYMENT

PROPERTY

CHILD RIGHTS

USE OF LANGUAGE

EDUCATION



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Introduction

The purpose of this catalogue is to provide you, as a community member in Kosovo, with information on what you may do in the event that you have a concern or a grievance relating to the upholding of your fundamental rights.

This catalogue aims to give you practical guidance on whom you can approach and how to make a complaint if you feel that your rights have been violated. It covers as many different areas of concern as possible, from how to tackle discrimination based on sex and gender, through what you can do if you think the police are harassing you because of your community identity, to how to ensure that the name of your village is properly spelt in all languages on a road sign.

The catalogue is organized thematically with sections covering general community rights, gender, returns, media, security, public sector employment, property, the rights of the child, and the use of language. Each thematic area is colour coded according to the table above. Some of these entries overlap, and cover a number of different thematic areas. In those cases you will find that each of the colours has been used to highlight the relevant entry. The general community rights thematic area encompasses bodies that are generalist in nature, and cover most or all of the thematic areas listed. In addition, each entry describes whether the relevant institution is at the central or local level.

Each individual institution, agency and organisation is given a separate listing. Each listing briefly explains the purpose of the body, followed by some examples of situations in which it might be of assistance to you. The listings include specific instructions on how to file a complaint, if relevant, and the contact information.

Your municipality will most likely be your first point of contact in the event that you need assistance or support in filing a complaint or raising a concern in relation to your rights. Often your first point of contact will be with the municipal returns officer, the municipal communities' office staff, the deputy chairperson of the municipal assembly for communities, the deputy mayor for communities or the communities committee. If they cannot directly assist you, they should be able to redirect your query/complaint to somebody who can.

This catalogue lists neither each directorate within the municipality nor each ministry at the central level. It assumes that if you have a specific complaint you will address it directly to the relevant ministry/directorate, and attempt to get the issue resolved through any complaint mechanism it has in place to deal with it. If, however, you do not obtain a satisfactory resolution to your complaint and you feel that your rights have been violated and a satisfactory remedy has not been offered, then this catalogue will help you decide where to go and what to do next.

When making that decision, you should be aware that you may be eligible for legal aid, in order to help you pursue a case if you cannot afford to do so on your own. Legal aid is available for both court cases and administrative procedures, which could include employment hearings or claims for social benefits, such as pensions. To find out whether you are entitled to legal aid assistance you can contact the District Legal Aid Bureau in your region.

The Ombudsperson Institution is a fundamental body when it comes to ensuring that your rights are protected. It is relevant in many circumstances, covers many issues, and has thus been placed first on the list of remedial mechanisms.

Also included in this list are a small number of bodies that do not necessarily have a complaints mechanism, or that do not directly address individual grievances, but which might be able to assist you to ensure that your rights as a community member are upheld. These include the community consultative council, the Ministry of Communities and Returns and the committee on human rights, gender equality, missing persons and petitions. Also, do not forget that the members of the Assembly of Kosovo and the municipal assemblies are there to represent their constituents.

Finally, this catalogue is not exhaustive. For instance, while no mention has been made of judicial remedies, it is always a possibility for you to pursue a civil or criminal case through the court system. However, to a great extent we hope that this catalogue will assist you in determining where to go and to whom to file a complaint if you consider that your rights as a community member are violated.

Ombudsperson Institution in Kosovo

Description of the Ombudsperson Institution

The Ombudsperson Institution is an independent organisation, mandated by law to address alleged human rights violations and abuses of authority by public institutions in Kosovo, excluding international organisations carrying out a public authority role.

The Ombudsperson Institution conducts investigations, issues reports and provides legal services and public advocacy. The Institution can act either independently to open an investigation without receiving a complaint, or at the request of a member of the public. If, during its investigations, it identifies a human rights violation, the staff of the Ombudsperson can seek remedies through a variety of channels. They can mediate disputes between the complainant and the authorities, they can demand further information from the authorities, they can recommend action to the authorities, issue public reports or raise concerns via the media. In extreme cases, they can also issue a request for an interim measure to ensure the protection of the complainant.

The Ombudsperson Institution provides all services free of charge and accepts complaints from anyone in Kosovo. Within the Institution there is a Gender Equality Unit, a Non-Discrimination Team and a Children's Rights Team.

In order to ensure access by all members of the community, the lawyers of the Ombudsperson Institution regularly visit municipalities, enclaves and areas with non-majority populations (a non-majority community is defined as a community that is numerically smaller than the majority community at the municipal level). They also make regular visits to prisons and detention facilities, including the Social Care Facility in Shtime/Štimlje.

How they can help you

If you consider that you have been discriminated against by a public institution or an individual working in a public institution, which could include your local municipality, a central institution, or the police, for instance, and your objection to that institution is not dealt with in a satisfactory manner, then you can file a complaint with the Ombudsperson Institution, which will then initiate an investigation. You can also address your complaint directly to the Ombudsperson Institution, without addressing it first to the relevant authority. However, your case will be better grounded if it can be shown that you have exhausted all available remedies with the relevant authority and that it has not responded adequately.

Situations in which the Ombudsperson Institution can provide assistance are varied and cover a wide range of issues. Some examples of previous cases they have addressed include: preventing physical violence being used against children at school; ensuring that disabled persons had full access to, and communication with, public institutions; upholding property rights for non-majority community members; ensuring women's rights to benefit from social and pension schemes; and highlighting with the judiciary where the length of civil proceedings were too long.

If you feel that you have been discriminated against because of your sex, for example, if you were refused a job in a municipality because you are pregnant or because you are a man who has sole responsibility for caring for a sick child, you can file a complaint to the Gender Equality Unit of the Ombudsperson Institution. It is important to recognise that gender equality is not only to ensure female equality, it is to ensure equality for both women and men.

You can file the complaint directly with one of the offices detailed below, by visiting during office hours. Alternatively, you can go online and download the complaint form from the website. The Ombudsperson Institution also receives complaints by email, fax, mail, and their telephone hotline.

Contact information

Prishtinë/Priština Headquarters

Address: Str. Agim Ramadani, (formerly Kosovodrvo building)

Tel: +381 (0) 38 501 401, 545 303

Fax: +381 (0) 38 545 302

Email: ombudsperson@ombudspersonkosovo.org

Visiting hours: Monday to Thursday, 10.00 – 14.00

Gračanica/Gracanicë Field Office

Address: Main road, opposite the Monastery

Phone: +381 (0) 38 65 118

Mobile phone: +381 (0) 64 37 111 37

Visiting hours: Monday and Thursday, 10.00 – 14.00

Gjilan/Gnjilane Field Office

Address: Str. Adem Jashari, Municipal Building II

Tel: +381 (0) 280 320 843

Visiting hours: Monday and Thursday, 10.00 – 14.00

Prizren Field Office

Address: Str. Remzi Ademi, OSCE Regional Centre, II, No. 20

Tel: +381 (0) 29 44 200 ext. 109, +381 (0) 29 622 138

Visiting hours: Monday and Wednesday, 10.00 – 14.00

Pejë/Peć Field Office

Address: Str. Queen Teuta, No. 59, Municipal Building, 3rd Floor, No. 3

Tel: +381 (0) 39 432 931

Visiting hours: Monday and Thursday, 10.00 – 14.00

Mitrovicë/Mitrovica Field Office

Address: Agim Hajrizi Square, Regional Tax Administration Building

Tel: +381 (0) 28 530 138

Visiting hours: Monday and Thursday, 10.00 – 14.00

Mitrovicë/Mitrovica Sub-Office

Address: Trepca Annex, Filipa Visnjica 4

Tel: +381 (0) 63 817 44 79, +377 (0) 44 393 181

Visiting hours: Monday and Thursday, 10.00 – 14.00

Webpage: <http://www.ombudspersonkosovo.org> (available in Albanian, Serbian and Turkish)

Communities Consultative Council

Description of the communities consultative council

The communities consultative council was established by law as a consultative mechanism, and resides within the Office of the President. It was set up to provide a forum for co-operation and discussion among and between communities and the government. The council is composed of community and government representatives whose aim is to further community members' access to, and participation in, political, economic and social life in Kosovo. Part of its mandate is to raise awareness of community concerns within Kosovo. It also provides a forum for communities to comment at an early stage on legislative or policy initiatives that might affect them. It is made up of representatives of all the communities in Kosovo, as well as members of the Assembly of Kosovo, the Government of Kosovo, the Office of the President and other governmental agencies.

How they can help you

The communities consultative council is a forum through which you can raise problems encountered when exercising your community rights. As part of its mandate is to raise awareness of community concerns within Kosovo, it can be a relevant forum for raising your concern. For example, it has discussed the issue of civil registration for one non-majority community, and issues relating to tertiary education for another community. The council is able to set up special working groups in order to look into particular issues, and like the committee on human rights, gender equality, missing persons and petitions, it is interested in analysing trends, which could then lead to positive policy changes in support of community rights. For example, concerns that non-majority communities may have with regards to access to education or repeated violations of community language rights at the municipal level could be potential topics of interest. In general, the council has a mandate to raise awareness of community concerns and contribute to better relations between communities. It is therefore a relevant forum for your community-related concerns.

Contact information

Petitions can be submitted to your community representative directly. You can do this by contacting the council through the Office of the President and asking for the representative of your community. There are representatives of the following communities sitting on the council: Ashkali, Kosovo Bosniak, Egyptian, Gorani, Kosovo Montenegrin, Roma, Kosovo Serb and Kosovo Turk. Office of the President, Building of the Assembly of Kosovo, Mother Theresa Street, Prishtinë/Priština, +381 (0) 38 212 460, <http://www.president-ksgov.net> (available in Albanian and Serbian)

Ministry of Communities and Returns

Description of the Ministry of Communities and Returns

The Ministry of Communities and Returns is mandated to develop policies and implement legislation for the promotion and protection of the rights of communities and their members, including in relation to the right to return. Among other tasks, it is also mandated: to promote the establishment of conducive conditions for returns and ensure that rights are always central to returns; to take the lead in confidence-building, dialogue and reconciliation activities among communities; to develop and oversee the implementation of the government outreach strategy relating to communities and returns; and, to monitor and support municipal efforts to address community issues and returns. The Ministry supports organized and individual returns, and is involved in all aspects of returns, from project design, planning and implementation, to the monitoring of returns policies and programmes. It is involved in screening and prioritising requests for support for returns.

The Ministry is responsible for ensuring that central and local-level policies include provisions for the protection of communities' rights and interests, including those of displaced persons and returnees. Such provisions may include facilitating freedom of movement and freedom of expression, free use of languages, equal opportunities for representation and employment, and equal access to the judiciary, public services and housing.

The Ministry of Communities and Returns supports civil society projects that aim to provide stability to communities. It also supports infrastructure projects proposed by local-level institutions, such as the municipal communities office, the municipal returns officer and village representatives.

How they can help you

The Ministry of Communities and Returns does not have a specific complaints system in place. However, its role is to provide assistance to all inhabitants of Kosovo and to share with them "...their concerns and complaints, with one sole purpose: to transform Kosovo to a better society and a home of dignity for all", according to its mission statement. You can contact the Ministry if you have a concern or complaint about any issue related to communities and returns.

Contact information

Ministry of Communities and Returns, Mother Theresa Square, Fushë Kosovë/
Kosovo Polje, +381 (0) 38 552 047, <http://www.mkk-ks.org> (available in
Albanian and Serbian)

Committee on Human Rights, Gender Equality, Missing Persons and Petitions

Description of the committee on human rights, gender equality, missing persons and petitions

The committee on human rights, gender equality, missing persons and petitions is one of the permanent committees of the Kosovo Assembly, mandated by the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly. As well as having a role in the formulation of draft laws, committees also have responsibility for monitoring the implementation of the law. Its scope of interest includes human rights, gender equality, missing persons and the right to make petitions, that is to raise a concern about any issue to the Kosovo Assembly. If an individual makes a petition to the Assembly of Kosovo, it will be passed on to this committee. Following its consideration, the committee will recommend to which institution the petition should be sent. It does not substantively address individual petitions. As well as having a role in the formulation of draft laws, the committee also has responsibility for monitoring the implementation of existing law.

How they can help you

Although this is not a body that was set up to offer an individual complaint mechanism, the committee can highlight human rights issues and trends with the Assembly, and is able to forward your complaint to the relevant body, if appropriate. Depending on the particular issue, and if that is a trend, the committee might investigate further, especially in situations where there has been a failure to properly implement a law. For example, the Committee has engaged with the NGO "Mother's Call", which organized a hunger strike due to the slow progress of the government in dealing with the remaining cases of missing persons.

Another permanent committee of the Assembly of Kosovo is the committee on the rights and interests of communities and returns. Although it deals with community issues, this committee does not have any complaint mechanism, and any petitions sent to it will be forwarded to the committee on human rights, gender equality, missing persons and petitions.

Contact information

To make a petition to the committee, write to the Assembly of Kosovo, Mother Theresa Street, Prishtinë/Priština, <http://www.assembly-kosova.org> (available in Albanian and Serbian)

Communities Committee

Description of the communities committee

There is a communities committee in each municipality in Kosovo. By law it should be established by the municipal assembly, regardless of the size of non-majority community membership in the municipality. Its members comprise all community members present in the municipal assembly plus community representatives of any community who are not represented in the assembly. Every community in the municipality, regardless of its size, should be represented in the committee, and the community that is in the majority in the municipality should have less than a half of the membership of the overall committee. The chairperson of the committee should always be someone other than a member of the majority community in the municipality.

The communities committee is responsible for monitoring the municipality's compliance with the law, with the aim of ensuring that community rights and interests are fully respected. The committee can recommend to the municipal assembly any measures it considers necessary to ensure the implementation of provisions related to the needs of persons belonging to communities. These measures should foster respect for the right of communities to maintain, develop and express their ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic identities. In addition, the committee works on the promotion of the rights and interests of non-majority communities living within the municipality, ensuring that all municipal acts, regulations and policies respect and protect community rights. The committee also addresses any matter within the mandate of a municipality related to discrimination against any person on any grounds that could result in a violation of the rights of a community, the member of a community, or that may be prejudicial to the interests of a community.

How they can help you

The communities committee is an important mechanism for the participation of non-majority communities at the local level. You can address the committee if you feel that you have been discriminated against on any ground because you belong to a particular community.

All complaints to the committee should be made in writing to the chairperson or deputy chairperson. The complaint will be treated as confidential, unless you agree in writing to the complaint becoming public, which even then will not result in all your personal data being made public. The committee can provide further information concerning the confidentiality of the complaint process. The complaint may also be submitted to the head of the community office,

who shall record it and forward it to the chairperson or deputy chairperson of the committee within one week of receipt.

When the committee receives a complaint, it will consider whether there has been (or will be) a violation of the rights of a community, a member of a community or that may be prejudicial to the interests of a community. If the committee finds that there has been discrimination, it may raise the issue with the municipal assembly.

Contact information

See the Annex for your municipality contact details.

Municipal Communities Office

Description of the municipal communities office

The municipal communities office is responsible for enhancing the protection of community rights and ensuring the equal access of communities to public services at the municipal level. In 2008, the Ministry for Local Government Administration issued guidelines instructing municipalities to keep the communities offices in those municipalities where they had been established. As a result, there are municipal communities offices in most municipalities, and where there is one it can provide you with important advice and access to municipal public services.

How they can help you

The communities office will be able to provide you with advice on the availability of public services and any concerns you may have in relation to municipal policies as a member of a non-majority community. For instance, it is there to ensure equal and unhindered access to public services provided by both central and municipal institutions, such as public utilities, education, social welfare, healthcare, social housing, access to property and other services.

The municipal communities office can liaise between you and the municipality to ensure that services are provided equitably. They can also raise issues to higher forums, such as to the municipal assembly or the mayor.

The communities office acts as a focal point for community members and their concerns within the municipality. Therefore, it can address any issue or grievance related to your rights as a community member within the municipality.

A regulation by the Office of the Prime Minister in August 2010 merges the Municipal Offices for Communities with the Municipal Officer for Returns.

Contact information

See the Annex for your municipality contact details.

Municipal Human Rights Units

Description of the municipal human rights units

The municipal human rights units have been established in most of the municipalities in Kosovo since 2008. They are responsible for the promotion and protection of human rights at the municipal level. They have responsibility for ensuring that municipalities are human rights compliant. They work in co-operation with the ministerial human rights units, at the central level, as well as with other relevant institutions.

Although their composition may change from municipality to municipality, in general, the units consist of two or three municipal staff working part time as members of the unit. The units are comprised of: a co-ordinator who is in most cases the municipal officer for gender equality, a children's rights officer and a communities officer.

At present, the capacity of the human rights units varies from municipality to municipality. However, with further support from the local authorities and the Ministry for Local Government Administration, they will become increasingly effective and useful mechanisms.

How they can help you

The municipal human rights units are responsible for the protection and promotion of human rights at the municipal level. As a result, they have the duty to monitor the compliance of municipal regulations, policies and other activities with human rights standards, especially in the following fields: equal opportunities, non-discrimination, gender equality, children's rights, the rights of persons with disabilities, the rights of communities, the use of languages and anti-trafficking.

The units also have the obligation to handle individual human rights complaints and should keep you informed about the status of any complaint you make. For that purpose the units have, in many cases, established a close co-operation with the Ombudsperson Institution and other relevant institutions.

In addition, the co-ordinator of each unit has the duty to participate in recruitment panels for municipality job interviews and municipal working groups to make sure that the decisions taken are not discriminatory.

Finally, another responsibility of the units is to co-operate and co-ordinate activities with the NGOs present in each municipality in the field of protection and promotion of human rights. In that regard, the municipal human rights

unit could refer your case to an NGO specialised, for example, in the rights of communities, women, children or persons with disabilities so that they can further assist you, if appropriate.

Contact information

See the Annex for your municipality contact details.

Deputy Chairperson of the Municipal Assembly for Communities

Description of the deputy chairperson of the municipal assembly for communities

In municipalities where non-majority communities make up at least ten per cent of the population of the municipality, according to the law, the post of deputy chairperson of the municipal assembly for communities is reserved for a representative of one of the non-majority communities. The post is awarded to the candidate who received the most votes on the open list of candidates for elections to the relevant municipal assembly.

It is the deputy chairperson's role to promote inter-community dialogue, and to serve as a focal point for addressing non-majority community concerns and interests that relate to the meetings of the municipal assembly and its work.

How they can help you

The deputy chairperson acts as a focal point for complaints against acts or decisions by the municipal assembly that constitute an alleged violation of community rights. If you believe that the actions or decisions of the municipal assembly violate your rights as a community member, then you can raise that concern to the deputy chairperson. If the deputy chairperson is of the opinion that the matter warrants further investigation, it is his/her responsibility to refer that matter on to the municipal assembly for its consideration. If the deputy chairperson is not satisfied with the assembly's response, then he/she may submit a complaint directly to the constitutional court for review.

Contact information

See the Annex for your municipality contact details.

Deputy Mayor for Communities

Description of the deputy mayor for communities

In municipalities where non-majority communities make up at least ten per cent of the population of the municipality, the post of deputy mayor for communities is established. The deputy mayor for communities serves a four-year term. The elected mayor proposes his/her candidate, who must then be approved by the municipal assembly, including a majority of the assembly members belonging to non-majority communities. It is the job of the deputy mayor for communities to assist the mayor and to provide him/her with advice and guidance on all issues related to non-majority communities.

How they can help you

If you have a concern regarding any community-related issue in your local municipality, you can approach the deputy mayor for communities. He/she should be able to provide you with advice and assistance, and to address any serious issues with the mayor, who could raise it with the assembly if necessary. He/she will also be able to direct you to the correct body or individual if your complaint can be better addressed elsewhere.

Contact information

See the Annex for your municipality contact details.

Municipal Officer for Gender Equality

Description of the municipal officer for gender equality

The municipal officer for gender equality is a civil servant at the municipal level tasked with working towards achieving gender equality as well as mainstreaming gender issues into all municipal policies, legislation, and practices. They are responsible for contributing to the promotion, advancement and protection of human rights, with a particular focus on gender equality.

The gender officer reports to the mayor of the municipality and co-ordinates with the agency for gender equality at the central level.

In most municipalities, the gender officer is to be found within the municipal human rights unit, however, not in every municipality. In some municipalities, the gender officer is also employed in some other capacity within the municipality and thus performs multiple duties.

The responsibilities of the gender officers includes reviewing municipal documents, attending municipal meetings and municipality job interviews, all to ensure gender equality, and that a gender-based non-discriminatory approach is followed in the procedures and processes of the municipality.

How they can help you

The gender officers are responsible for protecting and promoting human rights at the municipal level, specifically with regard to gender issues.

The municipal human rights units also have the obligation to handle human rights complaints, and should keep you informed about the status of your complaint. If you have a complaint related to any form of gender-based discrimination in your municipality, you can contact the gender officer. As the municipal human rights units often co-operate closely with the Ombudsperson Institution, the gender officer will be able to assist you either directly, or by referring you to the Gender Equality Unit of the Ombudsperson Institution if necessary.

Contact information

See the Annex for your municipality contact details.

Agency for Gender Equality

Description of the agency for gender equality

The agency for gender equality can be found within the Office of the Prime Minister. The agency was established by law to ensure gender equality in Kosovo. The agency plays an advisory role to the government and does not accept direct complaints from individuals. However, if they see there is a pattern of discrimination, then they are obliged to take any measures within their mandate to address such discrimination effectively.

How they can help you

Since the agency for gender equality does not accept individual complaints its advisory role will only be engaged if it establishes a pattern of practice or evidence of systematic discrimination. This means that you should use the other gender-based complaint mechanisms mentioned above if you have a particular complaint.

Issues of discrimination that relate directly to gender, such as discrimination against individuals or groups of individuals committed by government bodies, other public authorities, employees of such bodies, employers or other legal and physical persons should be addressed to the Gender Equality Unit within the Ombudsperson Institution.

When considering where to file your complaint, remember that there is a gender equality officer in each municipality. Complaints may also be filed concerning gender discrimination based on sexual orientation or identity.

Contact information

See above for the contact details of the Ombudsperson Institution. For the contact details of the municipal officer for gender equality, see the Annex for your municipality contact details.

Municipal Working Group on Returns

Description of the municipal working group on returns

The municipal working group on returns is the local co-ordination and implementation forum for all returns-related issues, projects and activities. It provides a forum for all communities to engage in dialogue on returns issues, and is the main mechanism through which displaced persons can access the returns process and request assistance for returns. It is responsible for developing and implementing, in full consultation with all its members, a municipal returns strategy. It is composed of local municipal officials, including the municipal returns officer and communities office, the Kosovo police, community members and displaced persons' representatives/associations, representatives of international organizations, such as the OSCE and UNHCR, relevant non-governmental organizations, civil society groups, and other interested parties. The working group meets on a monthly basis or every two months.

How they can help you

The municipal working group on returns provides communities with a place in which to discuss returns issues, access the returns process and request assistance to return. The working group also acts as the local implementation co-ordination body for returns projects, designing and facilitating project implementation. Working group meetings provide a forum for discussions and information sharing on a variety of issues, such as conditions in places of origin, or conditions for return. Therefore, if you are a displaced person or a returnee, and you have concerns related to your physical return, you can raise this issue during working group meetings, which you can attend without invitation. The municipal returns officer can provide you with information regarding working group meeting times in your municipality.

Contact information

See the Annex for your municipality contact details.

Municipal Returns Officer

Description of the municipal returns officer

The main duties of the municipal returns officer include ensuring support to the mayor or deputy mayor in organizing and co-ordinating the municipal working group on returns, drafting municipal returns strategies, assisting displaced persons in the process of returning, and overseeing the implementation of all associated projects for return.

The municipal returns officer provides displaced persons and all organizations involved in the returns process with a full-time municipal official to establish links and to undertake and follow up initiatives to assist displaced persons and refugees in reaching the most sustainable solutions. The municipal returns officer is also a key official in facilitating all returns-related activities, and in establishing and sustaining links with displaced persons and refugees through go-and-see visits and go-and-inform visits, among other activities.

How they can help you

The post of municipal returns officer is not mandated by law, but most municipalities have retained one to act as a focal point for returns. They usually work full time. You may approach the municipal returns officer for any matter relating to returns in your municipality. In fact, if you are a displaced person or returnee, you should already have contact with the municipal returns officer, who is responsible for visiting you, assessing any needs you may have and offering advice related to all municipal matters that might concern you as a returnee.

A regulation by the Office of the Prime Minister in August 2010 merges the Municipal Offices for Communities with the Municipal Officer for Returns.

Contact information

See the Annex for your municipality contact details.

The EULEX Human Rights Review Panel

Description of the EULEX Human Rights Review Panel

The EULEX Human Rights Review Panel was established as an independent accountability mechanism to consider cases of complaints by any person in Kosovo claiming to be a victim of a human rights violation by EULEX in carrying out its executive mandate. It is not a judicial or disciplinary body. Rather, it considers whether a violation of human rights in an individual case has occurred, and if needed, makes recommendations in order to remedy the offending actions. The recommendations are submitted to the head of EULEX, and are made public.

How they can help you

The Human Rights Review Panel will only consider a complaint if it has to do with a human rights violation that has occurred while EULEX was carrying out its executive functions. It will not take complaints if, for instance, you feel that you have been discriminated against when applying for a job at EULEX. The purpose of the Human Rights Review Panel is to consider alleged human rights violations by EULEX and/or its employees, which could not otherwise be challenged in the Kosovo legal system, and in which there is no other way to ensure that EULEX actions, inaction, or employee conduct could be held to account. For instance: if you feel that a prosecutor has harassed you during the gathering of evidence for a legal case because of your ethnicity, or if an EULEX police officer used excessive force when arresting you, you can file a complaint to the Panel.

The Panel held its first session in June 2010. It will only examine complaints arising from alleged violations of human rights occurring since 9 December 2008. You must submit your complaint by 9 September 2010, or within six months of the date of the alleged violation. Complaints must be in writing and signed by the applicant. The complaint form can be obtained from the office address below or can be downloaded from the Panel's website. Copies of all relevant documents should be attached to the complaint.

When considering your complaint, the Panel will base its decision on the information it received from you in writing. It can also receive oral statements or presentations when necessary.

Contact information

Human Rights Review Panel, HRRP Building, Str. Rrustem Statovci No. 29, Prishtinë/Priština, +386 (0) 43 78 2125, office@hrrp.eu, <http://www.hrrp.eu> (available in Albanian and Serbian)

Office hours: 10:00-12:00 Wednesday, Thursday

Independent Media Commission

Description of the Independent Media Commission

The Independent Media Commission is the broadcast regulator in Kosovo. It promotes ethical and technical standards among Kosovo's broadcast media. It applies a body of regulations that hold local broadcasters to European standards of professionalism and fairness in their news coverage. The Independent Media Commission's activities include monitoring broadcast coverage of current events, commenting on media-related legislation, evaluating complaints and enforcing its regulations and the terms of its licenses.

The Independent Media Commission monitors Kosovo media broadcasts and may initiate its own investigations *ex officio*. It also relies on the public to bring problems to its attention by filing complaints.

How they can help you

Any individual or organization may file a complaint with the Independent Media Commission. Complaints usually concern violations of the terms of a broadcast license, the Code of Conduct for the broadcast media, or a relevant law or regulation. The most common issues of complaint, according to the Independent Media Commission, concerning the fairness or accuracy of a broadcast programme, or the interference of one broadcaster's transmission signal with another's. However, you can make a complaint about any alleged violation, as long as it is related to fairness, factual accuracy or compliance with the law. For instance, you could file a complaint alleging that the amount of media coverage in a particular language is insufficient.

If you have any concerns about media behaviour, the Independent Media Commission recommends that first you try to contact the relevant media source. The best method is to telephone them first, then write them a letter. Many complaints can be settled this way without involving the Commission. Once a reasonable amount of time has passed, if the media outlet has not responded to you, the Independent Media Commission recommends that you inform them that you will be filing a complaint with the Commission.

If you are still not satisfied with the media response, you can write, fax, e-mail or visit the Independent Media Commission in person to make your complaint. They will need the following information: the name of the media; the date and time of the broadcast of concern; a clear and specific statement regarding what violations you believe have been committed. It is important to do this within 21 days of the incident as after that the media does not have to keep the documentation in its archives, and so there may not be any evidence of the alleged violation.

Potential remedies include: a clarification or correction from the media, a right of reply granted to the complainant, or a public apology from the media. If no suitable remedy can be found, the Independent Media Commission can, as a last resort, initiate legal proceedings.

Contact information

Office of the Independent Media Commission, Str. Gazmend Zajmi No. 1, Prishtinë/Priština, +381 (0) 38 245 031, info@imc-ko.org, <http://www.imc-ko.org> (available in Albanian and Serbian)

Press Council of Kosovo

Description of the Press Council of Kosovo

The Press Council of Kosovo is a self-regulatory body for the print media in Kosovo. Its purpose is to ensure the application of the Press Code of Conduct, and to foster the positive reputation of the press. It receives complaints related to violations of the Press Code, adjudicates them, and decides on appropriate sanctions.

How they can help you

Complaints can be made by any person, but cannot be anonymous. They must be made in writing, and within one month of the offending material being published. You cannot make complaints against individual journalists, only against a specific newspaper. So for instance, if a newspaper has published an article that you think incites hatred or is defamatory against your ethnicity or community, then you can make a written complaint to the Press Council. The Press Council can impose a fine on the offending newspaper, and order the newspaper to print a copy of its findings. It can also terminate the newspaper's membership of the Press Council if necessary.

Contact information

Press Council of Kosovo, Str. Hajdar Dushi, No. 7, Prishtinë/Priština, +377 (0) 44 291 810, presscouncil.kosovo@gmail.com, <http://www.presscouncil-ks.org> (available in Albanian)

Municipal Communities Safety Council

Description of the municipal communities safety council

The municipal communities safety council is mandated by law to build confidence between the police and communities, to raise awareness of safety concerns at the local level, to identify local concerns regarding public safety and to propose action plans aimed at addressing those concerns. The participants of the safety council include the mayor, the police commander, one representative per each religious community, one representative of the Kosovo security force, one representative of the local public safety committee, one representative of the community safety action teams, one representative of the municipal civilian emergency sector, one representative from each community and five representatives from civil society. The safety council is a valuable mechanism for strengthening and promoting dialogue among communities, municipal institutions and the police as it is the main consultative body for security matters within a municipality.

How they can help you

The safety council meets once a month. In addition, every year they are obliged to hold two public meetings to discuss community safety. If you have a concern or are dissatisfied with certain safety matters, such as the lack of street lighting in your area, or the need for more community policing, you can raise them at the safety council meeting. You can also raise your concerns with one of the members of the council at any other time, and ask them to discuss the issue at the next meeting.

Contact information

See the Annex for your municipality contact details.

Local Public Safety Committees

Description of the local public safety committees

The local public safety committees are a forum for communities and the Kosovo police to identify and address issues of community safety, security, crime and living conditions in their local community. They were set up to give members of the general public a voice in community policing and to act as an advisory body to the police. They are generally established by the police in areas where a sub-station has been opened, in order to ensure good relations between the local community and the police.

How they can help you

If you have a concern relating to public safety in your area, you can attend the local public safety committee meeting to voice your complaint. The public safety committee provides direct access to the police who are working in your area.

The local public safety committees also enable communities to address concerns to the municipal authorities through the municipal community safety council as a member of the public safety committee also attends the council.

Contact information

See the Annex for your municipality contact details.

Police Inspectorate of Kosovo

Description of the police inspectorate of Kosovo

The police inspectorate of Kosovo is an independent body set up to investigate serious complaints against the police service in Kosovo.

How they can help you

If you are concerned about the performance of the police, in particular about the actions of an individual police officer or a civil servant working for the police, you can file a complaint directly with the police inspectorate.

If the police have acted in an unprofessional manner, such as targeting you because you belong to a particular community, you can submit a complaint and the inspectors will investigate. If they find that there has been an offence, then the individual or group responsible will be sanctioned.

You can file a complaint by directly contacting the police inspectorate either in person or in writing to the address below. They will start a formal investigation within 14 days of receiving your complaint, and complete the case within three months. Alternatively, you can also file a complaint by writing to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, or by going directly to any police station. The complaint will then be forwarded to the police inspectorate, unless it is considered to be a minor offence, in which case it will be dealt with directly by the professional standards unit of the police.

Contact information

Police Inspectorate of Kosovo, Str. Tirana, (ex Building Urata), +381 (0) 38 213 388, 213 798, Prishtinë/Priština, <http://www.ks-gov.net/ipk> (available in Albanian)

Independent Oversight Board

Description of the Independent Oversight Board

The Independent Oversight Board is a quasi-judicial body charged with hearing and adjudicating appeals by public servants on hiring, firing and employment practices within the civil service. It holds hearings to resolve complaints and appeals, and its decisions are binding for the governmental executive bodies that it oversees. The Board is independent, and reports directly to the Assembly of Kosovo.

How they can help you

If you are a civil servant and you are aggrieved by a decision of your employer in breach of the principles and regulations governing the civil service, you can appeal such decision to the Independent Oversight Board. These principles include: fair and equitable treatment; political neutrality and impartiality; integrity; honesty and accountability; transparency; merit; non-discrimination; and inclusiveness. Prior to that, you must exhaust the internal appeal procedures of your employer. This is a precondition for referring the case to the Independent Oversight Board. Also, if you apply for a job in the civil service and are not selected for reasons which you think are in violation of the principles mentioned above or in violation of the law, you can request the Independent Oversight Board to investigate the issue. Before doing so, you must first address your complaint directly to the interview panel who originally interviewed you, after you receive the results of the interview.

Contact information

Independent Oversight Board, Germia Building, Mother Theresa Str. Prishtinë/
Priština, +381 (0) 38 212 040, <http://www.ks-gov.net/kpmk> (available in
Albanian and Serbian)

Kosovo Property Agency

Description of the Kosovo Property Agency

The Kosovo Property Agency is an independent body set up to resolve claims relating to private immovable property, including agricultural and commercial property. The Kosovo Property Agency is mandated to receive, register and resolve property claims resulting from the armed conflict that occurred in Kosovo between 27 February 1998 and 20 June 1999. Decisions are taken by the reviewing mechanism of the Kosovo Property Agency, the Kosovo Property Claims Commission.

The Kosovo Property Agency is also responsible for temporarily administering properties on behalf of the property right holder if he/she is unable to take repossession of the property. When a property is under administration and assessed by the Kosovo Property Agency as suitable for the rental market, the property right holder can choose to lease out the property through the Agency.

How they can help you

The Kosovo Property Agency is no longer accepting new claims, its last intake closed on 3 December 2007. However, it continues to process prior claims. It can provide you with advice and information in relation to property issues.

Contact information

Headquarters

Str. Perandori Justinian No. 5, Qyteza Pejton, +381 (0) 38 249 918,
mailbox@kpaonline.org.

Gjilan/Gnjilane

Str. Lidhje e Prizrenit 114, +381 (0) 280 320 289.

Prizren

Str. Wiliam Walker, Prizren (at EULEX base), +381 (0) 29 231 469, 231 429.

Mitrovicë/Mitrovica

Main Office: UNMIK Regional HQ (Yugobanka), +381 (0) 28 530 136, 530 137.

South: Str. Mbretresha Teuta (opposite Yugobanka).

North: KTA Building, Room No. 18, UNMIK North Station Compound.

Pejë/Peć

Str. Mbreterasha Teuta, No. 85, +381 (0) 39 431 668.

Prishtinë/Priština

Str. Goleska, +381 (0) 38 225473.

Skopje

Str. Vinichka, No. 10 (CDRIM-building), First Floor, +389 22 656 680.

Podgorica

Crnogorskih Serdara, +382 20 624 216, 623 744.

Website: <http://www.kpaonline.org> (available in Albanian and Serbian)

Language Commission

Description of the language commission

The language commission was established in 2007, within the Prime Minister's Office, as an independent institution mandated to preserve, promote, protect and monitor the use of the official languages and to ensure their equal status in Kosovo. It also ensures protection of the languages of communities whose mother tongue is not an official language, but which are in official use in particular municipalities, in accordance with the law.

Your municipality has a legal obligation to provide you with services in the official languages and in your mother tongue if it has been recognised as a language in official use in your municipality. Such services would include: education, access to healthcare and social welfare services, and access to public meetings and municipal regulations, among others.

The language commission is responsible for ensuring recognition of the equal status of the official languages and for ensuring compliance with the relevant law. It has the authority to receive and investigate complaints, mediate, make recommendations, issue written warnings and impose financial sanctions against both the institution and the individual person responsible for that institution that violated any of your linguistic rights. As a final resort, it can report its findings to the Government and to the Assembly of Kosovo.

How they can help you

The use of official languages and languages in official use is protected at the central and local level of government, and in judicial proceedings, education and the media, among others. If you feel that your linguistic rights as a community member are not being respected, then you can file a complaint with the language commission. For instance, if there is poor, incorrect or no translation of official documents at the municipal level, if no interpretation is offered to you at a court hearing, or if your village sign has been defaced or misspelt, then you can submit a complaint to the language commission.

Claims to the language commission should be submitted to the Office of the Prime Minister. Alternatively, you can also file a complaint online at the language commission's official website. Complaint forms are available in the Albanian, Serbian, Turkish, Bosnian and Romani languages. Or, you can file a complaint through the municipal communities office in your municipality.

Contact information

The contact person for the language commission is: Bahrije Islami, Office No. 113, First Floor, Government Building, Prishtinë/Priština, +381 (0) 38 200 146 18, bahrije.islami@ks-gov.net, <http://www.ks-gov.net/kgjz> (available in Albanian and Serbian)

School Boards and School Directors

Description of the school boards and school directors

The right to education in Kosovo includes the right to be taught in one of the official languages of Kosovo, or in your mother tongue where that is considered to be one of the official languages of the municipality. In order to ensure this right, children are entitled to free or subsidised transportation to a school teaching in their language, if it is not near where they live.

You have the right to attend education in one of two official languages in Kosovo: Albanian and Serbian. In addition, if your mother tongue is recognized as a language in official use at the municipal level, the municipality is obliged to provide you and your children with pre-school, primary and secondary education, for all subjects, in your language.

The school board, school director, parents' council, municipal education directorate or even the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology are all institutions and individuals who are mandated to consider any complaints you may have regarding education. The institution responsible will differ, depending on the situation.

How they can help you

Depending on your issue of concern, your complaint should be directed to either the municipality or the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. As a first point of contact, however, you can always address the matter to the school board or the school director, who will either be able to address your complaint, or direct you to the relevant body. The school director is responsible for dealing with complaints related to the quality of teaching at the school, or the quality of the facilities available at your school.

Contact information

The contact information of the school board and school director are the same as the address of the school you or your child attends. You can also see the Annex for your municipality contact details.

Annex I

– Municipality Contact Details

Annex II

– Legal Aid District Bureau
Contact Details

	Municipality	Address	Phone number
1.	Deçan/ Deçane	Square Mentor Tolaj	+381 (0) 390 361 100
2.	Dragash/ Dragaš	Str. Sheshi i Deshmoreve	+381 (0) 29 281 005
3.	Ferizaj/ Uroševac	Str. Deshmoret e Kombit,	+381 (0) 290 320 150
4.	Fushë Kosovë/ Kosovo Polje	Str. Nëna Terezë	+381 (0) 38 536 006
5.	Gjakovë/ Đakovica	Str. Nëna Terezë, No. 469	+381 (0) 390 321 100
6.	Gjilan/ Gnjilane	Mayor's building, Str. Adem Jashari, municipal executive building, Square Rexhep Mala e Nuhi Berisha,	+381 (0) 280 323 311; +381 (0) 280 226 428; Executive building number: +381 (0) 280 320 490
7.	Glllogoc/ Glogovac	Str. Fehmi e Xhevë Lladrovci	+381 (0) 38 584 074
8.	Graçanicë/ Gračanica	Dukat Hotel, main road	no phone number
9.	Han i Elezit/ Đeneral Janković	Str. Nuri Bushi	+381 (0) 290 385 112; +377 (0) 44 381 314
10.	Istog/ Istok	Str. 2 Korriku	+381 (0) 39 451 202
11.	Junik/ Junik	Centre (no number)	+381 (0) 390 370 114
12.	Kaçanik/ Kačanik	Str. Emin Duraku	+381 (0) 290 380 005; +381 (0) 290 380 047; +377 (0) 44 225 315
13.	Kamenicë/ Kamenica	Kriva Reka building, Str. Skenderbeu (no number), Municipal returns officer: cultural house premises Isa Kastrati, Str. Skenderbeu	Mayor's office: +381 (0) 280 371 969
14.	Klinë/ Klina	Str. Abedin Rexha	+381 (0) 39 471 306
15.	Klllokot/ Klokot	Vrbovac/Vërboc, Klokot/Klllokot (no street name or number)	Mayor's office: +381 (0) 280 385 470

16.	Leposavić/ Leposaviç	Str. JNA, Municipal Communities Office: Haki Imeri, Head, Bistricë/Bistrica village	+381 (0) 28 83 860
17.	Lipjan/ Lipljan	Str. Shqipëri	+381 (0) 38 581 255; +381 (0) 581 258 and +381 (0) 581 505
18.	Malishevë/ Mališevo	Str. Gjerg Kastrioti Skenderbeu	+381 (0) 29 269 043
19.	Mamusa/ Mamushë/ Mamuša	Municipal building on the main square	+381 (0) 29 273 260
20.	Mitrovicë/ Mitrovica	Str. Mbretëresha Teutë, (no number) Municipal Returns Office Str. Mbretëresha Teutë, (no number)	+381 (0) 28 532 104
21.	Novo Brdo/ Novobërdë	Village Bostane/ Bostan (no street name or number)	+381 (0) 38 576 012 Mayor's office: +381 (0) 38 576 009
22.	Obiliq/ Obilić	Str. Hasan Prishtina, (no number) Obiliq/Obilić	+381 (0) 38 561 536
23.	Parteš/ Partesh	Municipality not yet functioning	MPT contact +377 (0) 45 386 489
24.	Pejë/ Peć	Str. Mbretëresha Teuta, No. 59	+381 (0) 39 432 875; +381 (0) 39 434 875
25.	Podujevë/ Podujevo	Str. Zahir Pajaziti	no phone number
26.	Prishtinë/ Priština	Str. UCK, No. 2, 10000	no phone number
27.	Prizren	Main municipal building (MRO/MCO offices), Str. Remzi Ademi; White House municipal building (D/ M for Communities, D/MA Chairperson for Communities), Str. Adem Jashari	+381 (0) 29 241 925; Mayor's Office: +381 (0) 29 242 406

28.	Ranilug/ Ranillug	Village Veliko Ropotovo/Ropotovë e Madhe (no street name or number)	+381 (0) 280 76 010; Mayor's office: +381 (0) 280 375 422;
29.	Rahovec/ Orahovec	New municipal building (D/Mayor for Communities, Head of MCO) Str. Xhelal Hajda – Toni	+381 (0) 29 276 037; +381 (0) 29 276 737; +381 (0) 29 276 039
30.	Štrpce/ Shtërpce	Štrpce/Shtërpçë town (no street name or number)	Mayor's secretary: +381 (0) 290 370 005
31.	Shtime/ Štimlje	Str. Tirana	no phone number
32.	Skënderaj/ Srbica	Str. 18 Qershori MCO Banja/Bajë village	+381 (0) 28 582 124
33.	Suharekë/ Suva Reka	Main building (MWGR, CC) main Prishtinë/Priština-Prizren road Old municipal building next to the river (MRO office)	no phone number
34.	Viti/ Vitina	Str. 28 Nëntori	Mayor's office: +381 (0) 280 381 626
35.	Vushtrri/ Vuçitrn	Str. Adem Jashari, (no number) MCO in Priluzhje/ Prelluzhë village	+381 (0) 28 571 408; +381 (0) 28 571 524
36.	Zubin Potok/ Zubin Potok	Str. Kolasinskih Knezeva, No. 27 MCO Çabër/Çabra village	+381 (0) 28 460 048
37.	Zvečan/ Zvečan	Kralja Milutina 5 MCO in Lipa/Lipë village	+381 (0) 28 664 728

	Legal Aid Office	Address	Phone number
1.	Prishtinë/ Priština	Str. Zenel Salihu No.30, Prishtinë/Priština	+381 (0)38 200 18314
2.	Prizren	Str. Arbëri No.4, Ortakoll, Prizren	+381 (0)29 230 554
3.	Pejë/ Peć	Str. Bukureshës No.8, Pejë/Peć	+381 (0)39 423 698
4.	Mitrovicë/ Mitrovica	Str. Vëllezërit Dragaj No.16, Mitrovicë/Mitrovica	+381 (0)28 534 477
5.	Gjilan/ Gnjilane	Str. Mulla Idrizi No.41, Gjilan/Gnjilane	+381 (0)280 321 134
6.	Legal Aid Commission, Prishtinë/ Priština	Str. Zenel Salihu No.30, Prishtinë/Priština	+381 (0)38 200 18224

