Stakeholders of (De)-Radicalisation in Kosovo

D3.1 Country Report

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List of abbreviations

ATRC	Advocacy Training and Resource Centre
BIK	Islamic Community Association in Kosovo
CBM	Community Building Mitrovica
CDF	Community Development Fund
DPRRI	Division for Prevention and Reintegration of Radicalised Persons
EU	European Union
GTI	Global Terrorism Index
IS	The so-called Islamic State
KCS	Kosovo Correctional Services
KCSS	Kosovar Centre for Security Studies
KFOR	NATO Force in Kosovo
KRCT	Kosova Rehabilitation Centre for Torture Victims
MCSC	Municipal Community Safety Councils
MIA	Ministry of Internal Affairs
MLSW	Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare
MoJ	Ministry of Justice
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
P/CVE	Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism
R&R	Rehabilitation and Reintegration
UN	United Nations
UNMIK	United Nations Interim Administration in Kosovo
UNSCR 1244	United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244

About the Project

D.Rad is a comparative study of radicalisation and polarisation in Europe and beyond. It aims to identify the actors, networks, and wider social contexts driving radicalisation, particularly among young people in urban and peri-urban areas. D.Rad conceptualizes this through the I-GAP spectrum (injustice-grievance-alienation-polarisation) with the goal of moving towards measurable evaluations of de-radicalisation programmes. Our intention is to identify the building blocks of radicalisation, which include a sense of being victimized; a sense of being thwarted or lacking agency in established legal and political structures; and coming under the influence of "us vs them" identity formulations.

D.Rad benefits from an exceptional breadth of backgrounds. The project spans national contexts including the UK, France, Italy, Germany, Poland, Hungary, Finland, Slovenia, Bosnia, Serbia, Kosovo, Israel, Iraq, Jordan, Turkey, Georgia, Austria, and several minority nationalisms. It bridges academic disciplines ranging from political science and cultural studies to social psychology and artificial intelligence. Dissemination methods include D.Rad labs, D.Rad hubs, policy papers, academic workshops, visual outputs and digital galleries. As such, D.Rad establishes a rigorous foundation to test practical interventions geared to prevention, inclusion and de-radicalisation.

With the possibility of capturing the trajectories of seventeen nations and several minority nations, the project will provide a unique evidence base for the comparative analysis of law and policy as nation states adapt to new security challenges. The process of mapping these varieties and their link to national contexts will be crucial in uncovering strengths and weaknesses in existing interventions. Furthermore, D.Rad accounts for the problem that processes of radicalisation often occur in circumstances that escape the control and scrutiny of traditional national frameworks of justice. The participation of AI professionals in modelling, analyzing and devising solutions to online radicalisation will be central to the project's aims.

Executive summary/Abstract

This report examines and overviews Kosovo's main agents of radicalisation and stakeholders of de-radicalisation, including a description of the country's context, key individuals and processes influencing radicalisation as well as de-radicalisation. This report also explores the main factors that have given rise to radicalisation within the country and the emerging trends in the area of violent extremism. In doing so, the report focuses on main cases of radicalisation in Kosovo which consist of Jihadism and ultra ethno-nationalism. Even though the report highlights the latter as a growing threat, it points out that until now disproportionate research and policy focus has been placed on religious-inspired extremism. As a result, ultra ethno-nationalism has been largely left unexplored and to a large extend left unaddressed as a consequence.

In building up Kosovo's context of radicalisation and de-radicalisation, it is considered important to acknowledge the country's unique situation as a fairly new state, with a recent history that has been marked with various transformative processes, including a transition from war to peace, from authoritarianism to democracy, and the ongoing process of consolidating statehood and international subjectivity. These macro-level developments are relevant in understanding radicalisation and de-radicalisation processes even at the community and individual level since forging a national identity is often tightly linked with the radicalised individuals' struggle to find belonging, deal with the legacy of conflict, and learn how to manage high expectations in Kosovo's newly-independent and democratized society.

1. Introduction

This report aims to explore and analyze the main radicalisation agents and de-radicalisation stakeholders in Kosovo as part of the Work Package "Mapping Stakeholders and Situations of Radicalisation" of the D.Rad project. For the purposes of this report, *radicalisation* is defined as a process involving the increasing rejection of established law, order, and politics and the active pursuit of alternatives, in the form of politically-driven violence or justification of violence; by *de-radicalisation* we mean processes countering such rejection at individual (micro), organisational (meso), or societal (macro) levels resulting in a shift from violent to nonviolent strategies and tactics; de-radicalisation might or might not be an outcome of de-radicalisation programmes. Throughout this report, *extremism* is defined as an incitement of violence and glorification of such violence through the dehumanization of the religious or the ethnic other.

Extremism can take the form of Jihadism, ethno-nationalism, right-wing or left-wing ideology. *Jihadism* denotes a belief by extremist islamist organisations that "armed confrontation with political rivals is a theologically legitimate and instrumentally efficient method for socio-political change (Ashour, 2007, p.596)." Extremist islamist organisations have repeatedly misused the word "jihad[1]" which is a term with multiple meanings in the religion of Islam, however, terrorist organisations use it in the narrow sense of warfare in an attempt to legitimize the killing of civilians who do not submit to their orders. This type of extremism has been manifested in Kosovo primarily through the foreign fighter phenomenon or individuals travelling from Kosovo to Syria and Iraq to join the various factions of extremist groups in the foreign conflict zones. *Foreign fighters* are individuals that have for a variety of reasons and with different backgrounds joined an armed conflict abroad – since mid-2012 (The International Centre for Counter-terrorism – The Hague, 2021, p.1). Ethno-nationalism on the other hand contains the belief that certain individuals or groups are considered inferior on grounds of race, ethnicity, culture and religion (Rrustemi, 2019, p.14). It is important to note, however, that violent extremism is an evolving threat that hinges upon the shifting socioeconomic and political dynamics at the local and international level – thereby taking various ideological forms.

The following parts of the report include a) contextual background on Kosovo, b) structure of radicalisation, c) stakeholders and channels of radicalisation, d) stakeholders and channels of de-radicalisation, e) stakeholders and channels of de-radicalisation, and a f) conclusion. The main sources for this report include available scholarly research, policy papers, policy briefs, government documents and media commentary.

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[1] As described in the Quran and other Islamic religious sources, the word "Jihad" can refer to the efforts of Muslims to be devout believers and inform other people about Islam; to protect Islam and if the religion cannot be defended by peaceful methods, then the use of violence is allowed, however, within predefined strict rules. For example, violence against innocents, women, children and disabled is strictly prohibited in the execution of "Military Jihad", and any attempt at peace by the enemy must be accepted (Perteshi, 2017, p.17).

2. Contextual background

Kosovo is one of the youngest countries in Europe, both in terms of its population and its statehood. It is a parliamentary republic whose majority population consists of Albanians, followed by Serbs as the largest minority group who, together with other ethnic minorities, make up from 7 to 12 percent of the population (Fazliu, 2017, p.1.). It is estimated that 53 percent of Kosovo's population are under the age of 25. The majority of Kosovo citizens primarily identify with their ethnic background rather than their religious belonging. Yet, most Kosovo Albanians are either observant or nominally Muslims and most Kosovo Serbs are Orthodox-Christians, though there are also Albanian-Christians, Protestant, and Jewish communities. The constitution of Kosovo guarantees political representation for non-majority community representatives and out of 120 seats in the Assembly, 20 are reserved for non-majority ethnic groups, allocated based on the relative size of their populations.

In the past 20 years, Kosovo's development processes have been largely influenced by its legacy of conflict. In 1998-1999, Kosovo experienced a war when the former Yugoslav President, Slobodan Milosevic, unleashed an ethnic cleansing campaign targeting the majority-Albanian population in Kosovo. The Kosovo War marked the last episode of the violent disintegration of the former Yugoslavia and took a massive toll on the country's population and infrastructure. It resulted in the death of over 13,535 civilians, including 1,230 children under the age of 18, the displacement of around a million people, and over 1600 people still missing (Humanitarian Law Centre, 2011). The war ended with NATO's intervention and a political agreement that required an immediate end to violence and the withdrawal of the Serbian military, police and paramilitary forces as prescribed by the UN Security Council resolution (UNSCR 1244). A United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) was set in place to oversee the civilian administration of the territory and offer provisional mechanisms of self-government - amid efforts to reach a final settlement of its political status.

Kosovo declared its independence from Serbia in 2008 and since then it has been working to consolidate its international subjectivity and implement internal reforms. More than 110 United Nations (UN) members and 22 members of the European Union (EU) have recognized Kosovo's independence, however, non-recognizing states continue to prevent the country from membership in international organisations such as the UN, excluding it from important international discussions, initiatives, and contributions. In spite of these challenges, Kosovo is steadfast in its pursuit for full integration in the international community, including membership into NATO, the EU, and the UN. In various assessments, Kosovo is consistently ranked as one of the most pro-American and pro-EU countries in the world, with an overwhelming 93 percent of the population supporting EU accession and 94 percent viewing the United States as the most important economic partner (Western Balkans Regional Poll, 2020, p.58). In this context, the emergence of radical anti-west narratives galvanized by the recent wars in the Middle East have puzzled researchers and policy-makers alike.

In 2016, the Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA) entered into force which presents the first contractual relationship between the EU and Kosovo and the framework under which all reforms towards EU accession take place. The prospect of EU membership holds the potential to transform not only Kosovo but also the entire region of Western Balkans and ensure its peace and stability. Indeed, the possibility of joining the EU has provided the ground

for peace negotiations to take place and for reforms to be implemented, even bringing former warring parties around the same table. In 2011, Kosovo and Serbia began a EU-mediated dialogue with the purpose of reaching a peace agreement and resolving disputes through diplomatic channels.

The slow pace of reforms, internal issues within the EU itself and what is perceived as "enlargement fatigue" among EU member states, nevertheless, continue to challenge the accession prospects and its transformative potential for the region. Further, Kosovo is the only country in the Western Balkans that still does not enjoy visa-free travel with the EU, even after the European Commission and the European Parliament have repeatedly reaffirmed Kosovo's fulfillment of the necessary criteria. The failure of the EU to deliver on its promise of visa liberalization has significantly tarnished EU credibility in the country and the region – making EU integration seem like an elusive target. In particular, the lack of visa liberalization is negatively impacting the country's majority youth, who are being deprived of various life opportunities due to their limited freedom of movement. Youth are also disproportionally affected by high levels of unemployment as Kosovo remains one of the poorest countries in Europe, even though its economic growth rates in the past decade outperformed neighbouring countries. These socio-economic factors coupled with isolation and identities in flux make up for a dynamic set of grievances that put vulnerable individuals to radicalisation in a precarious situation.

In the aftermath of the war in 1999, there was an immense need for international assistance in spurring Kosovo's reconstruction and rebuilding process as the country was building its democratic institutions from scratch. Prior to international intervention and the introduction of democracy in Kosovo, the practice of religion and the influence of religious communities in Kosovo was mainly restricted to the private sphere (Jakupi & Kraja, 2018, p.8). Jakupi & Kraja (2018) argue that "with the introduction of democracy, the public sphere in Kosovo, just like elsewhere in countries in transition, opened up to various ideological influences and actors that pursued their agendas by taking advantage of free speech, freedom of association and guarantees of religious freedom." In addition to much needed assistance, various non-governmental organisations that entered the country simultaneously to providing charity work they introduced a new strain of Islam in Kosovo, which was more conservative and diverted from the way Islam was traditionally practiced for centuries.

In the post-war power vacuum and at the height of a need for physical and emotional support among the vulnerable population groups, these foreign non-governmental organisations "planted the seeds of a new group identity shaped in the mold of political Islam that gradually came to fruition with the galvanizing effect of the armed conflict in Syria and Iraq (Shtuni, 2016, p.8). According to Shtuni (2016, p.1), "Kosovo's post-war situation, including socio-economic vulnerabilities were abused and exploited to create an environment conducive to radicalisation." Notably, these precarious factors led to the manifestation of the foreign fighter phenomenon between 2012-2016, underscoring the dangers of religious-inspired radicalisation and extremism, a topic that has garnered much of the research and government attention in the recent years. At the same time, after Kosovo's conflict, inter-ethnic tensions had been constantly present, but had been kept in check by the presence of the international actors such as KFOR (Donner et al., 2018, p.6). Ethnic tensions continue to be high between the Kosovo Albanians and the Kosovo Serb minority, especially in the northern part of the country were Serbs resist integration into Kosovo's institutional structures and instead opt for

direct influence and guidance from Belgrade. Inter-ethnic tensions precipitate harsh rhetoric and dehumanization of various ethnic groups or the "other", and give way to extreme political polarisation. In many ways, the rise of far-right ideologies and ultra ethno-nationalist tendencies in the West seem to be making a comeback also in Western Balkans (Kraja, 2018, p.1), a trend that is troublesome given the fact that such tendencies have often acted as a prelude to the wars in 1990s and continue to shape extremist trends in the current political landscape.

3. Structure of radicalisation

Kosovo has not been immune to the global threat of violent extremism and continues to face the threat as it evolves based on national and international socio-political dynamics (See Appendix 1). Obtaining consistent and comprehensive data on political violence on Kosovo presents a challenge for several reasons. First, in the backdrop of ethnically-charged tensions and social cleavages, with the intention of not spoiling or sacrificing reconciliation efforts, various inter-ethnic or political violence incidents that by some definitions would qualify as terrorist acts, have often not been counted as such. Moreover, the framing of concepts such as radicalisation, terrorism, and terrorist acts in Kosovo has been largely influenced by the US foreign policy and its fight against global terrorism, which until recently has been skewed towards a greater focus on Jihadi terrorism. As a result, most of the data on terrorism-related acts or charges in Kosovo correspond with actions related to Jihadist extremist groups. Moreover, given that Kosovo as an independent country is still being added in international platforms and datasets, there are notable challenges in obtaining official data on political violence indicators on the country. At present, most international databases either exclude indicators on Kosovo or contain outdated information dating back to the time of the former Yugoslavia. Yet, available datasets such as The Global Terrorism Index (GTI) in 2018 ranked Kosovo in the 71st place with a "low" level threat of terrorism (Institute for Economics & Peace, 2018, p.8), while in 2019 Kosovo's standing improved by eight degrees and was ranked 79th with still a "low" level of threat (Institute for Economics & Peace, 2019, p.43). The most recent GTI report of the showed that for the year there has been no terrorism-related impact on Kosovo (Institute for Economics & Peace, 2020, p.8). In absence of national systematic data-gathering sources, the Global Terrorist Database (GTD) is one of the few platforms that contains data on political violence in Kosovo, with a relatively broad definition for terrorist attacks. An analysis of recorded incidents at the GTD database shows that at least from 2008 (when Kosovo became independent) there were 48 incidents recorded, the overwhelming majority of which were committed by unknown perpetrators. The fact that perpetrators remain unknown makes it harder to identify how agents of radicalisation have evolved over the years. Yet, another important aspect stands out. Even though during the period from 2014 – 2016 jihadi-related terrorism dominated the public discourse in Kosovo and much of the international attention, the GTD has not recorded any attacks related to jihadism in Kosovo. Instead, most of the GTD-recorded cases hint to ethno-national motivations, while a number of other incidents targeted political opponents or journalists. These findings correspond with other available data that suggest that there has not been any terrorist attack perpetrated by jihadi extremists of foreign fighter returnees in Kosovo, although a number of five terrorist plots were successfully foiled by the security authorities between 2012 and 2019 (Bytyqi and Mullins, 2019, p.25).

In 2014, the first images that appeared of a Kosovo jihadist allegedly committing gruesome acts alongside extremist groups in Syria and Iraq sent shockwaves among the public and the institutions alike. Although the threat was not effectively prevented, the institutional response towards the foreign fighter phenomenon and religious-inspired radicalisation in general has been relatively swift. The then President of Kosovo, Atifete Jahjaga, immediately gathered the National Security Council (NSC) - tasking them to treat the threat of violent extremism as a top priority. She noted that "It is our responsibility as institutions and as a society to condemn these ugly phenomena. We must distance ourselves from these brutal acts of criminals, and we must denounce and treat them as such" (cited in Likmeta and Zogiani, Balkan Insight, 2014, p.1). By stating that "Kosovo will not become a safe haven for terrorists and that the Kosovo institutions will never permit for the country to turn into a source of criminal and terrorist activities which threaten the peace, stability and constitutional order (Office of the President of Kosovo, 2014), President Jahjaga firmly set the tone for Kosovo's counter-terrorism policy for years to come.

Although Kosovo's political scene has been marred by instability and characterized by frequent snap elections and unfinished government mandates – Kosovo's consecutive governments have shared the stance that they would address the issue of violent extremism with high priority. The statements of political leaders tend to reflect the stage at which efforts to keep the threat of violent extremism at bay are at the moment. For instance, at the height of heavy-handed prosecution during 2014-2015, the political discourse revolved around law enforcement and arrests of suspected individuals. As the former Minister of Interior expressed in 2016, "violent extremism often leads to acts of terrorism, and radicalisation of different societies is not a national problem, rather it is a transnational problem requiring international coordination and cooperation." (cited in Koha, p.1). In the more recent years, as Kosovo has been prosecuting violent extremism suspects and returnees from the foreign conflict zones, there has also been increased emphasis on the need to rehabilitate and reintegrate those formerly affiliated with extremism groups. Abelard Tahiri, former Minister of Justice, stated in 2019 that "criminals will face justice, while victims will be rehabilitated (cited in Ministry of Justice, p.1). As the issue of foreign fighters dominated in the media and public's attention, the discourse around violent extremism among the Kosovo Albanian political parties has been quite uniform – condemning any affiliation of Kosovo citizens joining extremist groups and emphasizing the need for greater prevention efforts. While more recently, most of the focus has been on establishing rehabilitation and reintegration programmes as a more long-term approach to addressing the issue (See Appendix 2).

On the other hand, Kosovo-Serb politicians perceive and articulate the threat of violent extremism in a different manner. The Serb List is currently the dominant political party representing the Kosovo-Serb community in Kosovo. Even though the Serb List participates in elections and is represented in the institutions of Kosovo, it is heavily influenced by Serbia's leadership and has been found to intimidate rival Kosovo-Serb political parties that pursue a more autonomous approach (Heil, 2019, p.1). Given that contestation of Kosovo's statehood is central to the discourse of Serbia's top leaders, this narrative permeates all discussions around Kosovo, including perceptions on the threat of violent extremism. Thus, taking cues from Belgrade politicians, the Serb minority in Kosovo is heavily influenced by their perception. Since the foreign fighter phenomenon in Kosovo drew a lot of attention, Serbian politicians

sought this as an opportunity to draw parallels between jihadi extremist organisations and the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) (Ristić, 2016, p.1), often lacing their commentary with propaganda and distortion of historical facts and context, conflating an ethno-national struggle with religious tones. Yet, research has shown that there is no link between KLA mobilization during the Kosovo War and the foreign fighter mobilization to Syria and Iraq. In fact, the opposite holds true in the context of Kosovo since areas with high KLA mobilization and greater organisation in the civil movement for freedom were more resilient to jihadi recruitment (e.g., Deçan, Drenica) compared to areas were KLA mobilization was barely there (e.g. Hani i Elezit, Kaçanik) (Jakupi and Kraja, 2018, p.20) due to a strong ethnic identity and mobilization which left little space for exploitation of religious ambiguities.

So far, data points out that out of nearly 300 foreign fighters, three former, low-ranking members of the KLA, which disbanded in 1999, that joined armed organisations in the early days of the recruitment effort.[2] Further, according to the Kosovo Police database, the majority of the foreign fighters from Kosovo ranged from 18 of age to 27 of age, most of which were young children at the height of the Kosovo War, making the link between the two practically impossible.

The public's perceptions towards the threat of violent extremism have been fluctuating over the years. According to a survey conducted by the Kosovar Centre for Security Studies in 2018, 70 percent of respondents consider that violent extremism is a national security threat (Kosovar Centre for Security Studies, 2018, p.8). However, as the graph below shows, there are slight changes in how the public perceives the threat from the various cases of extremism.

Figure 1. Data from Kosovo Security Barometer Survey from 2018-2020

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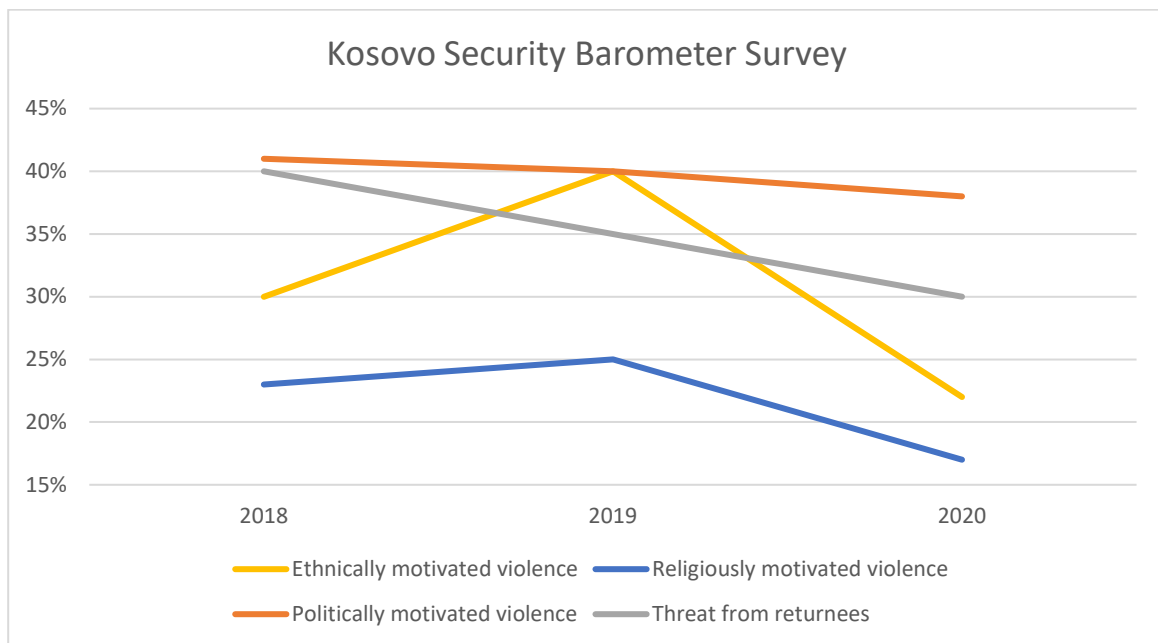
[2] They are Naman Demolli, Hetem Dema and Kjani Mjaku, all killed in Syria between 2012 and 2015 in Syria and Iraq. Further read on the KLA links: http://unkt.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/UNDP_Push-and-Pull-Factors_ENG.pdf

A 2017 poll conducted by the UNDP, found that most Kosovars form their perceptions regarding violent based on written and online media and that most of them view politically-motivated violence at the most dangerous (60 percent), followed by ethnically-motivated violence (36 percent) and religiously-inspired extremism (29%) (Qirezi, 2017, p.14).

Although focus on the threat from Jihadism has been front and centre in Kosovo's efforts to tackling violent extremism, in line with global trends, the threat from far-right extremism with ultra ethno-nationalist leniencies presents a growing concern in Kosovo. Yet, this type of radicalisation has been alarmingly not addressed, in large part due to a lack of political will and the donor driven agenda surrounding violent extremism research within the country. The disproportionate attention on Jihadism has arguably been at the expense of tackling ultra ethno-nationalism which necessitates an in-depth exploration.

4. Agents and channels of radicalisation

Between 2011-2016, an estimated 403 citizens from Kosovo joined the conflict in Syria and Iraq, including 255 men, over 50 women and 47 children - making Kosovo one of the countries with the highest number of foreign fighters per capita in Europe (Perteshi and Ilazi, 2019, p.7). However, this estimation is much lower when compared to the percentage of its Muslim population. Some of these individuals who traveled at the outset of Sirian civil war alleged that they sought to join the opposition forces, however, the reality that they encountered in the foreign conflict zones was much more complex, and the fighting factions were not as clear cut. The majority of these Kosovars who travelled to the foreign conflict zones ended up becoming part of the Jabhat Al-Nusra Front and the so-called Islamic State. In examining the travel patterns of foreign fighters and their family members, two important trends stand out. Those who left in the immediate period after the civil war in Syria tended to travel on an individual level, and many of those who travelled during this early period reportedly returned after a mere few days or weeks. These early returnees claimed that they were disillusioned with that they saw in the foreign conflict zones; that their primary intention was to aid the Syrian people and they did not want to join jihadist groups like Al Nusra (cited in Morina, 2016, p.1). However, after the so called IS declared its "caliphate" in June 2014, those leaving to join the conflict in Syria and Iraq tend to travel more in groups or with family – indicating that potentially the second wave of foreign fighters and their families comprise a more ideologically-hardened group. Tens of children have also been born in the foreign conflict zones.

Various studies have sought to explain the factors that led to the emergence of the foreign fighter phenomenon in Kosovo and why individuals from a country that stands out for its overwhelming support towards the US and the EU could join extremist groups fighting against the West. Many scholars looked into this puzzle and found a number of factors that may have influenced a fringe group of Kosovo's individuals to subscribe to radical interpretations of Islam and even take active steps to either endorse or use violence to support their radical views. According to Kraja, different studies have found that

> "violent extremism in Kosovo has been driven by a combination of tangible internal conditions – weak economy, political instability, poor education system and the rise of various Islamic nongovernmental organisations, competing in Kosovo's newly

democratized public sphere, as well as a number of less stringent circumstances, such as identity issues, social isolation or exclusion" (Kraja, 2017, p.4)

Other studies have associated the emergence of this phenomenon in Kosovo with the work of Islamic organisations that sought to promote a pan-Muslim identity which gained momentum during the wars in the Middle East (Ibid. p. 5). Even though throughout the last two decades Kosovo's sociopolitical conditions have improved, the country still faces widespread perceptions of failed leadership efforts, corruption, and unmet expectations (Shtuni, 2016, p.6). As highlighted in Shtuni's study, "rising and frustrated expectations are a far more common source of extremism than economic deprivation" (cited in Shtuni, 2016, p.6). A myriad of reasons explain why Kosovans have become directly or indirectly, willingly or forcibly engaged in violent extremism, but economic deprivation and inadequate education do not seem to be among them (Kraja, 2017, p.15). Rather, as Kraja (2017) notes "factors closely tied to a recent past defined by interethnic strife, segregation, and victimization and a current reality marked by popular perceptions of failed leadership efforts and unmet expectations against a backdrop of identities in flux in a nascent country struggling to define itself appear to be more relevant." While across the board, we know that poor economic conditions are not a key factor, there have been cases when in certain municipalities, these families were among the poorest.

In Kosovo's context, studies did not find that foreign fighter mobilization took place through an organised terrorist cell or terrorist entity operating from within the country, rather, the process of radicalisation and recruitment is considered to have taken place through a set of individuals with ties to extremist networks (See Appendix 3). Notably, foreign fighter mobilization was not spread uniformly across the country, rather it was concentrated in a cluster of contiguous municipalities (Hani i Elezit, Kaçanik, Gjilan and Viti) near the border with Macedonia where the Albanian community "has traditionally been more religiously conservative and under the influence of parallel religious structures that have operated unhindered" (Qehaja and Perteshi, 2018, p.15). Some of the first foreign fighters who traveled from Kosovo to Syria and Iraq originate from these areas. It is after their travel in the foreign conflict zones that they began to recruit others to join their ranks. The presence of these individual foreign fighters/recruiters across these municipalities in large part explains the presence of foreign fighter mobilization and jihadi extremism in Kosovo.

One of the most prominent recruiters is considered Zekirja Qazimi, a hard-line local imam who initially organised a group of young believers around a local NGO before obtaining the position of the imam of al-Kuddus mosque in the municipality of Gjilan (Jakupi and Kraja, 2018, p.11). However, the mosque where Qazimi carried out his religious role was deemed illegal as it functioned outside of the authority of BIK, an organisation that is in charge of overseeing the country's Islamic religious affairs, including the selection of imams. At the time, BIK was going through a crisis of legitimacy since its majority moderate members were being challenged by a group of radical imams who had received training in more conservative schools of Islamic thought in Middle Eastern countries such as Saudi Arabia (Kursani, 2015, p.4). The clashes within BIK are viewed as an exacerbating factor influencing more radical currents to penetrate the country. Data from court transcripts in the indictment of Qazimi show that in addition to delivering sermons around the municipalities that had produced the highest numbers of foreign fighters, Qazimi coordinated financial supporters, logistical personnel, brokered the power

struggles in IS for the Kosovo contingent, including "the appointment of their leader, and quickly became the go-to recruiter of IS in Kosovo" (Kraja, 2017, p.13).

Lavdrim Muhaxheri and Ridvan Aqifi are two other individuals who served as foreign fighters and recruiters, even rising to the position of leaders of the Albanian contingent within IS. They were the face of various propagandistic materials aimed at raising new recruits while intimidating the public and the institutions. Muhaxheri jointly with the other key recruiters, some of them with religious training, were critical in exposing various groups of the population to extremist content – especially the local populations where they were from. A KCSS study found that there was a quick trajectory from propaganda exposure to joining the terrorist organisation as the recruiters appeared in videos together with the other IS members and addressed the audience from the war theater, replacing their lectures with action and creating a more compelling effect to their narrative (Kraja, 2017, p.7). Moreover, when the law enforcement agencies undertook actions to crackdown on their networks, the IS spokesman from Kosovo within IS issued threats to all of those do not heed to their call (Ibid, p.7). Muhaxheri and Haqifi died in the foreign conflict zones as a result of US air strikes, while Zekerija Qazimi is currently completing his 10-year-sentence in Kosovo's prisons. They were deemed responsible for the plotting of at least two foiled terrorist attacks targeting national and international security institutions (Morina, Balkan Insight, 2017, p.1) Without a doubt, extremist narratives that get propagated through various online and offline means/platforms influence the radicalisation process. Even though in many cases it is difficult to establish any direct links between extremist groups and mainstream media, there have been notable deficiencies in how local media reported on terrorism. Primarily, this has resulted from a lack of experience in covering topics of terrorism, poor editorial standards and low media literacy which at times has led to the amplification of radical messages, although unwittingly.

An added complexity to Kosovo's violent extremism problem is that a considerable number of Kosovo individuals who traveled to Syria and Iraq possess dual citizenship. About 48 individuals, or 20 % of Kosovo's total foreign fighters were born and raised in western European countries, mainly to immigrant parents who fled Kosovo in the 1990s (Perteshi, 2018, p.30). The majority, or 14 radicalised foreign fighters of Kosovo origin are from Germany, six from Switzerland and four are Americans (Ibid., p.30). After joining IS, some of these individuals returned to Kosovo or to their countries of birth. In some aspects they have similar paths of radicalisation such as identity-seeking, but the context is different- in Europe they are first- or second-generation immigrants.

On the other hand, when it comes to ethno-nationalist extremism in Kosovo, the issue remains largely unexplored. Existing studies recognize the dearth of knowledge around this type of radicalisation while noting that Kosovo is highly affected by far-right extremism, propagated mainly through external actors such as Serbia and Russia (Rrustemi, 2019, p. 23). Rrustemi (2019, p. 23) argues that Russia contributes to nationalist extremism in Kosovo by leveraging political elites in the northern area of Kosovo with the intention of aggravating tensions between Albanian and Serbian communities in the region while undermining their prospects for EU integration (Ibid., p. 24). Further, it is considered worrying that the far-right rhetoric endorsed by the political elite of Serbia is reaching the Serbian minority in Kosovo and further risks the stability of Kosovo and the region (Ibid., p. 24). Key elements that characterize the rhetoric of far-right extremist groups in Serbia include denying Serbian war crimes, glorifying war criminals, and complaining of the Serbia's 'victim status' at the hands of the West

(Dzombic, 2014, p. 12). Ultimately, the presence of far-right and ultra ethno-nationalist elements narratives in Kosovo are reminiscent of a dangerous discourse that mirroring the sentiment prior to 1990s wars, signaling the need for serious and immediate attention.

Among the stakeholders of radicalisation, the role of the state should also be examined. In regards to jihadi extremism, the state could have done more to prevent and ebb the flow of the foreign fighters from Kosovo at the earlier stages of recruitment and especially when the route that took the new IS recruits to Syria and Iraq became known. However, in reaction to the phenomenon, the authorities acted decisively. In the beginning, law enforcement institutions were concerned that the crackdown on individuals suspected of involvement in extremist activities, including raids in their homes, would alienate family members and provoke more negative interactions with state institutions. However, this is a lesson that the security institutions seemed to have realized early on and with a focus on rehabilitation and reintegration in addition to prosecution, there was no significant backlash to the institutional crackdown with potential further radicalising effects.

In terms of countering ethno-nationalism, the state's role must be contextualized. It should be noted that the institutions of Kosovo have been built from scratch, including the security ones that were built based on international standards with the ultimate goal of integration into NATO. Euro-Atlantic integration has been the approach that Kosovo's political leadership has sought since the inception of the institutions, including politicians who were formerly associated with the KLA. With the support of the US and other nations right after the Kosovo war, the KLA was demobilized through a gradual process in a largely successful DDR programme, and its members were integrated into the new institutions, primarily the Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC) with an entirely civil mission and the Kosovo Police (KP), with the remaining ones receiving additional training and support to either integrate in other institutional sectors or civil life (Qehaja et. al. 2009, p. 4).

Thus, the legacy of the KLA did not have a direct impact on the political approach of the succeeding institutions. As various scholars have pointed out in their reflection of the Kosovo Albanian resistance and Serbia's counterinsurgency (Clark, 2000; Maliqi 2000; Kraja 2003), the actual formation of KLA was in response to Serbia's oppressive policies towards ethnic Albanians, a policy which led to ethnonationalist mobilization and homogenization among the Kosovo Albanians. Thus, ethno-nationalism in Kosovo today among the Kosovo Albanians should be primarily examined and viewed as a symptom and a response to Serbia's revisionist policies. The more Serbia's political leadership engages in revisionist policies, the more ethno-nationalist is the response of Kosovo's institutions.

5. Stakeholders and channels of de-radicalisation

As the threat of violent extremism became more apparent through foreign fighter mobilization during 2012-2016, Kosovo's institutions took a series of measures to control the threat and strengthen preventive efforts. Kosovo's government has opted for a combination of punitive, rehabilitation, and reintegration measures, including working with CSOs in bolstering P/CVE efforts (See Appendix 4). In 2014, Kosovo's law enforcement institutions initiated a crackdown on suspects on terrorism-related charges which led to the closing of several NGOs with

suspected ties to extremist networks and the detention of over 100 individuals, including several imams (Abazi and Kajjo, VOA, 2016, p.1). However, as former foreign fighters were returning to Kosovo, it quickly became clear that to address the challenge posed by violent extremism in the long run, focus should be placed on rehabilitation and reintegration (R&R) efforts–contributing to de-radicalisation and facilitating an individual's safe return in their communities. For this purpose, Kosovo's leadership undertook several initiatives to reduce the threat from radicalisation, including through membership in international coordination mechanisms such as the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS. Moreover, Kosovo's Financial Intelligence Unit became part of the Egmont Group to improve international cooperation especially in tackling issues of money laundering and the financing of terrorism.

In 2017, the government of Kosovo established the Division for Prevention and Reintegration of Radicalised Persons (DPRRI) which functions under the Department for Public Safety at the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA). The division has a temporary mandate and deals exclusively with individuals and families that have been affected by violent extremism, in particular returnees from the foreign conflict zones. The core mission of DPRRI is to design programmes, coordinate stakeholders, and monitor the reintegration process of individuals that have been formerly affiliated with extremist groups. In doing so, Kosovo is the only country in the Western Balkans to have established a separate unit with the sole focus on R&R programmes. The work of the DPRRI has been particularly relevant in light of the repatriation of 110 citizens from the foreign conflict zones in April, 2019, the majority of whom have been women and children.

In pursuing a policy of repatriation, Kosovo set the example in "not only acknowledging the responsibility of the state vis-à-vis the return of those who were involved with IS, but also in seeking to ensure that they will not always pose a security risk, but have the opportunity to one day again be productive members of society" (Avdimetaj and Coleman, 2020, p.2). In addition to MIA, Kosovo's Ministry of Justice has established rehabilitation programmes targeting inmates within the Kosovo Correctional Services. These rehabilitation programmes that are available for both men and women draw upon a general rehabilitation programme for all inmates, but they do not specifically target violent extremism offenders (Avdimetaj and Coleman, p.4). These rehabilitation programmes include aspects of academic or vocational training, and cognitive skills training, with relatively limited focus on ideological de-radicalisation (Avdimetaj and Coleman, p.4). Moreover, for former terrorism-related convicts and especially men, there is no programme available to support their reintegration post-release.

The Ministry of Justice had also launched a programme in cooperation with BIK that involved bringing in imams in the prisons to address the ideological dimension of radicalisation and address the inmates' misconceptions regarding religious scripture. However, the project was not able to even commence as the former Minister of Justice had publicly stated that all the imams entering prison would be vetted by the security agencies, thereby making them less credible in the eyes of the inmates and less willing to be part of the programme (Ilazi and Perteshi, 2019, p.24). In addition, Kosovo's institutions have piloted the Referral Mechanism – a new mechanism functioning at the local level and focusing on early detection and prevention of violent extremism (Ilazi and Perteshi, 2019, p.26). According to some accounts, this programme is considered successful in having detected 12 cases of early detection among youth and supporting them by engaging their peers, families and offering counselling

(Ilazi and Perteshi, 2019, p.20). Other mechanisms that function at the local level in preventing violent extremism include the Municipal Community Safety Councils which are local forums covering security-related topics with the participation of a diverse set of stakeholders, including civil society activists, religious leaders, community leaders, municipal representative, local police etc. (Ilazi and Perteshi, 2019, p.20). One of the key contributions that the MCSCs make towards de-radicalisation efforts include the coordination and facilitation of local resources in support of P/CVE activities as well as in the identification of new threats to community safety and security early on.

In terms of de-radicalisation efforts, the civil society in Kosovo has played a critical role by producing knowledge on a relatively new topic, building the capacities of public institutions, strengthening local and international partnerships, and helping to raise awareness among the public and the institutions alike. A number of local organisations have been beneficiaries of the Global Community Engagement Resilience Fund (GCERF) which seeks to strengthen community resilience by supporting local initiatives to address the drivers of violent extremism. Non-governmental organisations such as the ATRC, CDF, and the CBM have all benefited from GCERF support, as a result implementing programmes that provide life skills training, alternative narratives, leadership training, cultural and sports activities to individuals and communities affected by violent extremism. Further, KCSS a Prishtina-based think tank has provided important contribution to pave the way for P/CVE work in general and de-radicalisation in particular. For more than six years, KCSS has been producing pioneering research on drivers of violent extremism, impact of propaganda, and more recently, R&R programmes. KCSS together with other local partners such as the KRCT and Partners Kosova have also been implementing projects to facilitate the reintegration process of returnees from the conflict zones in Syria and Iraq, especially women and children. The work implemented through these local partnerships significantly alleviates the burden of the DPRRI which in spite of immense work, continues to be underfunded and with limited capacities.

Overall, the majority of these programmes target former foreign fighters, their family members, and their local communities. The approach of these programmes is rehabilitative and reintegrative with a focus on providing skills-based trainings such as vocational training, strengthening institutional capacities, and raising awareness among the public. Although Kosovo's institutions have been proactive in streamlining R&R programmes, their efficacy continues to be challenged by their ability to leverage institutional mechanisms at the local level and community-led initiatives. Moreover, local stakeholders lack the knowledge and the tools to effectively integrate monitoring and evaluation measures in their project implementation approach. This in turn inhibits opportunities to adjust their programmeming based on evidence and established good practices. Another important aspect where Kosovo's current de-radicalisation efforts are lagging include the lack of focus on other forms of radicalisation such as ultra ethno-nationalism, thus creating a blind spot in its current approach with potential long-term repercussions.

6. Conclusion

This report sought to examine the main agents of radicalisation and stakeholders of de-radicalisation in Kosovo while providing an overview of its national context and a mapping of

key individuals that have influenced radicalisation patterns in Kosovo. Although Kosovo has not experienced any jihadism-related terrorist attack to date, a combination of factors such as isolation, poor socio-economic opportunities and external actors seeking to promote a more conservative strain of Islam in Kosovo – galvanized by the conflicts in the Middle East - have led to the radicalisation of a fringe group of the society. Radicalisation has been largely manifested through the foreign fighter phenomenon and through the spread of narratives that seek to sow division, contempt for the secular state and intolerance of "the other." Unlike in some other contexts, radicalisation in Kosovo has been closely tied to a number of individuals who sought to actively recruit new supporters for extremist groups in Syria and Iraq. This concentration of actions across the municipalities from which the radical individuals including radical imams were operating, made it easier for law enforcement to crackdown. The institutional response in addressing the threat of jihadi extremism led to a drastic decrease in foreign fighter mobilization while its proactive approach towards R&R is promising in managing the threat in a more sustainable manner.

Moreover, this report took stock of the main institutions and organisations working to prevent racialization and facilitate the rehabilitation and reintegration process of individuals formerly affiliated with extremist groups. Looking into available data and research, this report highlights the disproportionate focus that Jihadism has garnered in comparison to other forms of radicalisation, such as ultra ethno-nationalism. The threat from far right groups and ultra ethno-nationalist leniencies has been rapidly gaining momentum across Europe and beyond. Such a trend is also looming over Kosovo and the Western Balkans more broadly as a racist and dehumanizing rhetoric seems to be making a comeback. The current lack of political will to explore the presence of far right extremism and ultra ethno nationalism presents a challenge to effectively prevent threats and address their impact. By laying out a number of government and non-governmental programmes working on de-radicalisation, this report underscores Kosovo's focus on rehabilitation and reintegration efforts while pointing to the need for improved inter-institutional coordination and evidence-based programming.

Appendices

Appendix 1. Main (de)-radicalisation events in Kosovo since 2001

Name	Date or period of time	Description
9/11 terrorist attacks against the United States	09.11.2001	In the aftermath of the attacks, there was widespread condemnation in Kosovo of the terrorist acts against the United States. The people of Kosovo expressed a deep sense of solidarity and empathy with the people of the United States, while authorities reinforced messages against global terrorism.
The 2004 March Unrest in Kosovo	17.-18. 3.2004	Following the drowning of three ethnic Albanian boys in Mitrovica and speculations that they had been chased into the river by Serbs, hundreds of Kosovo-Albanians rose in protest. In the backdrop of high uncertainty over the settlement of Kosovo's final status and citizens' unmet expectations, the protests quickly turned into riots primarily targeting the Serbian minority. The ethnically-charged unrest left 19 people dead (eight Kosovo Serbs and 11 Kosovo Albanians), and several properties torched or damaged, including places of worship. The march unrest challenged efforts to integrate minorities into Kosovo's society, fueled extremist narratives, and put into question the role of the international missions in Kosovo in governing and maintaining the safety and security of the citizens.
Serbs protest Kosovo's declaration of independence from Serbia	17.2.2008	Kosovo's declaration of independence by its ethnic Albanian leadership was followed with demonstrations by the Serbs living in northern Kosovo. Kosovo Serbs opposing the independence protested, refused to follow orders from the central government in Prishtina, sought to seize and control infrastructure in Serb-populated areas, and carried out attacks on the international presence and Kosovo institutions, leaving a UN police officer dead and hundreds wounded.

Kosovo's Islamic Community Association (BIK) faces a crisis of legitimacy	2008	BIK's role as the sole authority in overseeing religious affairs of Muslim believers in Kosovo was challenged when two schools of thought emerged within BIK, one that considered that Kosovo should continue to practice Islam based on the Hanefi tradition and the other who promoted a more conservative strain of Islam and was externally driven. The rifts within BIK led to the formation of illegal mosques, breakaway preachers operating outside BIK's authority, the spread of a more conservative way of preaching Islam, and even incidents among the members of the community.
Building of Mother Theresa Cathedral	05.9.2010	Although the majority of the population welcomed the building of the Mother Theresa Cathedral in the centre of Prishtina – viewing it as a symbol of religious tolerance in Kosovo, some individuals spoke in dissatisfaction. Those criticizing the decision to build the Cathedral considered it as a discriminatory action against the Kosovo Muslims (greater in number than the minority Christian community) whose request to build a Grand Mosque had been initially rejected – raising concerns about the poor facilities in their existing mosques. Thus, the objection to building the Cathedral was not an objection towards Christianity, rather towards what was perceived as preferential treatment of Kosovo Christians as authorities sought to tighten links with a mostly Christian EU.
The Kosovo-Serbia dialogue	March 2011 - present	The Kosovo-Serbia dialogue mediated by the EU presents an important step in resolving the dispute between these two countries and ensuring a final peace deal through the use of diplomatic channels.
The Syrian Civil War	2011 - present	The onset the civil war in Syria drew in more than 300 individuals from Kosovo to join the various fighting factions in the foreign conflict zones. Although a number of them purport to have traveled with the purpose of joining/aiding the opposition forces, a majority of them ended up as part of the extremist groups such as Islamic State and Al-Nusra Front.

Kosovo's foreign ministry endorses Syrian opposition forces	15.5.2012	Kosovo's Foreign Minister, Enver Hoxhaj, voiced support for Syria's opposition that was trying to overthrow President Bashar-Al Assad. Hoxhaj's endorsement would later be referenced by many former foreign fighters who, when faced with prosecution, argued that they were also supporting Syrian opposition forces and not the terrorist groups in the foreign conflict zones.
Kosovo government crackdown on extremist recruiting	August 2014	Kosovo's crackdown on extremism through raids, closing of organisations suspected of terrorist financing, arrests of suspects, confiscation of material evidence etc., coupled with initiatives to prevent violent extremism, led to a drop in foreign fighter recruitment from Kosovo to Syria and Iraq.
Live broadcast of religious conversions into the Christian faith	2016	The ceremony of individuals who were being converted into the Christian religion at the Mother Theresa Cathedral was broadcast live on public national TV. These televised ceremonies were seen in criticism, prompting remarks that the Catholic Church was not only provoking the public but also in violation of guidelines from Pope Francis who spoke against religious spectacles during conversions.
The firing of a rocket-propelled grenade at the parliament building	August 2016	The attack occurred during the period when lawmakers from the opposition party Vetevendosje released tear gas in parliament in opposition to a border deal with Montenegro and an EU-brokered accord with Serbia - considered to extend autonomy to Serb-populated areas in Kosovo. The suspects arrested for the alleged crimes come from Vetevendosje.
The debate and protests over the construction of the Grand Mosque in Prishtina	15.6.2020	The Turkish-funded mosque that is being built in Prishtina sparked criticism over its Ottoman-era design and concerns of a revival of Ottomanism.

Appendix 2. Political discourse about radicalisation in Kosovo

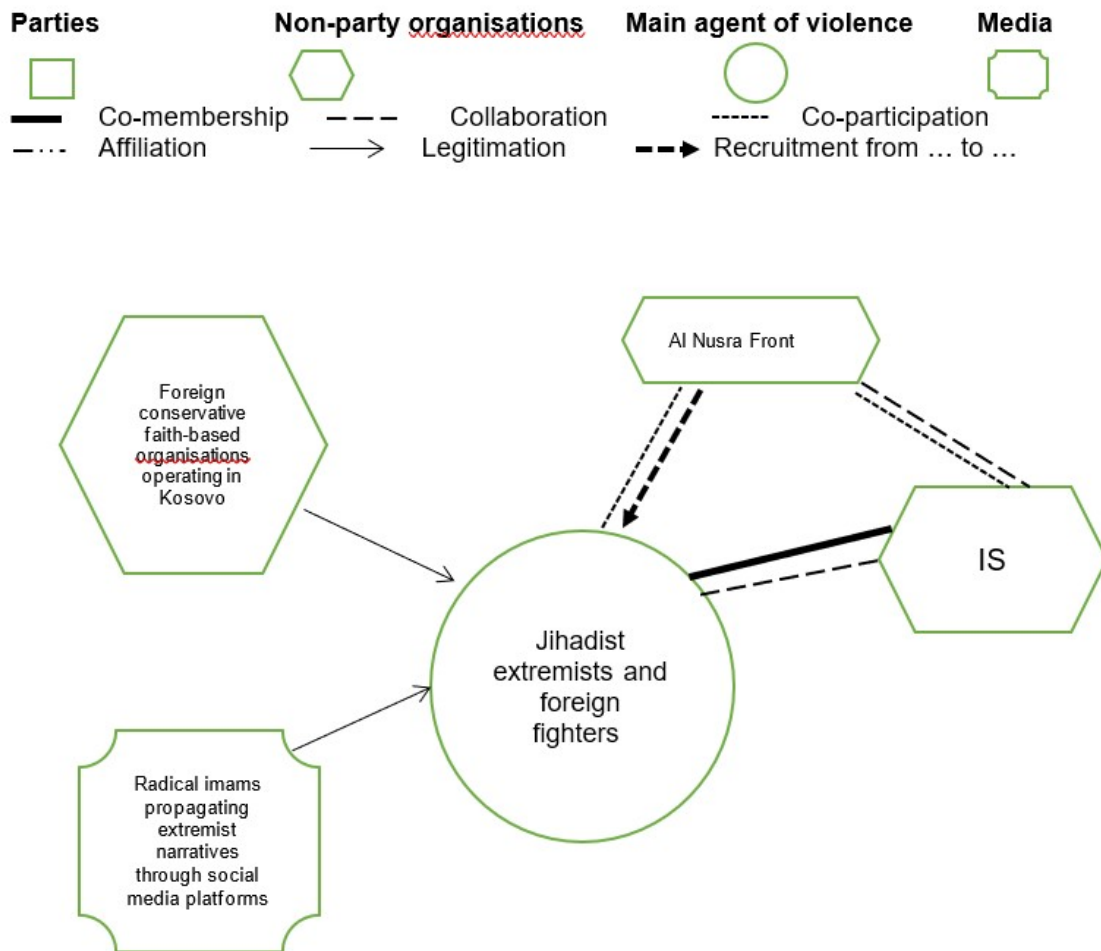| Quotation	Author(s)	Date of quotation	Source	Comments
"Violent extremism often leads to terrorist acts, but radicalisation is not a problem exclusive to certain societies, and as such tackling it requires coordination and cooperation at a transnational level."	Skender Hyseni, Democratic League of Kosovo, Minister of Internal Affairs	2016	Klan Kosova https://klankosova.tv/skender-hyseni-ne-kosove-rezultatet-e-luftimit-te-ekstremizmit-te-dukshme/	Former Minister of Interior highlighting need for international cooperation in tackling violent extremism.
"Religious communities and religious leaders will continue to be one of the most important partners in the fight against messages of extremism and violent radicalism."	Ramush Haradinaj, Alliance for the Future of Kosovo, Former Prime Minister	4.06.2018	Office of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Kosovo https://kryeministri-ks.net/kryeministri-haradinaj-kosova-kontribuese-ne-stabilitetin-rajonal-dhe-global/	Emphasizing need to work closely with religious leaders
"We must work separately to prevent extremism and terrorism. This prevention requires various measures in the field of education, so that people in schools are educated in such a way that they are not oriented towards violence."	Isa Mustafa, Democratic League of Kosovo, Former Prime Minister	18.01.2016	Radio Evropa e Lirë https://www.evropaelire.org/a/27494870.htm	Emphasis on the quality of education as a factor of preventing violent extremism.

"It is important that as institutions we act against individuals and groups that pose a threat to our security. This threat does not only threaten Kosovo. It goes beyond our internal context. Kosovo is not isolated in the face of this challenge, which has taken on a global dimension. It is important for us, as institutions, to act against individuals and groups that pose a threat to our national security; even as a society to distance ourselves from criminal and extremist actions, which have nothing in common with the values and ideals on which we are building our state."	Atifete Jahjaga, Former President	18.08.2014	Radio Evropa e Lirë https://www.evropaelire.org/a/26536307.html	Distancing from the extremist groups, singling them out from the rest of the society as non-compatible with the values of the rest of the population and state.
"The era we are living in not only has serious challenges, but some of them are also becoming destabilizing, threatening the way of life and destabilizing normal life. Religious extremism and radicalism are appearing among us in local context, moreover, one of the main pillars of our identity is being threatened - religious tolerance and one of the bases of the pro-Western political, cultural and cultural path. This threatening evil for all of us, both countries, is one more	Isa Mustafa, Democratic League of Kosovo, Former Prime Minister	03.06.2016	Radio Evropa e Lirë https://www.evropaelire.org/a/27776776.html	Frames religious extremism as a threat to one of Kosovo's pillars of our identity – religious tolerance.

reason for our countries to continue cooperating with each other."		25		
"The Republic of Kosovo will fight uncompromisingly radicalism, extremism and terrorism of any form."	Hashim Thaçi, Democratic Party of Kosovo, Former President of the Republic of Kosovo	02.11.2019	Agjencia Telegrafike Shqiptare http://archive.ata.gov.al/2019/11/02/presidenti-thaci-kosova-do-ta-luftoje-pa-kompromis-radikalizmin-ekstremizmin-dhe-terrorizmin-e-cdo-forme/	Reintrerating Kosovo's uncompromising approach towards any forms of extremism.
"The radicalisation of young people in the Balkans has been exported by various NGOs and cleric from the Middle East. We can not blame foreign governments for the spread of radicalism in the Balkans, as we have no evidence of this. We are very proud, since last September no one has left Kosovo to join IS."	Enver Hoxhaj, Democratic Party of Kosovo, Former Minister of Foreign Affairs	27.09.2016	Radio Evropa e Lirë https://www.evropaelire.org/a/28015784.html	Emphasizing the role of external influences in the process of radicalisation in Kosovo.

"Young people in our society are the easiest target. Unfortunately, young people spend a lot of time online, visiting various sites that propagate violence. Lack of social activities for young people and unemployment, of course, which are factors. Also the education system, which reproduces rather than creates critical thinking, may be one of the reasons."	Atifete Jahjaga, Former President of the Republic of Kosovo	12.08.2014	Radio Evropa e Lirë https://www.evropaelire.org/a/26527060.html	Noting the vulnerabilities of Kosovo's youth towards radicalisation and the role of online platforms in the radicalisation process.
"People who promote and line up in Islamic radicalism have no place in Kosovo. They are merely a bunch of bastards."	Kadri Veseli, Democratic Party of Kosovo	27.02.2014	Telegrafi https://telegrafi.com/veseli-radikalizmi-islam-nuk-ka-vend-ne-kosove/	Veseli later on becomes the Chairman of the Assembly of Kosovo.
"The reason for the [NATO] aggression in our country was the so-called humanitarian catastrophe in Kosovo and the fabricated Racak [massacre in 1999], and the Albanian terrorists are the ones who made all this up and committed the biggest crimes in Kosovo."	Ivan Todosijevic, Kosovo Serb Serb Minister of Local Government Administration	09.04.2019	Balkan Insight https://balkaninsight.com/2019/04/09/kosovo-serb-minister-fired-for-calling-albanians-terrorists/?fbclid=IwAR1wBfAT2Tyn7mBwskJGWgkMxksUM1kQ6OKN5uhIq8exuUou-76ZzYz3QzY	Kosovo Prime Minister Ramush Haradinaj fired the Serb Minister of Local Government Administration, Ivan Todosijevic, for describing ethnic Albanians as terrorists and fabricators of massacres during the war in Kosovo.

"These are people who are trained for military terrorist actions, they know how to handle weapons, they have those international contacts and many came for some task, and one of those tasks is to attack civilians, in this case Serbian Orthodox civilians"	Milovan Drecun, politican at the Serbian Assembly working on Kosovo-related issues	22.04.2019	Srbija Danas https://www.srbijadanas.com/vesti/kosovo/dzihadisti-na-kosovu-mogu-biti-pretnja-stiglo-upozorenje-zbog-povratka-islamista-na-kim-2019-04-22?fbclid=IwAR1Gm_yo8ZoU5SYyVMdRz83rFv-v0E4rDH-PXMHQblUITfre7JbvYOnokRs	Although Drecun is not part of the Kosovo-Serb political parties in Kosovo, his rhetoric can be influential for the Kosovo Serb minority and is likely to shape public opinion.
"About 500 extremists from Kosmet went to the military ranks of jihadists, many of them were killed, and many returned. He adds that these are people who will not be integrated into a normal civil society, but will continue with the militaristic way of working to spread that radical ideology, and that will reflect on the security of the entire region".	Milovan Drecun, politican at the Serbian Assembly working on Kosovo-related issues	22.04.2019	Srbija Danas https://www.srbijadanas.com/vesti/kosovo/dzihadisti-na-kosovu-mogu-biti-pretnja-stiglo-upozorenje-zbog-povratka-islamista-na-kim-2019-04-22?fbclid=IwAR1Gm_yo8ZoU5SYyVMdRz83rFv-v0E4rDH-PXMHQblUITfre7JbvYOnokRs	His rhetoric reflects efforts to undermine Kosovo's statehood and amplify the security threat by greatly exaggerating the number of individuals who traveled from Kosovo (not based on any evidence).

Appendix 3. Networks of connection of the main agents of radicalisation in Kosovo

Parties

Non-party organisations

Main agent of violence

Media

——— Co-membership   – – – Collaboration   ------ Co-participation
—··· Affiliation   ⟶ Legitimation   –– ▶ Recruitment from … to …

Al Nusra Front

Foreign conservative faith-based organisations operating in Kosovo

IS

Jihadist extremists and foreign fighters

Radical imams propagating extremist narratives through social media platforms

Appendix 4. Main de-radicalisation programmes in Kosovo

Name	Dates	Agents	Approach	Scale	Targets
Division for Prevention and Reintegration of Radicalised Persons (DPRRI)	2017 - present	Ministry of Internal Affairs as the main coordinating body; relevant line ministries in the provision of reha-bilitation and reintegration services	Integrative	National	Individuals affected by jihadi extremism; former foreign fighters and their family members
Rehabilitation programmes for inmates		Kosovo Correctional Services (KCS); Ministry of Justice	Integrative	National	All prison population
Technical Team for Prevention of Violent Extremism		Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MLSW)	Integrative	National	Returnees from the foreign conflict zones and their family members
Developing capacities of the personnel of the Kosovo Correctional Service on how to deal with the incarcerated returnees		International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Programme (ICITAP)	Punitive and integrative	National	KCS staff
Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism	2015 - present	Kosovar Centre for Security Studies (KCSS); Local think tank;	civic education, integrative	National	Individuals affected by jihadi extremism; former foreign fighters and their family members; all types of extremism

Capacity building of primary care professionals and counseling to returnees.	2019 - present	Kosova Rehabilitation Centre for Torture Victims (KRCT)	Integrative, education	National	Women and children returnees from the foreign conflict zones
Vocational training	2017	Advocacy Training and Resource Centre (ATRC); NGO	Education	National	Women returnees from the foreign conflict zones
Building strong and resilient communities in Mitrovica	2017 – present	NGO; Community Building Mitrovica (CBM)	Integrative, education, civic	Local	Inter-ethnic dialogue; jihadi radicalisation
United Against Radicalisation and Violent Extremism	2019 - present	NGO	Integrative, education, civil	National	Returnees from the foreign conflict zones; affected communities and strakeholders by violent extrmeism
Vocational training	2017 - present	Community Development Fund (CDF); NGO	Integrative	National	Individuals affected by jihadi extremism; former foreign fighters and their family members; all types of extremism

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