Youth, Rights and Security

in the Municipalities of Preševo, Bujanovac and Medveđa and in North Kosovo*



This report was produced through the RYCOgnizing YPS granting scheme, supported by German Cooperation and implemented by RYCO. The views and opinions expressed are solely those of Civic Initiatives, New Social Initiative, and Livrit and do not necessarily reflect the views of RYCO or German Cooperation. Neither RYCO nor the granting authority can be held responsible for its content.



CONTENTS

01 Executive Summary

02 Introduction and Methodology

03 The YPS Agenda: Framework and Rationale

04 Regional Context

05 Thematic Findings by Pillar

06 Cross-cutting Analysis

07 Recommendations

08 Annex



01 Executive Summary

This report examines the human rights situation of young people from minority and non-majority communities in two adjacent and structurally similar contexts: the municipalities of Bujanovac, Preševo and Medveđa in southern Serbia, and North Kosovo* together with other areas of Kosovo* inhabited by non-majority communities. It uses the United Nations Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) agenda, established through UN Security Council Resolution 2250 and subsequent resolutions, as its analytical framework, drawing on its five pillars: Participation, Protection, Prevention, Partnerships, and Disengagement and Reintegration.

The YPS agenda is not applied as a rigid classification system in which every human rights issue is assigned to a specific pillar. Rather, it provides a lens through which to examine the peace and security implications of the conditions affecting young people and to assess the extent to which they are recognised and supported as actors in building more inclusive, peaceful and resilient communities.

Across both contexts, the report finds a consistent pattern: formal legal and institutional guarantees for minority communities exist on paper but are inconsistently applied in practice, producing cumulative effects that disproportionately affect young people.

In the **municipalities of Preševo, Bujanovac and Medveđa**, Albanian representation in Serbian state institutions remains far below the community's share of the population, particularly in specialised roles within institutions such as the border police, tax administration and judiciary (Seven-Point Plan Report, 2024 — unpublished). Youth-authored research from the region documents related barriers, including a lack of transparency in police recruitment, challenges with diploma recognition for graduates returning from universities in Kosovo*, and gaps in Serbian-language curriculum design in Albanian-language schools (Youth alert reports: *Police Recruitment*; *Educational Opportunities*; *Srpski kao nematernji jezik*).

In **North Kosovo***, the mass resignation of Kosovo* Serb police, judicial and administrative personnel in November 2022 marked the culmination of an escalating dispute over Kosovo's* decision to replace Serbia-issued vehicle licence plates. The immediate trigger was the suspension and subsequent dismissal of the Kosovo* Serb regional police commander in the North, who had refused to enforce the government's licence-plate policy. This prompted the collective withdrawal of Serb personnel from Kosovo's* police, judiciary and other public institutions, creating a representation vacuum that persisted into 2025–2026. The resulting vacancies were filled primarily by officials from the majority community, while the deployment of special units of the Kosovo* Police represented a separate process that had begun prior to the November 2022

resignations and subsequently intensified.

These developments have contributed to a broader perception among Kosovo* Serbs that local security institutions are increasingly disconnected from the communities they are intended to serve (CASA, *Security Challenges in Northern Kosovo*, 2025; NSI, *Access Denied*, 2025). Since March 2026, the full implementation of Kosovo's* Law on Foreigners, combined with the newly adopted Law on Citizenship, has created acute legal uncertainty for a specific age cohort: individuals born outside Kosovo*, largely between 2000 and 2008, who, upon turning 18, are being redirected from citizenship-by-descent recognition to the more burdensome naturalisation process, despite meeting all substantive legal criteria (CASA, *Final Monitoring Report*, June 2026; CASA, *Monitoring Report No. 2*, May 2026; CASA, *Legal and Policy Analysis of the 2026 Law on Citizenship*, May 2026).

Economic measures, including the 2023 ban on imports of Serbian goods and the 2024 Central Bank of Kosovo* regulation effectively abolishing the use of the Serbian dinar, have compounded these pressures, disrupting incomes, business viability and access to Serbia-administered pensions and social assistance for Kosovo* Serb communities (NSI, *Economic Hurdles*, 2025; AKTIV, *Analiza Trendova* 2024).

Survey data from both contexts show high and, in the Kosovo* Serb case, worsening levels of pessimism: 91.2% of AKTIV's 2024 respondents believed that conditions in Kosovo* were not moving in a positive direction, while a majority indicated that they would leave if given the opportunity (AKTIV, *Analiza Trendova* 2024).

Security incidents directly affecting minors—including detentions related to clothing and symbols, the detention of six teenagers following an altercation in North Mitrovica, and an incident during a graduation parade—are documented in the *2025 Civil Society Report on Human Rights in Kosovo*, indicating that concerns related to the Protection pillar extend beyond adults and specifically affect the youth population (CSO Report on Human Rights in Kosovo, 2025).

Across all five YPS pillars, the report finds Participation and Protection to be the best evidenced, Partnerships to be consistently weak and donor-dependent in both contexts, and Prevention—including youth-led dialogue, peer mediation and inter-community contact—to be almost entirely absent from the documented record on both sides of the border. The report concludes with recommendations organised by pillar and directed at municipal authorities, the central governments in Belgrade and Pristina, and international donors and facilitators.

02 Introduction and Methodology

This report examines the situation of young people from non-majority and minority communities in two neighbouring, closely linked contexts: the Preševo Valley municipalities of Bujanovac, Preševo and Medveđa in southern Serbia, home to a predominantly ethnic Albanian population; and North Kosovo*, together with other non-majority-inhabited areas of Kosovo*, home to Kosovo* Serb, Gorani, Roma, Ashkali, Egyptian, Bosniak and Turkish communities.

The two contexts are considered together deliberately. In important respects, each mirrors the other: Albanians constitute a minority within Serbia, just as Serbs and other communities constitute non-majority communities within Kosovo*. Both populations live with unresolved status-related questions, contested security arrangements and institutional frameworks that formally guarantee minority rights but do not consistently ensure their implementation in practice.

The report uses the United Nations Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) agenda—anchored in UN Security Council Resolution 2250 (2015) and its successor resolutions 2419 (2018), 2535 (2020) and 2807 (2025), and grounded in the evidence base provided by the 2016 *Missing Peace* study —as its analytical framework. The agenda's five pillars - Participation, Protection, Prevention, Partnerships, and Disengagement and Reintegration - provide a consistent set of questions through which to examine both case studies, rather than treating either context as a special or unique case.

The report draws on two evidence streams. The first consists of institutional monitoring and legal analysis: Civic Initiatives' 2024 assessment of the implementation of the Seven-Point Plan for the Preševo Valley (unpublished; facts and data used with permission and not cited as a public document); AKTIV's 2025 *Community Rights Report* on non-majority communities in Kosovo*; AKTIV's *Analiza Trendova* 2024 public-opinion survey (N = 503 Kosovo* Serb respondents); NGO CASA's *Monitoring Report No. 1* (April 2026), *Monitoring Report No. 2* (May 2026) and *Final Monitoring Report* (June 2026) on the implementation of Kosovo's* Law on Foreigners; CASA's *Legal and Policy Analysis of the 2026 Law on Citizenship*; CASA's 2025 policy paper on Kosovo* Serbs' access to documentation and legal identity; CASA's 2025 policy brief on security challenges in North Kosovo*; New Social Initiative's (NSI) 2025 report *Access Denied: Deinstitutionalization of the Kosovo Serbs*; NSI's 2025 report on economic hurdles for businesses in North Kosovo*; NSI's 2026 report on the Law on Foreigners and the Law on Vehicles; and the 2025 *Civil Society Report on Human Rights in Kosovo*, produced jointly by 42 CSOs under the Human Rights Network.

The second evidence stream consists of youth-authored local research and advocacy materials from the Preševo Valley and, to a more limited extent, municipalities in North Kosovo* and other non-majority areas (Zubin Potok, Štrpce and North Mitrovica), covering issues such as police recruitment, diploma recognition, Serbian-language curriculum design, youth centres and local infrastructure. These materials are youth-produced problem analyses rather than first-person testimonies and are therefore used as evidence of youth-led civic engagement and, where relevant, as a complement to institutional monitoring.



03 The YPS Agenda: Framework and Rationale



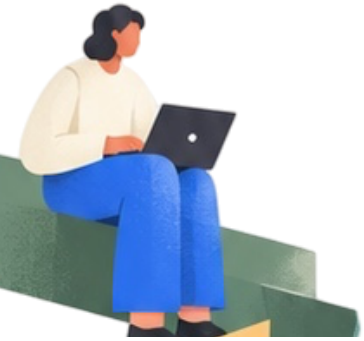
The Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) agenda originates in UN Security Council Resolution 2250, adopted in December 2015 as the first Security Council resolution fully dedicated to recognising the positive role that young women and men play in maintaining and promoting peace and security (*Missing Peace* study, 2018). The resolution requested the UN Secretary-General to conduct a progress study on young people's contributions to peace processes. The YPS agenda has since been reinforced by Resolution 2419 (2018), which calls for the meaningful inclusion of young people in formal and informal peace processes, and Resolution 2535 (2020), which further strengthened the implementation and institutionalisation of the YPS agenda and established regular reporting on Youth, Peace and Security (KOMS, *Analysis of the UN YPS Agenda*, 2024).

Resolution 2250 defines youth as persons aged **18–29**, while acknowledging that definitions may vary across national and international contexts; the UN's general statistical definition, for instance, covers those aged 15–24 (*Missing Peace* study, 2018). This distinction is worth highlighting at the outset, as it means that the citizenship-registration cutoff discussed below, set at exactly 18 years of age, falls at the lower boundary of the YPS agenda's own definition of the population it seeks to protect.

The agenda's evidentiary foundation is the 2018 UN study *The Missing Peace: Independent Progress Study on Youth, Peace and Security*, led by independent author Graeme Simpson and mandated by Resolution 2250. The study drew on consultations with at least 4,230 young people (2,159 young men and 2,070 young women) across 148 countries, combining regional and national consultations, 281 focus-group discussions in 44 countries, 25 country-focused studies, and a global survey of youth-led peacebuilding organisations (*Missing Peace* study, 2018).

The study's central argument is that young people are commonly portrayed either as a threat to be contained or as a problem to be solved, and that both framings obscure the reality that the vast majority of young people are neither involved in nor at risk of violence and are frequently active agents in preventing it (*Missing Peace* study, 2018). It identifies youth exclusion - what it terms the "violence of exclusion" - as a form of structural and psychological harm in its own right, manifesting across six areas: political inclusion, economic inclusion, education, gender, injustice and human rights, and disengagement and reintegration (*Missing Peace* study, 2018).

The agenda is structured around five pillars, as defined in Resolution 2250 (*Missing Peace* study, 2018; KOMS, *Analysis of the UN YPS Agenda*, 2024). For the purposes of this report, each pillar is translated into illustrative local-level indicators relevant to municipal governance and youth participation:



1 Participation

DEFINITION

ensuring that young people's participation and views are taken into account in decision-making, from negotiations and violence prevention to peace agreements and public-policy processes.

LOCAL INDICATORS

Local indicators include reserved seats with voting rights on municipal advisory bodies, participatory budgeting for youth initiatives, and regular consultations prior to the adoption of local acts affecting young people.

2 Protection

DEFINITION

ensuring the protection of young civilians' lives and human rights, as well as the investigation and prosecution of crimes committed against them.

LOCAL INDICATORS

Local indicators include municipal protocols for protecting young activists from threats and hate speech, safe spaces within youth centres, and functioning mechanisms for reporting violence.

3 Prevention

DEFINITION

supporting young people in preventing violence and promoting tolerance and intercultural dialogue.

LOCAL INDICATORS

Local indicators include peer mediation programmes in schools, interethnic and inter-community dialogue initiatives, and the early identification of tensions through youth workers.

4 Partnership

DEFINITION

engaging young people, alongside community actors and UN bodies, in the development and implementation of peacebuilding strategies.

LOCAL INDICATORS

Local indicators include funded memoranda of cooperation between municipalities and youth or peacebuilding organisations, as well as regional and international exchanges of experience.

5 Disengagement and Reintegration

DEFINITION

investing in young people affected by armed conflict through employment opportunities, inclusive labour policies, and education that promotes a culture of peace.

LOCAL INDICATORS

Local indicators include reintegration programmes for young returnees, support for young peacebuilders in post-conflict and regional contexts, and dialogue programmes addressing online radicalisation.

04 Regional Context



The southern Serbian municipalities of Bujanovac, Preševo and Medveđa and North Kosovo* are geographically adjacent and historically interconnected, but this report treats them as parallel rather than identical contexts.

Ethnic Albanians constitute the majority population in Preševo and Bujanovac and a smaller share of the population in Medveđa, all within the Republic of Serbia. Serbia's Seven-Point Plan, formally known as the *Measures Required for the Affirmation of the Rights of Albanians in the Preševo Valley*, was intended to promote integration, security, economic recovery, language rights, judicial decentralisation, education, and health and social protection for this community.

As of the most recent assessment, the Plan has never been formally published in the *Official Gazette*, and implementation across all seven areas remains partial. Albanian representation in state institutions, such as the Ministry of Internal Affairs, border police and the judiciary, remains well below the community's share of the local population; hate speech targeting Albanians, including by current and former state officials, continues largely unaddressed; and the practice of "passivisation of addresses" has measurably affected the official population count used to calculate institutional representation quotas (Seven-Point-Plan report, 2024 – unpublished). In August 2024, Preševo Valley Albanians publicly protested under the banner "For Identity and Dignity", citing the same unresolved issues that the Plan had been intended to address more than a decade earlier (Seven-Point-Plan report, 2024 – unpublished).

It is also important to situate the issues affecting young people in the Preševo Valley within the broader national context. Serbia has a Law on Youth, a National Youth Strategy for 2023–2030 and a corresponding Action Plan for 2023–2025, which formally recognise several YPS-aligned objectives, including youth councils and Youth Offices at the local level, support for programmes aimed at improving youth security, and youth-dialogue mechanisms such as KOMS's periodic dialogues with the Prime Minister's Office (KOMS, *Analysis of the UN YPS Agenda*, 2024).

However, the KOMS analysis found that no Serbian law or public-policy document dedicated to national security gave specific attention to youth security; no state institution ran a programme focused exclusively on protecting young people from violence; and young people were not involved in drafting the national security strategy or

in security-sector reform. These findings were recorded despite provisions in the Youth Strategy calling for expert analyses of the security risks facing young people. According to the KOMS analysis, only one such analysis had been produced by 2023, with a target of two by 2025 (KOMS, *Analysis of the UN YPS Agenda*, 2024).

Kosovo's* constitutional and legal framework provides for extensive formal power-sharing arrangements, including reserved Assembly seats, guaranteed ministerial and deputy-ministerial positions, minimum judicial representation quotas, and dedicated bodies such as the Office for Community Affairs and the Consultative Council for Communities (AKTIV, *Non-Majority Rights in Kosovo*, 2025).

In practice, this institutional architecture has been substantially weakened since November 2022, when Kosovo* Serb police officers, judges, prosecutors and other officials resigned from Kosovo* institutions across the four northern municipalities, creating what monitoring organisations describe as a continuing representation vacuum (AKTIV, *Non-Majority Rights in Kosovo*, 2025; CASA, *Security Challenges in Northern Kosovo*, 2025).

The subsequent abolition of the Serbian dinar as a currency in use in Kosovo*, the closure of roughly 100 Serbia-administered institutions throughout 2024 and early 2025, and the full implementation in 2026 of the Law on Foreigners and the new Law on Citizenship have added a further, more acute layer of uncertainty. A large cohort of young people, disproportionately comprising those born outside Kosovo* between approximately 2000 and 2008, now face the practical loss of access to citizenship registration by descent once they turn 18 (NSI, *Access Denied*, 2025; CASA, *Final Monitoring Report*, June 2026).

Non-majority communities beyond Kosovo* Serbs—including Gorani, Roma, Ashkali, Egyptian, Bosniak and Turkish communities—face parallel but distinct challenges, generally concentrated around language access, employment quotas that exist on paper but are not effectively enforced, and youth outmigration driven by limited local opportunities (AKTIV, *Non-Majority Rights in Kosovo*, 2025).

Both cases involve minority or non-majority communities living adjacent to a kin-state, with formally guaranteed rights whose implementation continues to present challenges in practice. Community representatives in both contexts have also identified youth outmigration as an important concern linked to broader political, institutional and socio-economic conditions. At the same time, the two contexts differ in important respects and should not be treated as directly equivalent. Kosovo's* constitutional and legal framework establishes specific mechanisms for the representation and participation of non-majority communities, while the Seven-Point Plan provides a policy framework for addressing issues affecting the Albanian community in the Preševo Valley. The two contexts also face distinct legal and administrative challenges, including those associated with Kosovo's* 2026 citizenship and residence legislation, which do not have a direct equivalent in the current Preševo Valley context.

05 Thematic Findings by Pillar

Participation



The Seven-Point Plan's integration provisions call for proportional Albanian representation in state institutions, based on the community's share of the local population. The most recent available data show that representation falls well short of this objective across a range of institutions: Albanians hold roughly 23% of Ministry of Internal Affairs posts across the three municipalities, despite constituting a substantial share of the local population, while their representation is close to zero in specialised areas such as the border police, republic-level inspectorates and tax administration (Seven-Point-Plan report, 2024 – unpublished).

Judicial representation shows a similar pattern: 3 of 15 judges in Bujanovac, 2 deputy prosecutors and only 1 notary are Albanian. The Seven-Point-Plan report also documents cases of qualified Albanian candidates who applied repeatedly for judicial and prosecutorial positions without being appointed (Seven-Point-Plan report, 2024 - unpublished).

Youth-authored research on **police recruitment**, drawing on the multi-ethnic policing initiative launched in 2001, documents similar concerns from the perspective of potential applicants. While the initiative produced positive results in its early years, the number of newly recruited members of the Albanian community has remained very low in recent years, despite continued interest among potential candidates. The research also identifies language-related and other barriers in the selection process, while highlighting the importance of more representative policing for equal access to public-sector employment, trust in institutions and social cohesion (Youth story: *Employment of Albanians in the Police in Preševo, Bujanovac and Medveđa*).

The youth-authored research on **educational opportunities** identifies a further set of barriers affecting young people's educational and professional prospects. These include limited opportunities for higher education relevant to the needs of Albanian-speaking youth, difficulties related to diploma recognition, language barriers and limited employment opportunities. The research also points to a strong connection between educational choices and prospects for remaining in or returning to the local community, with many respondents reporting that they saw few opportunities to stay after completing their education (Youth alert report: *Educational Opportunities*).

The **Serbian as a non-native language research** identifies related challenges in language education. Young people report difficulties particularly with speaking, conversation and grammar, while participating teachers point to a lack of appropriate textbooks and teaching materials and a need for more instructional hours. The research also identifies differences in the availability of qualified teaching staff and highlights the importance of Serbian-language competence for everyday communication, education and access to institutions (Youth alert report:Serbian as a Non-Native Language in Bujanovac, Preševo and Medveđa).

At the national level, Serbia's Law on Youth and National Youth Strategy formally provide for youth councils, Youth

Offices and participatory mechanisms at the local level, with the Strategy's Action Plan targeting an increase in the share of local self-governments with an established youth council to 66% by 2025 (KOMS, *Analysis of the UN YPS Agenda*, 2024). The youth-authored research *Opportunities, Participation and Needs of Young People in the Municipality of Bujanovac* illustrates how these formal mechanisms are perceived at the local level. While most respondents were aware of the Youth Office, only a small number had used its premises or participated in its activities. The research calls for youth mechanisms to become more visible, accessible and functional, including through a dedicated space for young people, regular activities and greater youth involvement in their design and implementation, pointing to a gap between the formal existence of youth mechanisms and their practical accessibility and use (Youth alert report: *Opportunities, Participation and Needs of Young People in the Municipality of Bujanovac*).

Kosovo's* constitutional framework formally guarantees substantially more extensive participation mechanisms than those provided under Serbia's Seven-Point Plan: 20 reserved Assembly seats, two Deputy President posts, mandatory ministerial and deputy-ministerial representation for non-majority communities, the Committee on Rights and Interests of Communities, the Office for Community Affairs, and the Consultative Council for Communities (AKTIV, *Non-Majority Rights in Kosovo*, 2025). In practice, several of these mechanisms have been non-functional for the largest non-majority community since the mass resignations of November 2022. As of the report's publication, there were no Kosovo* Serb representatives on the Committee on Rights and Interests of Communities; the position of Director of the Office for Community Affairs had been vacant for years; and Kosovo* Serb participation in the Assembly and the governments of the four northern municipalities had effectively ceased between late 2022 and February 2025 (AKTIV, *Non-Majority Rights in Kosovo*, 2025; CASA, *Security Challenges in Northern Kosovo*, 2025).

Political representation among Kosovo* Serbs has, since 2022, been dominated by Srpska Lista, which NSI's 2025 Policy Task Group research describes as functioning as a de facto extension of official Belgrade. The same research points to growing community disappointment over the party's perceived failure to protect local interests following the 2022 institutional withdrawal and the boycott of the 2023 local elections (NSI, *Access Denied*, 2025). The 2023 mayoral elections in the four northern municipalities proceeded with an overall turnout of approximately 3.47%, resulting in the election of ethnic Albanian mayors in Serb-majority municipalities. A 2024 referendum to remove them subsequently failed amid a further boycott, with overall turnout of just 0.54% (CASA, *Security Challenges in Northern Kosovo*, 2025).

This pattern shifted in the February 2025 parliamentary elections, when six Kosovo* Serb political parties, including Srpska Lista, re-entered the electoral process and won nine Assembly seats. CASA described this as a pragmatic, if uncertain, recalibration towards institutional engagement rather than continued boycott (CASA, *Security Challenges in Northern Kosovo*, 2025). AKTIV's 2024 survey data capture the underlying attitudes to which this shift may be responding: 72% of Kosovo* Serb respondents said that there was no politician or political party in Kosovo* they trusted, while 91.2% said that Kosovo* was not moving in a positive direction (AKTIV, *Analiza Trendova* 2024).

Election-specific monitoring conducted by AKTIV and Democracy in Action during 2025 identified continued structural barriers to the participation of non-majority communities in the democratic process itself: the absence of targeted voter-education campaigns for non-majority communities; inconsistent and delayed availability of Serbian-language election information; non-functional sections of the Central Election Commission's Serbian-language website shortly before the elections; and an initial, later reversed, refusal to accredit journalists from Serbian-language media outlets (*CSO Report on Human Rights in Kosovo* 2025).

Other non-majority communities report comparable, though less acute, participation gaps. Gorani community representatives describe their political representation as largely ineffective, while the 10% public-sector employment quota for the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities exists in policy but lacks effective monitoring and enforcement (AKTIV, *Non-Majority Rights in Kosovo*, 2025). These participation challenges are also visible, in a different form, at the local youth level. Youth-authored research from Zubin Potok points to limited awareness and use of existing youth mechanisms, insufficient spaces and activities for young people, and a low perceived ability to influence local decision-making. While these findings concern a different level of participation from the electoral and institutional issues described above, they similarly illustrate the gap that can exist between formal opportunities for participation and their accessibility and use in practice (*Youth alert report:Youth in Zubin Potok: Lack of Activities and Opportunities for Participation*).

Protection

The Seven-Point Plan's "Security" section documents the continued use of derogatory ethnic language by state officials, including then-Minister Aleksandar Vulin's repeated public use, in May 2022, of a derogatory term for Albanians. The statements were published on the Serbian Ministry of Internal Affairs' website. A 2018 Court of Appeals ruling, in a separate case, had previously found the use of the same term to constitute hate speech (Seven-Point-Plan report, 2024 - unpublished). A *Media Monitoring Report on Hate Speech in Serbia*, covering the period from May 2022 to December 2023 and cited in the Seven-Point-Plan assessment, found ethnicity to be the second most common basis for recorded hate speech after gender, with Albanians being the most frequently targeted ethnic group.

A survey by NGO Aktiv found 19,7% of Preševo Valley respondents cited security as the area's biggest problem and 28,7% of young respondents said an improved local security situation would influence their decision to stay in Serbia rather than leave; the same survey found perceived security threats driven primarily by "incendiary/nationalist vocabulary of politicians and prominent social actors" (46,3%), ahead of political instability (24,4%) and the Belgrade–Pristina negotiation process (22,7%) (Seven-Point-Plan report, 2024 - unpublished/*From Shared Challenges to Shared Solutions*, 2023).

Separately, civil-society research has raised concerns about the practice of "passivisation of addresses", whereby the Ministry of Internal Affairs may determine that an individual no longer resides at their registered permanent address and consequently passivise that address. Research on the practice in Preševo, Bujanovac and Medveđa has documented its impact on members of the Albanian community, including individuals who spend part of the week in Kosovo* for work and are therefore temporarily absent from their registered addresses, as well as cases in which affected individuals were not provided with a written decision or learned of the passivisation only subsequently (Seven-Point-Plan report, 2024 – unpublished; YIHR, *Passivisation of Addresses of Albanians in the Preševo Valley as a Discriminatory Practice*, 2023).

The 2025 CSO *Report on Human Rights in Kosovo*, produced jointly by 42 CSOs, describes the security situation in North Kosovo* as having "remained volatile since mid-2022", with 2025 marked by continued contestation over authority in the Serb-majority north (CSO *Report on Human Rights in Kosovo* 2025). Incidents documented during the year include the Kosovo* Police's discovery in February 2025 of weapons, ammunition and uniforms bearing the insignia of the Serbian parallel structure "Civilna Zaštita" in Leposaviq/Leposavić; the seizure of weapons in Zvečan/Zveçan in June 2025 in an operation involving the Kosovo* Police, KFOR and EULEX; a grenade attack on the Kosovo Post building in Zvečan/Zveçan in April 2025; and a joint operation in April 2025 in which 16 individuals travelling from Kragujevac, Serbia, were detained, including four active members of Serbia's security services (CSO *Report on Human Rights in Kosovo* 2025).

In September 2025, a Kosovo* Serb officer serving in the Kosovo* Police was placed in pre-trial detention on suspicion of espionage for Serbia's security intelligence agency (CSO *Report on Human Rights in Kosovo* 2025). CASA's 2025 research found that a majority of Kosovo* Serbs rated the security situation as unsatisfactory, reported very low levels of trust in the police and oversight mechanisms, and identified the heavy presence of Kosovo* Police Special Operations Units, restrictions on essential supplies, and organised crime



as primary drivers of insecurity. Trust in KFOR, by contrast, remained comparatively higher (CASA, *Security Challenges in Northern Kosovo*, 2025).

AKTIV's 2024 survey data quantify this trend directly: Kosovo* Serb respondents rated the security situation at an average of 1.76 out of 5 in 2024, while 18.1% reported that their own safety or that of their family had been threatened during the preceding year, rising to 29.1% among respondents in North Kosovo* specifically (AKTIV, *Analiza Trendova* 2024).

The 2025 CSO *Report on Human Rights in Kosovo* documents a series of incidents involving minors in North Kosovo* during 2025. On 6 March, the Kosovo* Police detained six minors, approximately 14–16 years old, in North Mitrovica following an inter-ethnic altercation involving Serb, Bosniak and Albanian teenagers. Three were released shortly after a review of CCTV footage, while a Bosniak boy who remained in custody later alleged that he had been physically mistreated during questioning and questioned without access to a parent or lawyer. The incident prompted a public protest by parents on 8 March (*CSO Report on Human Rights in Kosovo* 2025).

On 23 May, according to the report, a Kosovo* Police officer grabbed a Kosovo* Serb high-school graduate by the neck during a traditional graduation parade in North Mitrovica. Police cited "provocations" by the student, while the report noted that they did not respond in the same manner to provocations by an Albanian individual nearby (*CSO Report on Human Rights in Kosovo* 2025). On 7 May, the Kosovo* Police detained a 17-year-old at a village event in Rapča/Rapçë for wearing a T-shirt displaying a map bearing the inscription "Dragaš, Kosovo and Metohija" in Cyrillic. On 1 September, two Kosovo* Serb minors, aged 15 and 16, from Zubin Potok were detained and fined following a school-bus inspection over T-shirts bearing nationalist slogans and Red Star Belgrade fan imagery. On 8 October, a 15-year-old was detained and fined €300 in North Mitrovica for wearing a hoodie bearing a Serbian gendarmerie emblem (*CSO Report on Human Rights in Kosovo* 2025).

The CSO Report documents these cases as part of a broader pattern involving restrictions on the display of Serbian national symbols, alongside similar incidents involving adults during the June 2025 Vidovdan commemorations at Gračanica/Graçanicë and the Gazimestan memorial (*CSO Report on Human Rights in Kosovo* 2025).

Following the resignation of more than 570 Kosovo* Serb police officers in November 2022, Kosovo* Police Special Operations Units, composed entirely of ethnic Albanian officers, became the primary security presence in the north. NSI's 2025 Policy Task Group research describes these units as widely perceived by the local Kosovo* Serb community as "invasive and counterproductive". The same research notes criticism that newly recruited Kosovo* Serb police officers largely come from outside North Kosovo* and are therefore perceived as lacking local legitimacy (NSI, *Access Denied*, 2025).

CASA's research similarly found recruitment efforts to be "largely ineffective" in rebuilding trust, given that most newly recruited Kosovo* Serb officers originate from areas outside the four northern municipalities (CASA, *Security Challenges in Northern Kosovo*, 2025). The Kosovo* Ombudsperson received 59 complaints concerning excessive use of police force in 2025, of which 25 were deemed admissible—a figure the CSO Report describes as significantly higher than the averages recorded in recent years. The Police Inspectorate received seven related cases, resulting in the temporary suspension of three officers (*CSO Report on Human Rights in Kosovo* 2025). A joint civil-society study conducted by five organisations, and cited across multiple sources, identified more than 14,000 social media posts related to the Kosovo* Police, including over 140 photographs depicting approximately 300 officers displaying illegal insignia or nationalist gestures (CASA, *Security Challenges in Northern Kosovo*, 2025).

A distinct and growing protection concern involves the practical loss of access to citizenship registration for individuals born outside Kosovo*, predominantly Kosovo* Serbs, once they turn 18 (CASA, *Final Monitoring Report*, June 2026; NSI, *Law on Foreigners and Vehicles*, 2026). NSI's 2025 research separately documents the closure of roughly 100 Serbia-administered institutions since 2022, including post offices, social work centres, pension and health-insurance branches, sports halls, and the North Mitrovica City Library. The report describes the cumulative effect as "de facto deinstitutionalization", which has disproportionately affected vulnerable groups, including older people, women and rural residents (NSI, *Access Denied*, 2025).

The citizenship-registration issue introduced above deserves closer attention because it is the single most

concrete and currently active finding in this report that is directly tied to a specific youth age threshold, and because it maps with unusual precision onto the YPS agenda's own definition of the population it seeks to protect. Under Article 32 of Kosovo's* 2013 Law on Citizenship, direct descendants of individuals who were citizens of the former Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and habitually resident in Kosovo* as of 1 January 1998 may acquire Kosovo* citizenship by descent, with no age limit specified in the law (CASA, *Final Monitoring Report*, June 2026).

In practice, however, an administrative instruction has long restricted this pathway to applicants under the age of 18, redirecting older applicants to the considerably more burdensome naturalisation procedure (CASA, *Final Monitoring Report*, June 2026; CASA, *Monitoring Report No. 2*, May 2026). The new Law No. 10/L-023 on Citizenship, in force since 22 May 2026, converts this administrative practice into an explicit statutory requirement: children born abroad may register as citizens by descent only until the age of 18, with a narrow exception extending the age limit to 23 in cases of statelessness (CASA, *Legal and Policy Analysis of the 2026 Law on Citizenship*, May 2026).

CASA's monitoring indicates that the affected population is disproportionately Kosovo* Serb. Many were born abroad between approximately 2000 and 2008 to parents with unresolved or delayed civil status, a pattern CASA links to "displacement, reliance on Serbian administrative structures, weaker integration into Kosovo institutions" during that period (CASA, *Legal and Policy Analysis of the 2026 Law on Citizenship*, May 2026).

As noted in Section 3, Resolution 2250 defines youth as persons aged 18–29. The citizenship law's cutoff falls at the exact lower boundary of that range, meaning that the population excluded from registration by descent is, by definition, entering the YPS-defined youth category at the same moment that access to this pathway is lost. A young person who turns 18 without having completed registration as a minor therefore faces more than a bureaucratic inconvenience: they enter adulthood with the legal status of a "foreigner" in the country of their birth or lifelong residence, raising direct concerns under the YPS Protection pillar.

CASA's monitoring annexes provide illustrative, dated cases from 2026. These include an 18-year-old born in Novi Pazar, Serbia, who was denied registration despite one parent and two siblings holding Kosovo* IDs, redirected to naturalisation, and told that the office "awaits new instructions from Pristina" (CASA, *Monitoring Report No. 1*, April 2026); a 26-year-old born in Novi Pazar who has lived in Kosovo* since birth and whose parents both hold Kosovo* citizenship, but who was denied direct registration and redirected to naturalisation (CASA, *Monitoring Report No. 2*, May 2026); and a 23-year-old born in Western Europe and studying in North Mitrovica whose Serbian documents required apostille certification that, according to the report, northern civil registry offices did not accept from foreign consular offices (CASA, *Kosovo Serbs' Access to Documentation*, 2025).

CASA's June 2026 survey of affected applicants found that only 11.4% had fully resolved their status by the end of the three-month transitional window, while 72.2% reported receiving no communication from the authorities after submitting an application (CASA, *Final Monitoring Report*, June 2026).

Taken together, these findings provide the broader security context within which young people from minority and non-majority communities experience the YPS Protection and security dimension.



Prevention

At the regional level, Serbia is a party to the agreement establishing the Regional Youth Cooperation Office (RYCO), whose stated mission includes supporting regional youth exchange and the exchange of ideas, based on the values of coexistence, tolerance, respect for human rights and diversity, as well as a commitment to inclusion and security (KOMS, *Analysis of the UN YPS Agenda*, 2024). RYCO represents an established regional mechanism closely aligned with the YPS Prevention pillar, particularly through its emphasis on intercultural dialogue, youth exchange and cooperation across the Western Balkans. While its mandate is regional, RYCO-supported initiatives provide opportunities to translate these objectives into local and cross-community engagement, including among young people from Bujanovac and Presevo and North Kosovo*. In this sense, the regional framework complements locally focused efforts to strengthen dialogue, mutual understanding and cooperation among young people across communities.

Serbia's National Youth Strategy 2023–2030 formally commits to establishing a "network of peer support for young people who are victims of violence or are exposed to the risk of becoming one" and to developing "an online tool for early signalling of a risk situation" (KOMS, *Analysis of the UN YPS Agenda*, 2024). These commitments are relevant to the YPS Prevention pillar. However, KOMS's analysis notes that Serbia does not have a national security strategy specifically focused on young people and that expert analyses of security risks facing young people remain limited: according to the analysis, one such assessment had been conducted by 2023, against a target of two by 2025 (KOMS, *Analysis of the UN YPS Agenda*, 2024). The sources reviewed for this report do not provide evidence on whether the peer-support network or early-warning tool has been implemented specifically in Bujanovac and Preševo.

On the Kosovo* side, the clearest documented example of inter-community dialogue is the Barabar Forum, held in Pristina in March 2025. The event brought together more than 30 participants, including representatives of the Kosovo* Police and the Ombudsperson Institution, women's rights activists, and civil society representatives from Kosovo* Albanian, Kosovo* Serb, Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities to address gender-based violence and femicide across communities (*CSO Report on Human Rights in Kosovo* 2025). The Forum represents a concrete inter-community dialogue mechanism; however, it was adult-led, focused specifically on gender-based violence rather than on youth or inter-community tensions more broadly, and is documented as a single event rather than as part of a sustained programme.

At the local level, the sources reviewed provide limited evidence of established Prevention mechanisms such as peer mediation in schools, structured inter-ethnic youth dialogue or early identification of tensions through youth workers. Instead, the youth-authored research points primarily to a need for stronger opportunities for intercultural contact. Research on Serbian as a non-native language highlights young people's interest in more practical communication and joint activities with Serbian-speaking peers and recommends extracurricular and intercultural activities connecting young people from different communities (Youth alert report: *Serbian as a Non-Native Language in Bujanovac, Preševo and Medveđa*). Similarly, research on educational opportunities found that at least 14 of 17 surveyed students wanted more joint activities with peers from other communities, including sports, creative and educational programmes, excursions and joint projects (Youth alert report: *Educational Opportunities for Young People from the Albanian Community in Preševo and Bujanovac*).

Notably, KOMS's recommendations concerning Serbia's foreign policy explicitly call for encouraging the participation of young people in strengthening dialogue between young people from Serbia and Kosovo* (KOMS, *Analysis of the UN YPS Agenda*, 2024). This recommendation reinforces the relevance of sustained cross-community youth dialogue within the YPS Prevention pillar and is consistent with the need for stronger opportunities for intercultural contact identified in the local-level evidence reviewed in this report.



Partnerships

The clearest partnership documented in the Seven-Point-Plan report is the multi-ethnic policing initiative, launched by the Serbian Ministry of Interior in cooperation with the OSCE following the 2001 conflict. Youth-authored research on police recruitment credits the initiative with positive early results, although its momentum appears to have diminished in more recent recruitment cycles (Seven-Point-Plan report, 2024 – unpublished; Youth alert report:Employment of Albanians in the Police in Preševo, Bujanovac and Medveđa).Civic Initiatives' own convening role is evident throughout the Seven-Point-Plan report: its meetings with Albanian representatives in southern Serbia generated specific findings reflected in the report, including the language barriers faced by local civil society organisations when applying for funding and the repeated exclusion of qualified Albanian candidates from judicial appointments (Seven-Point-Plan report, 2024 – unpublished). Economic partnerships appear more limited still: the Coordination Body for the Municipalities of Preševo, Bujanovac and Medveđa has published subsidy calls since 2012, but reporting has been irregular, and no programme specifically targeting foreign or diaspora investment is documented, despite acknowledged interest from the diaspora (Seven-Point-Plan report, 2024 – unpublished).

At the national and regional levels, KOMS's analysis identifies several mechanisms relevant to the YPS Partnership pillar. These include the agreement establishing the Regional Youth Cooperation Office (RYCO), which forms part of the framework referenced by Serbia's Youth Strategy, as well as the Permanent Expert Team for EU Youth Dialogue, established at the Youth Council, and continued support for youth delegates at the United Nations (KOMS, *Analysis of the UN YPS Agenda*, 2024).

At the local level, the youth-authored report *Opportunities, Participation and Needs of Young People in the Municipality of Bujanovac* points to opportunities for strengthening local-level youth participation and cooperation. While formal mechanisms such as the Youth Office and Youth Council exist, the findings indicate limited engagement with them among the young people surveyed. The report calls for better information about the work of the Youth Office, more regular consultations with young people, a stronger and more transparent Youth Council, and the establishment of a permanent and functional space for young people. It also records a proposal for a multicultural youth centre where young people from different communities could participate in activities together (Youth Alert report: *Opportunities, Participation and Needs of Young People in the Municipality of Bujanovac*).

AKTIV's report notes that the Committee on Rights and Interests of Communities, formally a partnership mechanism linking community representatives with government and international actors, currently has no Kosovo* Serb community representatives through whom such engagement can take place. Similarly, the Office for Community Affairs, which is intended to coordinate with government bodies and international organisations on community-related issues, has had a vacant director position for years (AKTIV, *Non-Majority Rights in Kosovo*, 2025).

Where the AKTIV report does identify functioning

partnership initiatives, they appear to be consistently donor-driven. Examples include the VocUp language-learning platform, funded by IOM, UNMIK and the UK Embassy; the Balkanistics programme supporting BCS-language education at the University of Pristina; and TİKA's renovation of the Turkish Language and Literature Department at Hasan Prishtina University (AKTIV, *Non-Majority Rights in Kosovo*, 2025).

NSI's research on Kosovo* Serb-owned businesses in North Kosovo* documents a related partnership failure at the economic level: 52.4% of surveyed business owners said that the Kosovo* government does not provide a favourable business environment for businesses across all communities, while none said that the environment specifically favours Kosovo* Serb-owned businesses. The Development Fund for the North, intended as a joint funding mechanism drawing on customs revenues from northern border crossings, has also been left without adequate revenue due to continued restrictions on imports of Serbian goods (NSI, *Economic Hurdles*, 2025; NSI, *Access Denied*, 2025).

At the institutional–civil society level, five northern civil society organisations—NGO Aktiv, CASA, ACDC, InTER and NSI—formally suspended their cooperation with the EU's rule-of-law mission (EULEX) in October 2024 over the mission's perceived failure to respond adequately to the alleged mistreatment of a detained North Mitrovica resident. This provides an unusually direct illustration of a civil society partnership breaking down over perceived institutional unresponsiveness (CASA, *Security Challenges in Northern Kosovo*, 2025).

The clearest positive example under the Partnerships pillar in the Kosovo* source set is the March 2025 Barabar Forum on gender-based violence, which brought together the Kosovo* Police, the Ombudsperson Institution, women's rights activists, and CSO representatives from five different communities in a concrete multi-actor, multi-community partnership. However, as noted previously, this was a single dialogue event rather than a standing partnership mechanism, and it was not specifically focused on young people (*CSO Report on Human Rights in Kosovo* 2025).

Across both case studies, the sources reviewed suggest that many of the documented partnership activities involving young people and civil society are project-based and supported by international organisations or external donors, rather than embedded in permanent local cooperation structures. While formal youth and community-participation mechanisms exist in both contexts, the evidence reviewed provides limited examples of sustained, institutionalised partnerships between municipalities and youth or peacebuilding organisations.

Disengagement and Reintegration

The clearest Disengagement and Reintegration case in the entire source set is the unresolved status of the roughly 570 Kosovo* Serb police officers and approximately 100 judges, prosecutors and administrative staff who resigned from Kosovo* institutions in November 2022 (CASA, *Security Challenges in Northern Kosovo*, 2025). CASA's analysis frames judicial reintegration specifically as "not constrained by legal barriers", making it "one of the few areas where progress depends solely on political will", in contrast to police reinstatement, which the Kosovo* government has resisted on the grounds that individuals who voluntarily resigned cannot be reinstated under existing law (CASA, *Security Challenges in Northern Kosovo*, 2025).

NSI's 2025 Policy Task Group research reaches a starker conclusion: participants judged the reintegration of Kosovo* Serbs into the police, judiciary and municipal institutions in the north as "deeply unlikely", not because individuals are unwilling, but because "structural and political conditions no longer support meaningful participation" (NSI, *Access Denied*, 2025). Both sources agree that the recruitment of new Kosovo* Serb officers, while numerically real (74 additional non-majority officers deployed from mid-2023, including 45 Serbs), has been widely perceived locally as symbolic rather than substantive reintegration, since most new recruits originate from outside the four northern municipalities (CASA, *Security Challenges in Northern Kosovo*, 2025; NSI, *Access Denied*, 2025).

The 2025 CSO *Report* documents an active, functioning DDR-type programme distinct from the ethnic reintegration question above: Kosovo's* Correctional Service runs rehabilitation and deradicalisation programming for individuals convicted of terrorism-related offences, combining security containment with anger-management training, deradicalisation curricula and vocational education. As of the 2025 reporting period, 168 individuals had passed through this system, with only 16 remaining in custody under enhanced security regimes, described by the report as "a shift from large-scale detention to long-term reintegration management", albeit one in which authorities acknowledge persistent ideological resistance among some participants (CSO *Report on Human Rights in Kosovo* 2025).

For both case studies, the evidence overwhelmingly concerns communities losing young people rather than reintegrating them. AKTIV's 2024 survey found that two-thirds (66%) of Kosovo* Serb respondents said that someone in their immediate circle had left Kosovo* in the previous year, rising to 70.9% in the northern municipalities; 77.1% of those who knew someone who had left said that the departures included primary-school-aged children (AKTIV, *Analiza Trendova* 2024). Looking ahead, only 47.3% of respondents said that they saw themselves living in Kosovo* in five years, while 31.8% said that they would leave "if given the opportunity", and a further 20.3% said outright that they did not see themselves remaining (AKTIV, *Analiza Trendova* 2024). The leading reasons cited were political instability and the lack of respect for Serb rights in Kosovo*, ahead of personal security and economic uncertainty (AKTIV, *Analiza Trendova* 2024).

NSI's separate 2025 survey of Kosovo* Serb-owned businesses in North Kosovo* corroborates this pattern from an economic perspective: 36% of Kosovo* Serb respondents in a 2024 North/South Mitrovica poll said that they were considering leaving Kosovo*, while 45.2% of surveyed Kosovo* Serb-owned businesses said that they planned to cease operations in the near future, most commonly citing "policies of Kosovo's institutions" as the reason (NSI, *Economic Hurdles*, 2025).

On the municipalities of Bujanovac, Preševo and Medveđa side, the Seven-Point-Plan report documents continued outmigration among young Albanians following the completion of education and cites the 2024 protest under the banner "For Identity and Dignity", in which diploma recognition and access to employment were among the grievances raised (Seven-Point-Plan report, 2024 – unpublished). Youth-authored research on educational opportunities provides complementary evidence from the perspective of young people themselves. It identifies limited opportunities for higher education relevant to the needs of Albanian-speaking youth, diploma recognition and employment prospects among the factors shaping educational and professional choices. Of the 15 respondents who gave a concrete answer, 11 reported that they saw insufficient or very limited opportunities to remain in their community after completing their education, while some in-

dicated that they would consider staying or returning after their studies if suitable employment and professional-development opportunities were available (Youth Alert report: *Educational Opportunities for Young People from the Albanian Community in Preševo and Bujanovac*).

NSI's research on the closure of roughly 100 Serbia-administered institutions since 2022, including postal services, pension and health-insurance branches, and cultural and sports institutions. It identifies these closures alongside other measures—including the Central Bank of Kosovo's 2024 regulation affecting the use of the Serbian dinar and restrictions on imports of Serbian goods—as contributing to increasing practical and economic pressures on the Kosovo* Serb community (NSI, *Access Denied*, 2025; NSI, *Economic Hurdles*, 2025). AKTIV's public-opinion research illustrates the perceived impact of one of these measures: 48.1% of Kosovo* Serb respondents rated the impact of the dinar regulation on them as "very bad", while a further 31.6% rated it as "bad" (AKTIV, *Analiza Trendova* 2024).

06 Cross-cutting Analysis

Where the two contexts converge

Formal architecture outpaces practical function, in both directions. This finding held in the original draft and is, if anything, even more strongly evidenced now. Kosovo's* constitutional power-sharing framework is considerably more elaborate than Serbia's Seven-Point Plan, yet both produce similar practical shortfalls: vacant offices, unfilled quotas and representation gaps that persist for years without institutional correction (AKTIV, *Non-Majority Rights in Kosovo*, 2025; Seven-Point-Plan report, 2024 – unpublished). The lesson is that architectural sophistication is not in itself protective; what matters is whether a mechanism is adequately resourced, politically supported and actually staffed.

Youth outmigration functions as the shared, most consistently cited symptom. Every institutional source addressing either community—the Seven-Point-Plan report, AKTIV's trend survey, NSI's business and deinstitutionalisation research, and the youth-authored pieces themselves—independently identifies outmigration, or the intention to leave, as a leading indicator of unresolved status-related issues (AKTIV, *Analiza Trendova* 2024; NSI, *Economic Hurdles*, 2025; Seven-Point-Plan report, 2024 – unpublished; Youth story: Educational Opportunities). This convergence across genuinely independent sources, produced by different organisations for different purposes, is one of the report's more reliable findings, precisely because it was not solicited by any single study designed to identify it.

Legal and administrative precarity as an everyday condition rather than a one-off event. In the Preševo Valley, this is reflected in issues such as address passivisation and difficulties with diploma recognition; in Kosovo*, it is reflected in challenges related to citizenship, legal identity and the recognition or registration of certain documents issued within Serbia-administered systems (CASA, Kosovo Serbs' Access to Documentation and Legal Identity, 2025; Seven-Point-Plan report, 2024 – unpublished). Although the legal and institutional circumstances differ, both contexts illustrate how prolonged administrative barriers and uncertainty can affect access to rights and services and, over time, contribute to diminished trust in institutions.

Prevention and Partnership emerge as areas where sustained institutionalisation remains limited in both contexts. The evidence reviewed identifies a range of relevant regional, national and local initiatives, including youth exchanges, cross-community projects and dialogue activities. However, fewer examples are found of permanent, locally embedded mechanisms through which young people themselves participate continuously in intercultural dialogue, violence prevention or structured partnerships with public institutions. The evidence therefore points less to an absence of Prevention and Partnership activity than to the challenge of translating individual programmes, projects and events into sustained local structures.

Where the two contexts diverge

Acuity and pace. The developments documented in Kosovo* in 2026—including the full implementation of the Law on Foreigners and the adoption of the new Law on Citizenship—introduced time-sensitive legal and administrative pressures with direct implications for young people and other affected residents. In particular, the new citizenship framework introduced an explicit age threshold affecting certain persons born outside Kosovo* who had not acquired citizenship by descent before reaching the age of 18. No directly comparable, time-bound legislative change is identified in the evidence reviewed for the Preševo Valley, where challenges such as judicial underrepresentation and diploma recognition are documented instead as longer-term, structural issues that have persisted over many years.

Security institutions as a source of perceived insecurity. In North Kosovo*, Kosovo Police, including its special units, is frequently identified in the sources reviewed as a source of concern among members of the Kosovo* Serb community, alongside documented allegations and specific incidents involving minors (CSO *Report on Human Rights in Kosovo* 2025; NSI, *Access Denied*, 2025). The material reviewed for the Preševo Valley does not document a comparable pattern of youth-specific detention or use-of-force incidents. Instead, the security concerns identified in the Seven-Point-Plan assessment focus more prominently on inflammatory rhetoric, hate speech and broader questions of representation and trust in state institutions (Seven-Point-Plan report, 2024 – unpublished).

Political agency and tactical alternation. Kosovo Serb political representation shows a documented pattern of deliberate boycott followed by deliberate re-engagement (the 2022 institutional withdrawal, the 2023–2024 election boycotts, the February 2025 re-entry), a strategic choice made collectively by community leadership, distinct from simple exclusion (CASA, Security Challenges in Northern Kosovo, 2025; NSI, Access Denied, 2025). By contrast, the sources reviewed for the Preševo Valley do not document a comparable pattern of coordinated withdrawal by Albanian representatives from Serbian institutions. Instead, the concerns documented there centre primarily on underrepresentation, barriers to recruitment and appointment, and the implementation of existing integration commitments (Seven-Point-Plan report, 2024 – unpublished).

07 Recommendations

Recommendations are organised by YPS pillar, and each is assigned to the duty-bearer(s) best placed to act on it. Recommendations directed at Kosovo* institutions draw on and, where relevant, consolidate proposals already made by AKTIV and CASA in their respective reports; recommendations directed at Serbian institutions draw on the Seven-Point-Plan assessment and KOMS's national youth-policy analysis. This report's contribution is to organise these recommendations through a youth-specific, comparative lens rather than to develop entirely new proposals where well-evidenced recommendations already exist.

Participation

Municipality of Bujanovac / Serbian government

Strengthen the capacity and resources of the Youth Office to serve as an accessible and functional space for young people, including through dedicated programming space, a regularly published activity calendar, and clear opportunities for young people to participate in municipal consultations and local decision-making processes.

Government of Serbia

Strengthen the implementation of the Seven-Point Plan's commitments regarding the representation of Albanians in public institutions in the municipalities of Bujanovac, Preševo and Medveđa, including in public-sector employment and the judiciary, through clearly defined targets, regular monitoring and transparent annual reporting on progress.

Government of Kosovo

Fill the vacant Office for Community Affairs director post and ensure the Committee on Rights and Interests of Communities has functioning Serb community representation, as both are currently non-operational participation channels that exist only on paper.

Central Election Commission (Kosovo*)

Ensure the availability of accessible and fully functioning Serbian-language election information, accreditation for Serbian-language media, and targeted voter outreach to non-majority communities ahead of future election cycles

Protection

Kosovo* Police / Police Inspectorate of Kosovo*

Strengthen safeguards governing police interactions with minors, including through clear and publicly accessible procedures that ensure appropriate protections and the presence of a parent, guardian or other authorised professional during questioning, in accordance with applicable legal standards and child-protection principles.

Government of Kosovo / Ministry of Internal Affairs

Restore the Article 32 principle in practice, recognise citizenship by descent for applicants over 18 who can demonstrate parental entitlement, rather than defaulting to naturalisation, and clarify the relationship between the new Law on Citizenship's Articles 6, 30, and 31 as CASA has already recommended (CASA, Legal and Policy Analysis of the 2026 Law on Citizenship, May 2026; CASA, Final Monitoring Report, June 2026).

Government of Serbia

Take consistent institutional measures to address the use of derogatory ethnic language by public officials and promote compliance with applicable anti-discrimination and hate-speech standards, taking into account relevant domestic court jurisprudence, including the 2018 Court of Appeals ruling.

International actors (EU, OSCE)

Support the introduction of body-worn cameras for Kosovo* Police units operating in non-majority areas, as recommended by EULEX's own 2025 review of use-of-force cases (CSO *Report on Human Rights in Kosovo* 2025).

Prevention

RYCO / relevant central and local institutions

Build on existing RYCO-supported initiatives involving young people from the municipalities of Bujanovac, Preševo and Medveđa and municipalities in North Kosovo* by supporting sustained cross-community youth exchange, dialogue and cooperation beyond individual project cycles, with particular attention to creating longer-term links between young people, civil society organisations and local institutions.

Ministry of Education (Serbia) / relevant local institutions
Support the development of extracurricular and intercultural activities that bring together young people from Albanian- and Serbian-speaking communities, including opportunities for language learning, joint activities and peer exchange, building on the needs and recommendations identified by young people in the municipalities of Bujanovac, Preševo and Medveđa.

Civil society organisations (both contexts)
Build on and replicate dialogue initiatives such as the Barabar Forum by creating more regular multi-community spaces for exchange, with young people meaningfully involved alongside civil society and other relevant community actors.

Partnerships

Municipalities (both contexts) / donor community
Build on existing project-based partnerships, including initiatives such as VocUp, Balkanistics and TİKA-supported programmes, by exploring opportunities for longer-term cooperation, co-financing and clearly defined municipal contributions, with the aim of strengthening local ownership and supporting the sustainability of successful activities beyond individual project cycles.

Government of Kosovo*
Restore and expand cooperation with independent monitoring bodies, including by revising the restrictive 2024 monitoring agreement governing KRCT's access to correctional facilities, as a means of strengthening institutional partnership with civil society and independent oversight more broadly.

EU-facilitated Dialogue
Include the unresolved status of former Kosovo* Serb police and judicial personnel in the EU-facilitated Dialogue, with a focus on identifying legally viable pathways to restoring meaningful Kosovo* Serb representation in Kosovo* police and judicial institutions.

Disengagement & Reintegration

Government of Kosovo*
Prioritise the judicial reintegration of the roughly 100 Kosovo* Serb judges, prosecutors and court staff who resigned in November 2022, as this represents the clearest and most immediately actionable area for progress within this pillar (CASA, *Security Challenges in Northern Kosovo*, 2025).

Government of Serbia / Government of Kosovo*
Address the specific drivers of youth outmigration identified in AKTIV's survey—political instability and lack of respect for rights—rather than treating outmigration as a purely economic phenomenon to be addressed through subsidies alone

International donors
Fund targeted economic diversification and youth employment programming in both regions, informed by CASA's and NSI's finding that Serbian-owned businesses in North Kosovo cite institutional policy, not global economic conditions, as their primary reason for planned closure (NSI, Economic Hurdles, 2025).

08 Annex

Annex A: Full Source List

Institutional monitoring and legal analysis

1. Civic Initiatives, *Report on the Implementation Status of the Seven-Point-Plan*, August 2024 — unpublished; facts and data used with permission. Cited throughout as: Seven-Point-Plan report, 2024 — unpublished.
2. NGO AKTIV, *Legal Guarantees vs. Everyday Realities: Non-Majority Rights in Kosovo*, March 2025. Cited as: AKTIV, Non-Majority Rights in Kosovo, 2025.
3. NGO AKTIV, *Analiza Trendova 2024* (Trend Analysis 2024), December 2024, N=503 Kosovo Serb respondents. Cited as: AKTIV, Analiza Trendova 2024.
4. NGO CASA, *Monitoring Report No. 1: Implementation of the Law on Foreigners*, 9 April 2026. Cited as: CASA, Monitoring Report No. 1, April 2026.
5. NGO CASA, *Monitoring Report No. 2: Implementation of the Law on Foreigners*, 15 May 2026. Cited as: CASA, Monitoring Report No. 2, May 2026.
6. NGO CASA, *Final Monitoring Report: Implementation of the Law on Foreigners*, 15 June 2026. Cited as: CASA, Final Monitoring Report, June 2026.
7. NGO CASA, *Legal and Policy Analysis of the 2026 Law on Citizenship of Kosovo*, May 2026. Cited as: CASA, Legal and Policy Analysis of the 2026 Law on Citizenship, May 2026.
8. NGO CASA, *Kosovo-Serbs' Access to Documentation and Legal Identity*, 2025. Cited as: CASA, Kosovo-Serbs' Access to Documentation, 2025.
9. NGO CASA, *Security Challenges in Northern Kosovo through Institutional Participation of the Serbian Community*, 2025. Cited as: CASA, Security Challenges in Northern Kosovo, 2025.
10. New Social Initiative (NSI), *Access Denied: Deinstitutionalization of the Kosovo Serbs*, June 2025. Cited as: NSI, Access Denied, 2025.
11. New Social Initiative (NSI), *Economic Hurdles Amid Altered Dynamic: Difficult Times for Businesses in Northern Kosovo*, February 2025. Cited as: NSI, Economic Hurdles, 2025.
12. New Social Initiative (NSI), *Implementation of the Law on Foreigners and the Law on Vehicles in Kosovo*, March 2026. Cited as: NSI, Law on Foreigners and Vehicles, 2026.
13. Human Rights Network Kosovo (42 CSOs), *Civil Society Report on Human Rights in Kosovo in 2025*, May 2026. Cited as: CSO Report on Human Rights in Kosovo 2025.
14. UNFPA / UN Peacebuilding Support Office, *The Missing Peace: Independent Progress Study on Youth, Peace and Security*, lead author Graeme Simpson, 2018. Cited as: Missing Peace study, 2018.
15. National Youth Council of Serbia (KOMS), *Analysis of the UN Youth, Peace and Security Agenda Implementation in the Republic of Serbia*, Boban Stojanović, Ana Šljukić, Tamara Jovanović, Belgrade, 2024. Cited as: KOMS, Analysis of the UN YPS Agenda, 2024.

Youth-authored local research and advocacy

16. Bicycle Infrastructure in Preševo: Between Plans, Citizens' Needs and Institutional Responsibilities — referenced in the Regional Context only; not cited in the pillar findings.
17. Employment of Albanians in the Police in Preševo, Bujanovac and Medveđa — cited as: Youth Alert report: Employment of Albanians in the Police in Preševo, Bujanovac and Medveđa.
18. Educational Opportunities for Young People from the Albanian Community in Preševo and Bujanovac — cited as: Youth Alert report: Educational Opportunities for Young People from the Albanian Community in Preševo and Bujanovac.
19. Opportunities, Participation and Needs of Young People in the Municipality of Bujanovac — cited as: Youth Alert report: Opportunities, Participation and Needs of Young People in the Municipality of Bujanovac.
20. Serbian as a Non-Native Language in Bujanovac, Preševo and Medveđa — cited as: Youth Alert report: Serbian as a Non-Native Language in Bujanovac, Preševo and Medveđa.
21. Young People in the Municipality of Zubin Potok — cited as: Youth Alert report: Young People in the Municipality of Zubin Potok.
22. Road and Pedestrian Infrastructure in the Municipality of Štrpce — referenced briefly in the Regional Context only.
23. Municipal Waste and Public Spaces in North Mitrovica — referenced briefly in the Regional Context only.

Annex B: Illustrative Case Excerpts

The following are drawn from CASA's published monitoring annexes and this report's youth-authored source material, reproduced here in paraphrased summary form per the report's copyright practice (Section 2).

Citizenship registration (CASA, Monitoring Reports No. 1–2, 2026):

Kosovo* Serb male, 18, born in Novi Pazar, Serbia — denied direct registration despite one parent and two siblings holding Kosovo* IDs; redirected to the naturalisation procedure; the office was reportedly awaiting further instructions from Pristina.

Kosovo* Serb female, 23, born in Western Europe, university student in North Mitrovica — mother has valid Kosovo* civil status, but the applicant's Serbian documents required apostille certification, which northern civil registry offices did not accept when issued by foreign consular offices.

Kosovo* Serb male, 26, born in Novi Pazar, resident in Kosovo* since birth, with both parents holding Kosovo* citizenship — denied registration by origin and redirected to the naturalisation procedure.

This report was developed through participant-led desk research conducted within the framework of the project "Next-Gen Balkans: Dealing with the Future."

*This designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.