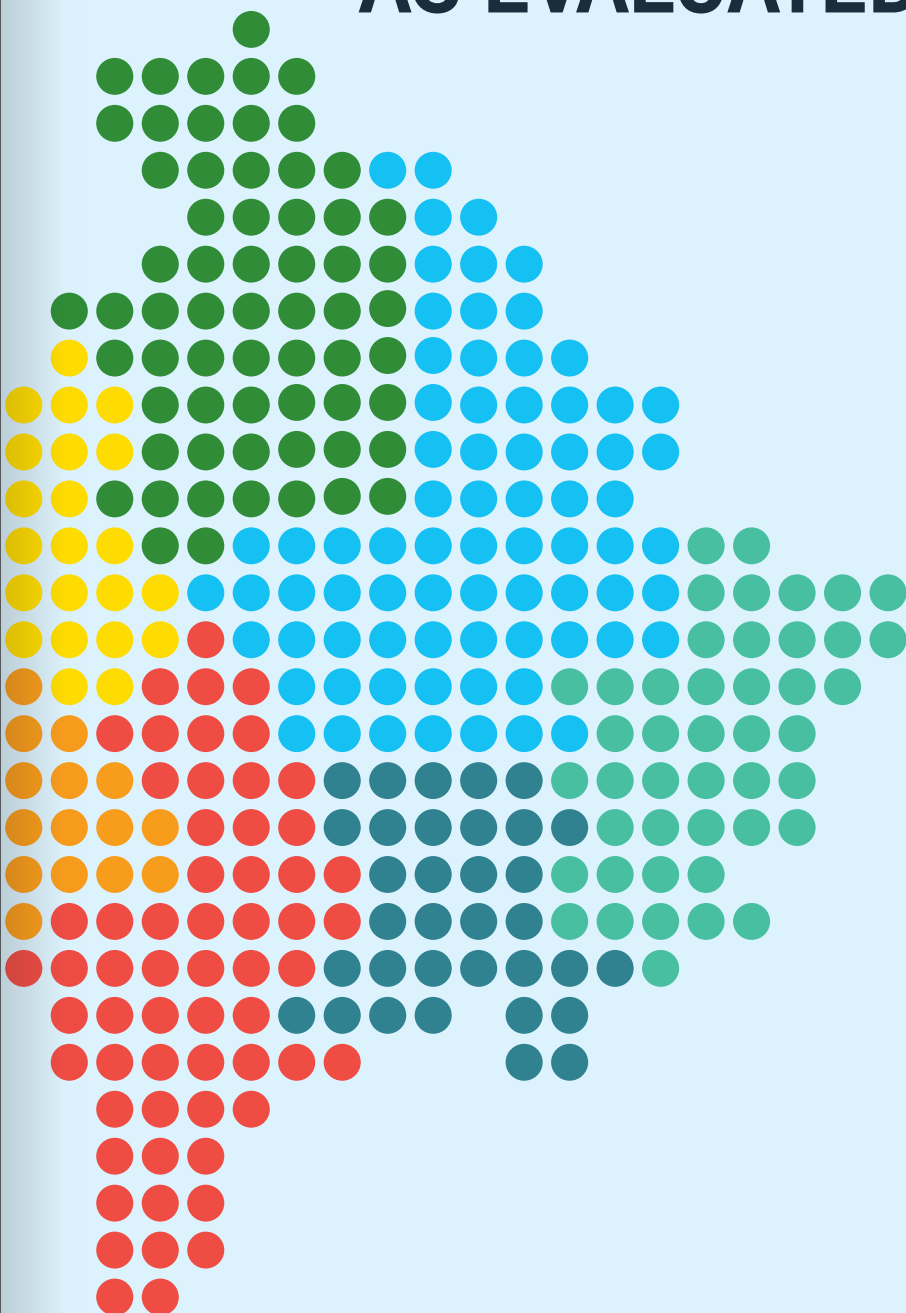




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QUALITY OF SERVICES PROVIDED BY KOSOVO BASIC COURTS – AS EVALUATED BY LAWYERS



2020

QUALITY OF SERVICES PROVIDED BY KOSOVO BASIC COURTS – **AS EVALUATED BY LAWYERS**

Prishtina, April 2020



Disclaimer:

This publication was produced for review by the United States Agency for International Development. It was prepared by Democracy Plus and Advocacy Center for Democratic Culture. The author's views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

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ABBREVIATIONS LIST

ACDC

Advocacy Center for Democratic Culture

D+

Democracy Plus

JSSP

Justice System Strengthening Program

KJC

Kosovo Judicial Council

KBA

Kosovo Bar Association

USAID

The United States Agency for International Development

KEY FINDINGS

Access to information

- Access to information about Basic Court cases was still a challenge for 54% of the lawyers surveyed, who found it difficult to get the information they need.
- The most common sources of case information for lawyers were court administration and judges (48% of responses).
- 60% of the lawyers surveyed do not speak to the judges about their cases.¹
- Court websites were not a prime source of information for lawyers – 62% of those surveyed did not use them, while many who tried to use them are not successful in their searches for information.
- 45% of the lawyers were either unaware of the existence of complaint boxes in courthouses or claimed they were never installed (17%).
- Almost 70% of those surveyed did not notice improvements in access to information compared to the previous year.
- 41% of respondents believed that transparency had improved at the Basic Courts.
- Only 19% of lawyers claimed that the Basic Courts have become more efficient in case handling and through automation.

Efficiency and fairness

- 66% of lawyers surveyed claimed that they are not able to get court business done in a reasonable time.
- Among civil cases, Property Claim cases take the longest to get resolved. According to the lawyers estimation on average it takes 49 months for a property claim to get resolved.
- Among criminal cases, Organized Crime and Corruption

cases take the longest to get resolved, lawyers estimate that on average it takes 32 months.

- Almost 70% of lawyers surveyed claimed that the Basic Courts take more than a year to schedule the first hearing after a case is filed.
- 30% of respondents claim that hearings get postponed often.
- The most frequent reasons for hearing delays cited by lawyers are the other party's absence, experts and/or witness's absence, and procedural violations by the court.
- Only 2 (two) of 359 lawyers surveyed stated that they communicate with the Basic Courts via e-mail. Notification via mail (postal service) represents 90% of the form of communication used in courts.
- 70% of respondents claimed not to be regularly notified about canceled or postponed hearings before arriving at the courthouse, and 30% claimed to never be notified.
- 65% of the lawyers believe that they are not treated equally.
- 76% of respondents believe that judges rarely or never sanction a lawyer for failing to appear at a hearing.

Perception of Corruption

- With the exception of 5 cases, the lawyers surveyed claimed to have never offered or received bribes.
- A minority of lawyers claimed that their colleagues received preferential treatment from a judge due to family and/or political ties or friendship.
- 44% of those surveyed claimed that ex-parte communications occur in the Basic Courts.

¹ This percentage is significantly higher compared to 37% who did not speak to judges in the previous survey.

INTRODUCTION

Democracy Plus (D+), in partnership with Advocacy Center for Democratic Culture (ACDC), was commissioned by USAID's Justice System Strengthening Program (USAID/JSSP) to assess lawyers' experiences with services provided by Kosovo's seven Basic Courts. Accordingly, we have collected and analyzed insights from lawyers, regarded as the most frequent users of court services, about their experiences with access to court information, efficiency in processing cases, and the nature and prevalence of corruption in the Basic Courts. This assessment attempts to identify gaps in these focal areas and facilitate a dialogue between lawyers and the courts about potential improvements.

The survey results will assist the Basic Courts, as well as the judiciary in general, in improving the quality of their services. This report builds on a previous assessment with lawyers conducted by D+ in 2018, as well as on a similar study of court users conducted in 2017.

USAID's Justice System Strengthening Program is a five-year rule of law activity that builds upon USAID's prior efforts to advance the rule of law in Kosovo and ensure that the justice system operates in a professional, efficient, and accountable manner. The program focuses on promoting a judicial system that adheres to high standards of independence, impartiality, integrity, accountability, and transparency, and on supporting the functioning and integration of judicial structures in the north of Kosovo.

Strengthen efficiency and effectiveness in the administration of justice and the delivery of quality services

Through USAID, the Justice System Strengthening Program (JSSP) assists the Kosovo Judicial Council (KJC) and Kosovo's courts in consolidating gains in efficiency and management at the court level. This is accomplished by facilitating the decentralization of administrative competencies and institutionalizing systems and tools for ef-

fective court and case management. Activities under this objective reduce case backlog and procedural obstacles to court efficiency and effectiveness.

Enhance the accountability and professionalism of the justice system

JSSP works closely with the KJC, judges, and court staff in building capacity to deliver justice professionally and efficiently. It also promotes continuing education and public integrity initiatives as the foundation for a judiciary that is accessible, credible, and effective.

Support the functioning and the integration of judicial structures in the North

JSSP supports the KJC and courts in activating judicial structures in northern Kosovo based on the Justice Sector Agreement signed by Kosovo and Serbia in 2015. This agreement provides for the integration of institutions, court operations, and judicial resources in the north. JSSP also assists individual courts in the region with case inventories and transfers, backlog reduction, case management, and capacity-building for judges and court staff.

Democracy Plus is an independent, nonprofit, and non-partisan organization founded by a group of activists who believe in further strengthening democratic values in Kosovo. The main objective of D+ is to foster democratic values and practices that will further strengthen the voice of the Kosovar society. D+ aims to contribute in establishing good governance practices, strengthening the rule of law, assisting free and fair elections, and fostering respect for human rights and social issues. D+ has implemented different projects that aim to bring decision-makers closer to citizens through policy research, facilitation of dialogue and interaction, and public education.

Advocacy Center for Democratic Culture is a civil society organization based in North Mitrovica, Kosovo. ACDC's goal is to improve the engagement of a multiethnic population in the Mitrovica region and raise citizen awareness about democratic culture.

1. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1.1 Survey Methodology

In the framework of this report, D+ conducted interviews with 374 lawyers licensed by the Kosovo Bar Association (KBA) who have practiced for a period of over two years in Kosovo's seven regions - Pristina, Ferizaj, Gjiilan, Prizren, Gjakova, Peja, and Mitrovica.

The survey sample size was calculated for each region based on the number of practicing lawyers registered with the KBA, as delineated in the list of lawyers on the KBA's official webpage as of June 2019. Only those lawyers who had been practicing for two or more years were included in the sample, with the aim of obtaining insights from those who were part of the legal system long enough to experience the issues under study. This list of practicing lawyers presented the population from which a representative sample size was calculated for each region based on the number of lawyers practicing in the region for over two years, with a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of +/- 10%. The total sample size consists of 374 respondents.

Lawyers to be interviewed were selected randomly (every nth lawyer in accordance with the sampling interval for each region) from the list in each region as registered with the KBA until the sample reached the predetermined sample size. Field enumerators hired by D+ were instructed to enter the offices of lawyers, ask if they would participate in the study, and interview them using tablets with Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing. Lawyers were asked to answer the survey questions about their Basic Court experiences based on the courthouse where they had the majority of their cases in order to more closely reflect conditions in the court with a higher level of certainty. This produced some contradictions between the number of lawyers registered with the KBA in a particular region and the number of lawyers in the sample size for non-majority lawyers. For example, even though there are 11 lawyers from non-majority communities registered with the KBA in the region of Mitrovica, four claimed to have the majority of their cases in the Basic Court of Pristina, hence they were included in the non-majority sample of Pristina.

To capture the experience of non-majority lawyers with Kosovo's Basic Courts, an exhaustive sampling technique was used whereby all non-majority lawyers registered with the KBA were included in the sample. Nonetheless, not all were successfully surveyed, as some claimed to reside outside of Kosovo. Moreover, a considerable number were surveyed by phone due to their temporary absence from Kosovo.

TABLE 1. DATA ON LAWYERS BY KOSOVO BAR ASSOCIATION AS OF JUNE 2019






























Region	NUMBER OF LAWYERS	
 PRISHTINA	 462	450 Albanian 11 Serbian 1 Turkish
 FERIZAJ/UROŠEVAC	 56	54 Albanian 2 Serbian
 GJILAN/GNJILANE	 84	82 Albanian 2 Serbian
 PRIZREN	 104	100 Albanian 1 Turkish 1 Serbian 2 Bosnian
 GJAKOVË/DJAKOVICA	 64	64 Albanian
 PEJË/PEĆ	 112	110 Albanian 2 Bosnian
 MITROVICË/MITROVICA	 79	68 Albanian 11 Serbian

TABLE 1.1. SAMPLE SIZE FOR EACH BASIC COURT

Sample size Basic Court	POPULATION OF PRACTICING LAWYERS (N)	SAMPLE SIZE FOR EACH REGION ²
 PRISHTINA	 462	84 Albanian 11 Serbian 1 Gorani
 FERIZAJ/UROŠEVAC	 56	36 Albanian 1 Serbian
 GJILAN/GNJILANE	 84	47 Albanian 1 Serbian 1 Turkish
 PRIZREN	 104	49 Albanian 1 Turkish 1 Bosnian 2 Gorani 1 Roma
 GJAKOVË/DJAKOVICA	 64	32* Albanian
 PEJË/PEĆ	 112	51 Albanian 3 Bosnian 1 Egyptian
 MITROVICË/MITROVICA	 79	44 Albanian 7 Serbian
TOTAL	961	374

*The minimum sample size needed within the set statistics for Gjakova is 39, deriving from a relatively small population of lawyers in Gjakova (64 total), the set minimum sample size was not reached. However, 32 lawyers were interviewed, and this number constitutes a new sample size, which statistically meets the set criteria that allows the results to be comparable to those of other Basic Courts.

2 Note: Lawyers were asked to claim their ethnicity, which in some cases was contradictory to their ethnicity in the official webpage of the KBA, therefore the information on this table may not be matching to the number of lawyers of different ethnic groups as in the official list of the KBA as of June 2019.

The respondents' identity and their answers to the questionnaires are kept anonymous and are not shared with the public. Data was entered into an excel database and analyzed using the R-Studio software for social sciences.

1.2 Variables

1.2.1 Access to Information

This study uses data from an underlying survey that measured the experiences of lawyers in obtaining case information from the Basic Courts. It specifically maps the channels used to obtain such information, such as personal inquiries, courts' official web pages, official correspondence, etc. It also captures information about the quality/usefulness of the information provided by the courts, and the speed at which lawyers were able to access the information they needed.

1.2.2 Efficiency

In this study we measure lawyers' opinions regarding court efficiency in terms of the time it takes for civil and criminal cases to be disposed. In addition, the study focuses on the lawyers' perception about the scheduling of hearings, underlying reasons for delays, and the approximate number of hearings it takes to resolve criminal and/or civil cases. Data collected through the survey aims to identify in what way lawyers are notified about hearings and if notification is provided in a timely manner; if, and whether, lawyers are sanctioned by judges for their failure to appear for a hearing; and if, and why judges, may show preferential treatment towards some lawyers or prosecutors.

1.2.3 Prevalence of Corruption

The survey collects information about whether lawyers personally, or through colleagues, have been asked for a bribe by judges or other court employees, and whether they or their clients considered bribery as a means of having their cases resolved faster or in their favor.

1.3 Demographic Data

The demographic data of participants in the study is presented in the following Tables. The majority of respondents were men, with most belonging to the 60+ age group. Around 9% lawyers came from non-majority communities in Kosovo.

TABLE 2. GENDER OF RESPONDENTS

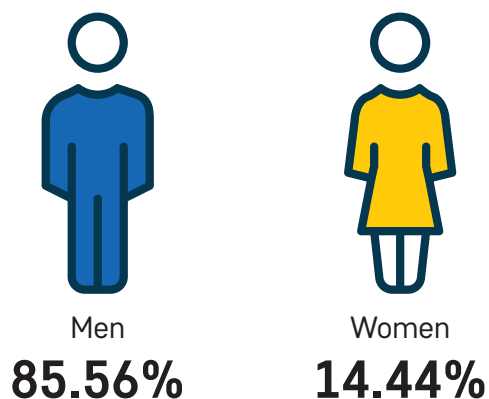


TABLE 2.1 RESPONDENT AGE GROUP

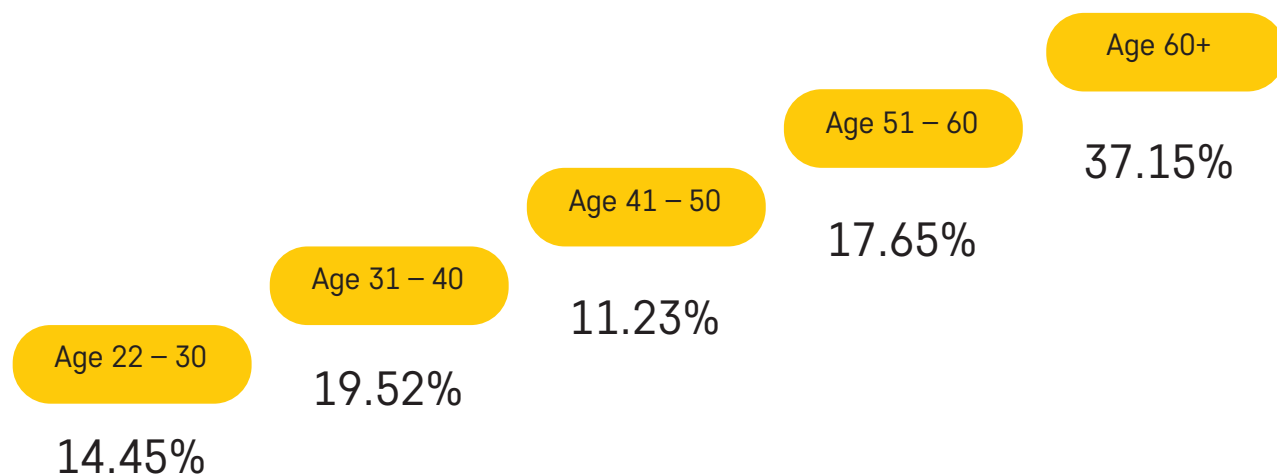


TABLE 2.2. ETHNICITY OF RESPONDENTS

Albanian	Serbian	Turkish	Bosnian	Roma	Ashkali	Egyptian	Gorani
91.71%	5.35%	0.53%	1.07%	0.27%	0.00%	0.27%	0.80%

2. QUALITY OF SERVICES OFFERED BY BASIC COURTS

This study was conducted with the purpose of assessing the services offered by the seven Basic Courts. As the first judicial instance, these courts have the largest workload compared to higher instance courts, such as the Court of Appeals, and/or the Supreme Court. Given their position in the judicial system, the Basic Courts are at the forefront to help the Kosovo Judicial Council (KJC) and the entire justice system increase public trust and transparency, improve efficiency, and apply a zero-tolerance policy against corruption.








3. ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Lawyers, as frequent users of court services, are familiar with the overall Basic Courts' operations. In the course of their professional work, they regularly seek information from the courts regarding their cases, including decisions and hearing schedules, among other matters. The common channels for getting this information are from court's website, phone calls or email, or by physically going to the court premises to ask court employees. In a well-functioning justice system, obtaining this information would be a smooth and timely process. The findings of this study indicate that access to information in Kosovo's courts is generally easy, apart from the Basic Court of Prishtina and Mitrovica.

3.1 Information sought by lawyers






Table 3.1 shows that the majority of respondents who tried the majority of their cases in the Basic Courts of Peja (78%), Prizren (72%), Gjiilan (63%), Ferizaj (59%) found it somewhat or very easy to get information about their cases from the courts. On the opposite end of the spectrum, 51% of those who practice mostly in Prishtina stated that it was very hard to acquire information from the court, as did 43% of those in the Mitrovica region.

TABLE 3.1: IN YOUR EXPERIENCE, HOW EASY IS IT TO GET INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR CASES AT THE COURT?

		Very hard	Somewhat hard	Somewhat easy	Very easy
	Prishtina	51.04%	37.50%	10.42%	1.04%
	Mitrovica	43.14%	35.29%	15.69%	5.88%
	Peja	9.09%	12.73%	38.18%	40.00%
	Gjakova	9.38%	46.88%	34.38%	9.36%
	Gjiilan	10.20%	26.53%	38.78%	24.49%
	Ferizaj	8.11%	32.43%	32.43%	27.03%
	Prizren	3.70%	24.07%	51.85%	20.37%

Lawyers were then asked a follow-up question about the source of information about their cases. Also, worth mentioning is the sameness in responses compared to survey results of the previous year, since court administration and judges remain as the key source of information for lawyers.³








TABLE 3.2: HOW DO YOU GET INFORMATION FROM THE COURT ABOUT YOUR CASES?

Number of answers	Source of information
 36.33%	Court Administration
 30.45%	From the referents or the referents in conjunction with judges and the administration
 17.65%	From the Scribe
 12.11%	By the judges, in conjunction with the administration
 3.46%	Stated they do not have any sources to get information about their cases.

Each case must have an assigned number that should be given to the lawyer prior to a scheduled hearing. However, the results indicate that this is not a common practice that all seven Basic Courts follow, as lawyers with most of their cases at the Basic Courts of Pristina, Gjakova and Gjilan do not share the same experience with lawyers from the Basic Courts of Mitrovica, Peja, Ferizaj and Prizren.

³ Osmani, R., Prekazi, B. (2018). *Cilësia e shërbimeve të ofrura në Gjykatat Themelore të Kosovës – Sipas vlerësimit të avokateve*. Retrieved from <http://bit.ly/sondazhimeavokate> p. 16.








TABLE 3.3: DO YOU RECEIVE INFORMATION FROM THE COURT ABOUT THE NUMBER YOUR CASE WAS ASSIGNED (BEFORE THE HEARING IS SCHEDULED)?

		Yes	No
	Prishtina	20.83%	79.17%
	Mitrovica	64.71%	35.29%
	Peja	60.00%	40.00%
	Gjakova	18.75%	81.25%
	Gjilan	36.73%	63.27%
	Ferizaj	64.86%	35.14%
	Prizren	79.63%	20.37%

Lawyers are not supposed to talk to judges directly regarding the status of their cases. Data from the survey indicates that the majority of lawyers never or sometimes talk to judges. Compared to results from the previous year, there appears to be improvement regarding lawyers speaking directly to judges about the status of their cases, with the overall percentage of lawyers never talking to the judges surpassing 60% compared to 37%⁴ last year. The situation in Prizren, Pristina, and Gjilan would benefit from closer scrutiny since a significant number of lawyers, almost half in Prizren and Gjilan, claim to *sometimes* talk to judges directly about their cases.

⁴ Osmani, R., Prekazi, B. (2018). Cilësia e shërbimeve të ofrura në Gjykatat Themelore të Kosovës – Sipas vlerësimit të avokatëve. Retrieved from <http://bit.ly/sondazhimeavokate> p. 17.

TABLE 3.4: DO YOU TALK TO THE JUDGE DIRECTLY ABOUT THE STATUS OF YOUR CASE?








		Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
	Prishtina	71.58%	26.32%	2.11%	0.00%
	Mitrovica	56.86%	35.29%	5.88%	1.96%
	Peja	69.09%	29.09%	0.00%	1.82%
	Gjakova	78.13%	18.75%	3.13%	0.00%
	Gjilan	42.86%	46.94%	6.12%	4.08%
	Ferizaj	59.46%	37.84%	2.70%	0.00%
	Prizren	44.44%	50.00%	3.70%	1.85%

In 2019, the KJC, with JSSP's support, launched an up-to-date website rich in information and with separate threads for each Basic Court and other courts.⁵ Survey results, however, show that the majority of lawyers interviewed do not use the courts' website as a source of information, a situation which has not changed from the last survey in 2018.⁶

⁵ USAID, Fostering Accountability in the Court System. Retrieved October 30, 2019, <http://bit.ly/fosteringaccountabilitycourtsystem>.








⁶ Osmani, R., Prekazi, B. (2018). *Cilësia e shërbimeve të ofrura në Gjykatat Themelore të Kosovës – Sipas vlerësimit të avokatëve*. Retrieved from <http://bit.ly/sondazhimeavokate> p. 15.

TABLE 3.5: DO YOU USE THE COURT’S WEBSITE AS A SOURCE OF INFORMATION?

		Yes	No
	Prishtina	46.32%	53.68%
	Mitrovica	27.45%	72.55%
	Peja	32.73%	67.27%
	Gjakova	43.75%	56.25%
	Gjilan	28.57%	71.43%
	Ferizaj	40.54%	59.46%
	Prizren	42.59%	57.41%








The age group 31- 40 years old comprises the largest proportion of the lawyers who claim to use the court website with 25%, (in most regions) followed by the age group 60+ years old with a large percentage in most regions. On the other hand, of those who claim to not use the court website as a source of information, the age group 60+ years old represents the largest percentage with more than 40% in most regions.

TABLE 3.5.2: DO YOU USE THE COURT'S WEBSITE AS A SOURCE OF INFORMATION?

		YES					NO				
		22-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	60+	22-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	60+
	PRISHTINA	13.64%	27.27%	20.45%	13.64%	25.00%	11.76%	15.69%	9.80%	11.76%	50.98%
	MITROVICA	21.43%	14.29%	42.86%	21.43%	0.00%	18.92%	21.62%	27.03%	18.92%	13.51%
	PEJA	11.11%	38.89%	11.11%	22.22%	16.67%	8.11%	16.22%	2.70%	24.32%	48.65%
	GJAKOVA	14.29%	7.14%	14.29%	28.57%	35.71%	5.56%	11.11%	5.56%	11.11%	66.67%
	GJILAN	21.43%	14.29%	7.14%	14.29%	42.86%	17.14%	14.29%	2.86%	17.14%	48.57%
	FERIZAJ	6.67%	33.33%	6.67%	26.67%	26.67%	4.55%	31.82%	4.55%	22.73%	36.36%
	PRIZREN	34.78%	26.09%	4.35%	21.74%	13.04%	16.13%	6.45%	3.23%	9.68%	64.52%

However, having a modern and updated website is not sufficient to make this information source usable. Lawyers who claimed to use the courts' website were asked whether they found what they looked for and the majority of them responded with the answers varying from partially to no. All the Basic Courts need to build a direct communication with the users of the website and get their feedback on how to enrich and update their websites regularly to satisfy their users' needs while increasing transparency and efficiency for services offered.








TABLE 3.6: DO YOU USUALLY FIND WHAT YOU WERE LOOKING FOR?

		Yes	Partially	No
	Prishtina	4.55%	72.73%	22.72%
	Mitrovica	14.29%	35.71%	50.00%
	Peja	27.78%	50.00%	22.22%
	Gjakova	42.86%	35.71%	21.43%
	Gjilan	21.43%	71.43%	7.14%
	Ferizaj	20.00%	66.67%	13.33%
	Prizren	34.78%	60.87%	4.35%

Court users should have the right to complain, express their concerns, and comment on court operations and overall delivery of services. In fact, apart from the president of the Basic Court of Pristina, this was a pledge made by the presidents of all other Basic Courts in response to the findings of the study conducted in 2018.⁷ Results from table 3.7 show that in four Basic Courts - Pristina, Mitrovica, Gjakova and Ferizaj - such boxes were not observed by respondent lawyers whether or not they were indeed in place. In the remaining three Basic Courts, lawyers claimed to have seen complaint boxes in court premises.

⁷ Osmani, R., Prekazi, B. (2018). *Cilësia e shërbimeve të ofrura në Gjykatat Themelore të Kosovës – Sipas vlerësimit të avokatëve*. Retrieved from <http://bit.ly/sondazhimeavokate> p. 44-45.

TABLE 3.7: ARE COMPLAINT BOXES AVAILABLE INSIDE THE COURTHOUSE?








		Yes	No	I do not know
	Prishtina	18.95%	18.95%	62.10%
	Mitrovica	25.49%	29.41%	45.10%
	Peja	36.36%	25.45%	38.18%
	Gjakova	46.88%	6.25%	46.88%
	Gjilan	61.22%	16.33%	22.45%
	Ferizaj	29.73%	18.92%	51.35%
	Prizren	59.26%	1.85%	38.89%

3.2 Indications of Improvement

D+'s report on the Quality of Services Provided by Kosovo Basic Courts in 2018, recommended a handful of policy proposals, which all seven presidents of the Basic Courts have committed to implement.⁸ Nonetheless, lawyers did not notice improvement with regard to access to information. As the table below reveals, most lawyers from all seven regions chose "No" as the answer when asked whether there were improvements to access to information in the respective Basic Court where they had most of their cases.






⁸ Osmani, R. & Prekazi, B. (2018). Cilësia e shërbimeve të ofrura në Gjykatat Themelore të Kosovës – Sipas vlerësimit të avokatëve. Retrieved from <http://bit.ly/sondazhimeavokate> p. 47.

TABLE 3.8: ARE THERE ANY IMPROVEMENT TO ACCESS TO INFORMATION COMPARED TO LAST YEAR?

		Yes	No
	Prishtina	20.21%	79.79%
	Mitrovica	19.61%	80.39%
	Peja	23.64%	76.36%
	Gjakova	46.88%	53.13%
	Gjilan	22.45%	77.55%
	Ferizaj	43.24%	56.76%
	Prizren	22.22%	77.78%

As a follow-up question, lawyers were asked to name some of the areas in which courts have improved from the past year. Around 20% of the respondents observed improvements in accessing information provided more detailed information. Their responses are aggregated in the table below, which lists some of the most common answers provided. As it shows, lawyers have witnessed improvements at the Basic Courts mostly in the area of transparency, case handling, administrative efficiency, and digitalization.

TABLE 3.8.1: ARE THERE ANY IMPROVEMENTS TO ACCESS TO INFORMATION COMPARED TO LAST YEAR?

Number of answers	Source
 41.67%	Enhanced transparency
 19.44%	Overall improvement in case handlings
 16.67%	Improved digitalization
 15.28%	Court administration has become more efficient
 6.94%	Mentioned the hiring of more judges as an improvement

4. EFFICIENCY AND FAIRNESS

This section looks into the efficiency of Basic Courts in their daily operations based on lawyers' first-hand experience. The total number of active cases in all seven Basic Courts as of April 2019 was 233,459, this shows that the Basic Courts in Kosovo are dealing with a large number of active cases and their efficiency is significantly challenged.⁹

Thus, in the process of collecting information related to courts' efficiency in providing services, we surveyed lawyers' experience with:

- 1 Courts processing of both civil and criminal cases;
- 2 Hearings management in terms of: sending notifications; frequency on hearings postponements; reasons behind hearing delays; and the number of hearings required until the final verdict;
- 3 Application of fines for lawyers' absence in hearings;
- 4 Lawyer-judge relations and treatment;
- 5 Lawyer – prosecutor -relations.








4.1 Disposition time

Firstly, lawyers were asked whether they were able to get their business done (from the moment of filing the case to the final verdict) within an acceptable and satisfying period of time. Results show that, apart from lawyers who had most of their cases in the Basic Court of Peja (55,54%, stated "Yes"), lawyers predominantly chose the answer option "No." Comparatively, results from last years' survey showed that lawyers from Pristina, Mitrovica, Gjakova, Gjilan, and Prizren were satisfied with the time it took to get court 'business done'. The Basic Court in Peja is the exception, having received a more positive evaluation compared to last year.¹⁰

⁹ Këshilli Gjyqësor i Kosovës, & Departamenti i Statistikës. (2019). *Raporti Statistikor i Gjykatave Term - I - 2019*. Retrieved from <http://bit.ly/KeshilliGjyqesoriKosoves>.

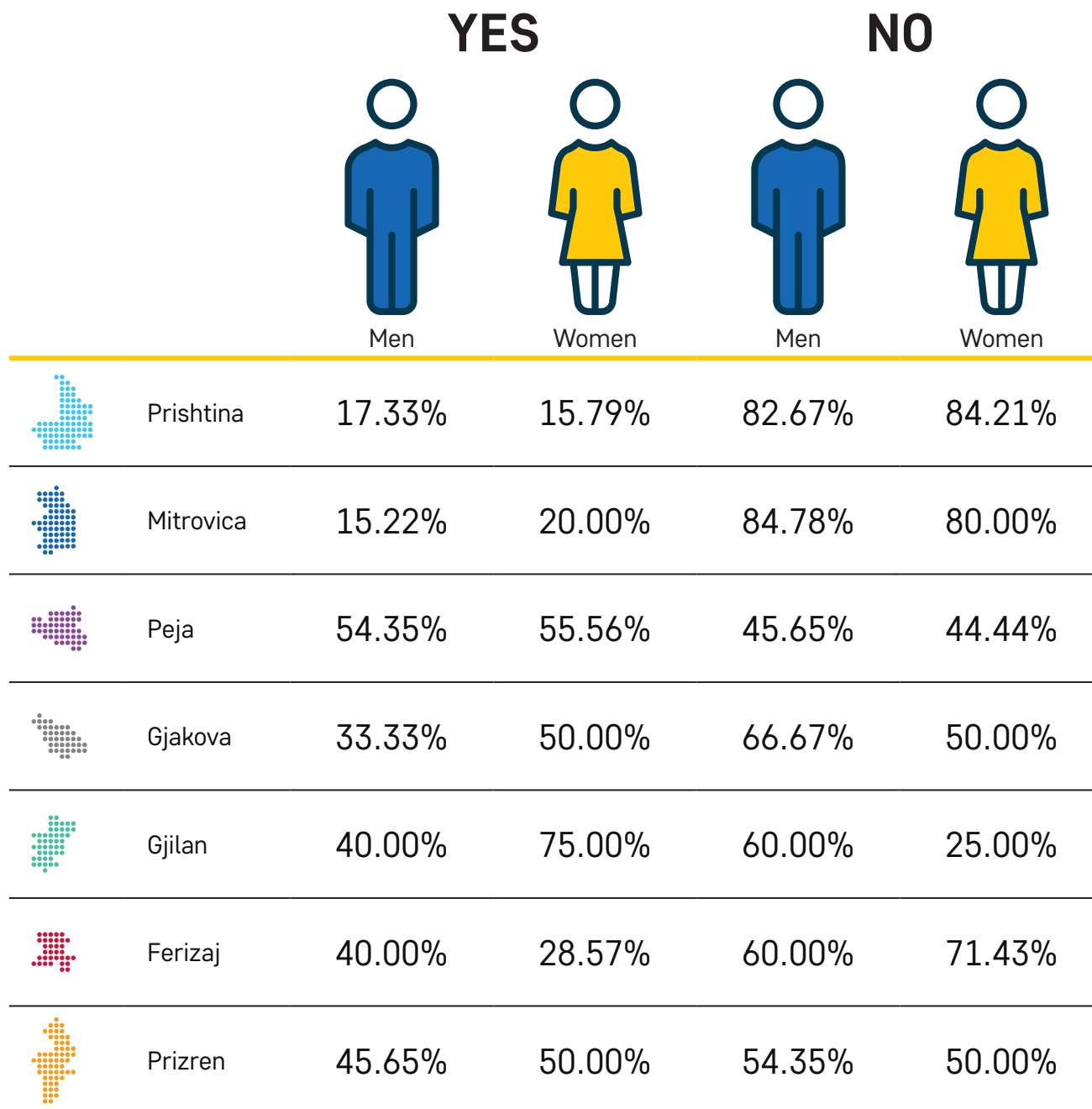
¹⁰ Osmani, R. & Prekazi, B. (2018). *Cilësia e shërbimeve të ofrura në Gjykatat Themelore të Kosovës – Sipas vlerësimit të avokatëve*. Retrieved from <http://bit.ly/sondazhimeavokate> p. 19.

TABLE 4.1: ARE YOU ABLE TO GET YOUR COURT BUSINESS DONE IN A REASONABLE TIME?

		Yes	No
	Prishtina	17.02%	82.98%
	Mitrovica	15.69%	84.31%
	Peja	54.55%	45.45%
	Gjakova	34.38%	65.62%
	Gjilan	42.86%	57.14%
	Ferizaj	37.84%	62.16%
	Prizren	46.30%	53.70%








When answers are disaggregated by gender, findings show that the only times the majority of lawyers claimed to get court business done in a reasonable time was female lawyers in Peja around 56% and Gjilan 75%, and male lawyers in Peja around 55%.

TABLE 4.1.1: ARE YOU ABLE TO GET YOUR COURT BUSINESS DONE IN A REASONABLE TIME?



Respondents believed that property claims took the most time to resolve - the mean number of months estimated by lawyers was 49 months. Pristina was viewed as taking the longest time, estimated at approximately 78 months per case, while Ferizaj had the shortest estimated time of 30 months. Damage compensation cases were considered the second longest to resolve, estimated at about 37 months across all courts. Labor disputes cases, according to the lawyers' experience, took the second shortest time to resolve (about 23 months). Contested divorce cases (about 10 months) were the shortest.

TABLE 4.2: IN YOUR EXPERIENCE, HOW MANY MONTHS ON AVERAGE DOES IT USUALLY TAKE FOR A CIVIL CASE TO BE DECIDED BY THE BASIC COURT FROM THE MOMENT OF FILING?

		Damage compen- sation	Contested divorce	Property claims	Labor disputes
	Prishtina	57	20	78	32
	Mitrovica	51	13	54	40
	Peja	37	8	37	21
	Gjakova	34	6	52	18
	Gjilan	36	11	47	23
	Ferizaj	23	7	30	15
	Prizren	24	6	48	11








Similar to civil cases, the time it takes for a court to resolve a criminal case depends also on the type of case. The questionnaire listed six categories of the most common criminal cases to collect the experience of lawyers in this regard. Lawyers were asked to determine, based on their experience, the approximate number of months/years needed to resolve criminal cases. Thus, cases of *theft (about 17 months)*, *domestic violence (about 8 months)* and *sexual violence (about 13 months)*, as the table below shows, are categories of cases that take the shortest time to resolve, in all seven Basic Courts. While, the three other types of cases: *illegal possession of weapons (about 15 months)*, *organized crime and corruption (about 32 months)*, and *homicide (about 26 months)* take longer.

Lawyers ranked the Basic Court of Peja as the most efficient court in resolving criminal cases. Findings show that cases of domestic violence take 3 months to be disposed while the cases of sexual violence take 5 months. The Basic Court of Pristina is ranked as the least efficient with 12 and 27 months for both cases respectively. It is important to note and stress that Basic

Court of Pristina, as the data from KJC shows, ¹¹ has more active cases than all other Basic Courts combined. The latter may explain the reasons why lawyers define it the least efficient court. The Basic Court of Mitrovica which has a considerable smaller number of active cases (8,971) ¹², according to the lawyers (table 4.3), is the slowest in resolving *organized crime and corruption* cases. It needs approximately 50 months to dispose of this category of cases.

Illegal possession of weapons, according to lawyers' experience, is one the categories of cases that the Basic Courts are struggling to resolve in a more efficient manner. Lawyers who have most of their cases in the Basic Court of Mitrovica claim that it takes on average 29 months to resolve a criminal case of illegal possession of weapons, which makes this court the least efficient according to lawyers, compared to others. On the other hand, results show that the Basic Court of Prizren is the most efficient in resolving this type of cases.

TABLE 4.3: IN YOUR EXPERIENCE, HOW MANY MONTHS ON AVERAGE DOES IT USUALLY TAKE FOR A CRIMINAL CASE TO BE RESOLVED BY THE BASIC COURT FROM THE MOMENT OF FILING?

		Theft	Illegal weapon possession	Organized crime and corruption	Homicide	Domestic violence	Sexual violence
	Prishtina	26	23	48	46	13	28
	Mitrovica	29	29	50	35	11	23
	Peja	14	10	31	27	4	5
	Gjakova	14	10	20	15	6	11
	Gjilan	16	11	23	20	9	11
	Ferizaj	14	14	31	25	7	11
	Prizren	10	9	26	18	7	7








11 Këshilli Gjyqësor i Kosovës, & Departamenti i Statistikës. (2019). Raporti Statistikor i Gjykatave Term - I - 2019. Retrieved from <http://bit.ly/KeshilliGjyqesoriKosoves>.

12 Ibid.

4.2 Hearings








Generally, all seven Basic Courts according to the lawyers' experience, take time in managing and scheduling the initial hearing. In five out of seven Basic Courts, lawyers claim that it takes more than 24 months for the court to arrange the first hearing from the date of filing the claim. While in the Basic Court of Gjakova and Prizren the situation appears to be somewhat better as the lawyers who have most of their cases in these two courts (47% vs 50%) claim that it takes between 13-24 months (Gjakova), and 7-12 months, (Prizren), to schedule the first hearing.

TABLE 4.4: IN YOUR EXPERIENCE, HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE ON AVERAGE FOR THE COURT TO SCHEDULE THE FIRST HEARING FROM THE DATE OF FILING THE CLAIM?

		Less than 2 months	2 - 6 months	7 - 12 months	13 - 24 months	Over 24 months
	Prishtina	1.06%	13.83%	4.26%	9.57%	71.28%
	Mitrovica	3.92%	9.80%	9.80%	7.84%	68.64%
	Peja	0.00%	0.00%	12.73%	16.36%	70.91%
	Gjakova	0.00%	12.50%	21.88%	46.88%	18.75%
	Gjilan	0.00%	12.24%	16.33%	26.53%	44.90%
	Ferizaj	2.70%	8.11%	21.62%	13.51%	54.05%
	Prizren	1.85%	25.93%	50.00%	18.52%	3.70%








To some degree a different situation appears when it comes to scheduling the first hearing from the date of filing an indictment. The table below indicates that lawyers across all seven Basic Courts, have shared experiences between the four options that have been provided in the questionnaire. Lawyers claim that in the Basic Court of Gjakova (37.5%), Ferizaj (43.2%) and Prizren (40.7 %,) it takes between 2-6 months to schedule the first hearing from the date of filing the indictment. In the Basic Court of Pristina between 40% of lawyers claim that it takes between 13 and 24 months, in Gjilan lawyers are divided between the options of less than 2 months and 2-6 months, (36.7% vs 42.8%) while in the Basic Court in Mitrovica, which is the most inefficient in this regard, 35.9% of lawyers claim that it takes more than 24 months to arrange the first hearing.

TABLE 4.5: IN YOUR EXPERIENCE, HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE ON AVERAGE FOR THE COURT TO SCHEDULE THE FIRST HEARING FROM THE DATE OF FILING THE INDICTMENT?

		Less than 2 months	2 - 6 months	7 - 12 months	13 - 24 months	Over 24 months
	Prishtina	5.32%	13.83%	22.34%	40.43%	18.09%
	Mitrovica	5.88%	15.69%	19.61%	23.53%	35.29%
	Peja	9.09%	12.73%	47.27%	25.45%	5.45%
	Gjakova	21.88%	37.50%	31.25%	9.38%	0.00%
	Gjilan	36.73%	42.86%	12.24%	4.08%	4.08%
	Ferizaj	21.62%	43.24%	27.03%	5.41%	2.70%
	Prizren	12.96%	40.74%	38.89%	7.41%	0.00%








The data from the KJC database shows that there is a high volume and frequency of new cases being filed in the courts. Frequent postponement of hearings adds up to the time it takes to resolve cases and also overall efficiency of the courts. The table below indicate a negative trend in most of the lawyers' responses. While, most of the lawyers in all Basic Courts claim that scheduled hearings are postponed "*sometimes*", a large share of them also chose to respond by selecting "*often*". This shows that postponement of hearings happens rather frequently in all seven Basic Courts and it occurs rather frequently.

TABLE 4.6: IN YOUR EXPERIENCE, ON AVERAGE, HOW OFTEN ARE SCHEDULED HEARINGS POSTPONED?

		Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
	Prishtina	2.13%	22.34%	42.55%	31.91%	1.07%
	Mitrovica	1.96%	25.49%	29.41%	31.37%	11.76%
	Peja	1.82%	21.82%	45.45%	30.91%	0.00%
	Gjakova	0.00%	15.63%	65.63%	18.75%	0.00%
	Gjilan	0.00%	14.29%	51.02%	34.69%	0.00%
	Ferizaj	5.41%	5.41%	45.95%	43.24%	0.00%
	Prizren	3.70%	33.33%	42.59%	20.37%	0.00%

Although there might be numerous reasons why hearings were delayed, we have compiled a list of the most frequent reasons and asked lawyers to choose (more than one option) why hearings were adjourned. The table below shows a rather puzzling picture of the situation in all seven Basic Courts. At a first glance one notices that *party's absence, experts and/or witness' absence* as the most frequent reasons, according to the lawyers' experience, in all seven Basic Courts. Two other most frequent reasons for hearing delays in all seven Basic Courts are the *prosecutor's absence* and *procedural violations* by the court. While for the Basic Courts of Pristina, Mitrovica, Peja and Gjiilan lawyer's absence is also one of the most frequent reasons hearings are delayed. Compared to last year's results the same reasons remain for hearing delays, however in a growing trend as the most frequent reason is *lawyers' absence*.¹³

TABLE 4.7: IN YOUR EXPERIENCE, WHAT ARE THE MOST FREQUENT REASONS HEARINGS ARE DELAYED FOR?

		Prosecutor's absence	Lawyer's absence	Other party's absence	Experts and/or witness' absence	Judge not prepared for the hearing	Failure to establish the panel of judges	Procedural violations by the court
	Pristina	18.32%	9.90%	24.75%	14.85%	10.89%	5.94%	15.35%
	Mitrovica	14.62%	12.31%	32.31%	20.00%	6.15%	6.15%	8.46%
	Peja	22.05%	9.45%	32.28%	26.77%	4.72%	3.15%	1.57%
	Gjakova	7.92%	8.91%	25.74%	25.74%	2.97%	5.94%	22.77%
	Gjilan	10.00%	8.33%	30.83%	20.83%	5.00%	6.67%	18.33%
	Ferizaj	12.79%	8.14%	26.74%	25.58%	4.65%	4.65%	17.44%
	Prizren	9.68%	1.61%	32.26%	27.42%	3.23%	0.00%	25.81%

¹³ Osmani, R. & Prekazi, B. (2018). *Cilësia e shërbimeve të ofrura në Gjykatat Themelore të Kosovës – Sipas vlerësimit të avokatëve*. Retrieved from <http://bit.ly/sondazhimeavokate> p. 23.








Results from the table 4.8, apart from the Basic Court of Mitrovica and Gjakova, shows that the reported average number of hearings needed to resolve a criminal case is smaller compared to that of a civil case. The courts with the smallest number of hearings needed for a civil case and a criminal case to be resolved, according to lawyers, are respectively that of Mitrovica with approximately 4 hearings for the former and that of Peja with 3.5 hearings for the latter. Tables 4.4 and 4.5 indicate that the Basic Court of Mitrovica is the slowest in scheduling the first hearing for both civil and criminal cases, however once the scheduling is completed and in accordance with the responses of the surveyed lawyers as aggregated in the table below it is the most efficient court in resolving civil cases is approximately 4 hearings per case.

TABLE 4.8: IN YOUR EXPERIENCE, ON AVERAGE, HOW MANY HEARINGS DOES IT TAKE TO RESOLVE...

		...a civil case	...a criminal case
	Prishtina	4.79	4.54
	Mitrovica	3.84	5.66
	Peja	4.12	3.68
	Gjakova	4.23	4.25
	Gjilan	4.29	3.96
	Ferizaj	4.11	3.97
	Prizren	4.31	5.29

The table below shows that lawyers claim that generally all seven Basic Courts send their notifications to them two weeks in advance, except for the Basic Court of Pristina and Gjilan for which some lawyers claim to receive them within the same day.








TABLE 4.9: TYPICALLY, WHEN ARE YOU NOTIFIED ABOUT A HEARING?

		2 weeks in advance	5 - 7 days in advance	1 day in advance	Same day
	Prishtina	84.04%	13.83%	1.06%	1.06%
	Mitrovica	72.55%	27.45%	0.00%	0.00%
	Peja	80.00%	20.00%	0.00%	0.00%
	Gjakova	84.38%	15.63%	0.00%	0.00%
	Gjilan	67.35%	28.57%	2.04%	2.04%
	Ferizaj	64.86%	35.14%	0.00%	0.00%
	Prizren	75.93%	24.07%	0.00%	0.00%

Despite widely used technology and electronic communication, similar to last year,¹⁴ according to lawyers, all seven Basic Courts still use the least efficient and most expensive means of sending hearing notifications to lawyers by using post mail. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that lawyers who have most of their cases in the Basic Court of Pristina and Mitrovica, in some occasions might receive the notification about hearings via phone. While only two lawyers (one in Mitrovica and another one in Ferizaj) mentioned to having received notifications via E-mail. However, this seems to be regulated by the KJC regulation under article 4, point 11 which stipulates that notifications are sent and received via post mail.








¹⁴ Osmani, R. & Prekazi, B. (2018). *Cilësia e shërbimeve të ofruara në Gjykatat Themelore të Kosovës – Sipas vlerësimit të avokatëve*. Retrieved from <http://bit.ly/sondazhimeavokate> p. 25.

TABLE 4.10: HOW ARE YOU USUALLY NOTIFIED ABOUT HEARINGS?

		Mail	Phone	Email
	Prishtina	83.19%	16.81%	0.00%
	Mitrovica	84.21%	14.04%	1.75%
	Peja	96.43%	3.57%	0.00%
	Gjakova	85.71%	14.29%	0.00%
	Gjilan	92.68%	7.32%	0.00%
	Ferizaj	80.00%	16.67%	3.33%
	Prizren	96.36%	3.64%	0.00%

The consequences of not using modern means of communication on part of the courts is reflected in the frequency of cases where lawyers must travel to the courthouse only to realize that the scheduled hearing has been delayed. Generally, according to lawyers, they are not informed in a timely manner for a hearing postponement, in fact most responses in all seven Basic Courts were indicated by “*sometimes*” or “*never*.”








TABLE 4.11: DO YOU RECEIVE TIMELY NOTIFICATIONS WHEN HEARINGS ARE POSTPONED (BEFORE YOU GO TO THE COURTHOUSE)?

		Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
	Prishtina	37.23%	39.36%	10.64%	12.77%
	Mitrovica	21.57%	17.65%	23.53%	37.25%
	Peja	25.45%	47.27%	14.55%	12.73%
	Gjakova	15.63%	46.88%	37.50%	0.00%
	Gjilan	40.82%	44.90%	6.12%	8.16%
	Ferizaj	21.62%	51.35%	5.41%	21.62%
	Prizren	31.48%	44.44%	22.22%	1.85%

4.3 Lawyer – Prosecutor Relations

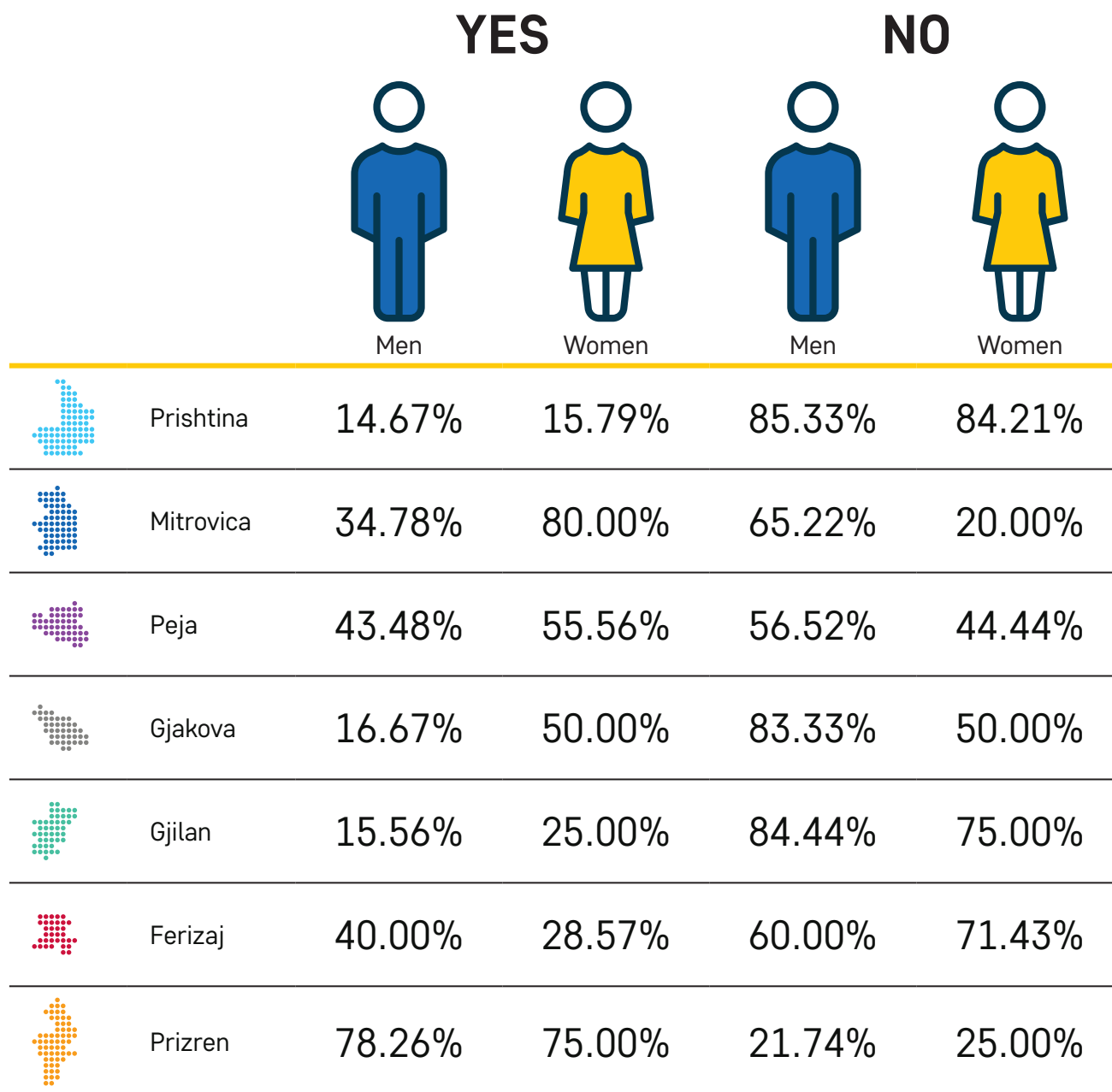
Prosecutor and lawyers are expected to be treated equally by the judge. However, the results show that lawyers' experience in six out of seven Basic Courts, is that they are not treated equally. As a matter of fact, overall, 65% of them believe that they are not treated equally. Compared to their colleagues, lawyers who have most of their cases in the Basic Court of Prizren, claim to be treated equally.

TABLE 4.12: DO YOU BELIEVE THAT YOU AND THE PROSECUTOR GET TREATED EQUALLY BY THE JUDGES?

		Yes	No
	Prishtina	14.89%	85.11%
	Mitrovica	39.22%	60.78%
	Peja	45.45%	54.55%
	Gjakova	18.75%	81.25%
	Gjilan	16.33%	83.67%
	Ferizaj	37.84%	62.16%
	Prizren	77.78%	22.22%








Female lawyers who have most of their cases at the Basic Courts of Mitrovica (80%), Peja (55.5%) and Prizren (75%) share the experience that lawyers, and prosecutors are treated equally at the respective courts. In contrast, for male lawyers, only those who have most of their cases at the Basic Court of Prizren (78.2%) share the same view.

TABLE 4.12.1: DO YOU BELIEVE THAT YOU AND THE PROSECUTOR GET TREATED EQUALLY BY THE JUDGES?






When it comes to the age group who share this sentiment, the table below shows that two age groups stand out. The highest percentage (table 4.12.1 in most cases over 30%) of the lawyers who believe they are not treated equally with a prosecutor belong to the age group 60+ years old followed by the age group 31-40 years old (in most cases over 10%).

4.12.2: DO YOU BELIEVE THAT YOU AND THE PROSECUTOR GET TREATED EQUALLY BY THE JUDGES?

		YES					NO				
		22-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	60+	22-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	60+
	PRISHTINA	7.13%	14.29%	14.29%	14.29%	50.00%	13.75%	22.50%	15.00%	12.50%	36.25%
	MITROVICA	20.00%	15.00%	30.00%	20.00%	15.00%	19.35%	22.59%	32.26%	19.35%	6.45%
	PEJA	4.00%	28.00%	8.00%	24.00%	36.00%	13.34%	20.00%	3.33%	23.33%	40.00%
	GJAKOVA	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	33.33%	66.67%	11.54%	11.54%	11.54%	15.38%	50.00%
	GJILAN	0.00%	25.00%	0.00%	0.00%	75.00%	21.95%	12.20%	4.88%	19.51%	41.46%
	FERIZAJ	7.14%	21.44%	0.00%	35.71%	35.71%	4.35%	39.13%	8.70%	17.39%	30.43%
	PRIZREN	23.81%	16.67%	2.38%	11.90%	45.24%	25.00%	8.33%	8.33%	25.00%	33.34%

In a follow-up question lawyers have been asked to name the reason why they think the prosecutor is treated differently from them. Hence, the reasons as to why lawyers think they are treated unequally by judges, the table below shows, varies from questioning judges' understanding of the institutional role of the prosecutor, to the judges' level of professionalism.

TABLE 4.12.3: IF NO, WHAT MAKES YOU THINK THAT WAY?¹⁵








Number of answers	Reasons
 46.84%	Tendency to view prosecutors as state or public officers, rendering them in the same category as judges.
 35.44%	Close ties between judges and prosecutors, which arise from the proximity of the offices of judges and prosecutors and their frequent meetings outside of court sessions.
 17.72%	Lack of objectivity on the part of the judges.

4.4 Lawyer – Judge Relations

One of the most frequent reasons as to why hearings fail or need to be postponed, is the lawyers' absence. Nevertheless, apart from a small percentage (around 12%) of the lawyers with most of their cases at the Basic Court of Mitrovica who claimed that it occurs often or always (around 2%), lawyers who have the majority of their cases in the remaining six Basic Courts claimed that rarely or never lawyers are sanctioned by the judge for failing to appear at a hearing.

¹⁵ This was an open-ended question and optional, therefore only 158 lawyers answered to it.








TABLE 4.15: IN YOUR EXPERIENCE, DO JUDGES SANCTION LAWYERS WHEN THEY FAIL TO APPEAR FOR A HEARING?

		Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
	Prishtina	39.36%	39.36%	21.28%	0.00%	0.00%
	Mitrovica	17.65%	49.02%	19.61%	11.76%	1.96%
	Peja	60.00%	30.91%	9.09%	0.00%	0.00%
	Gjakova	56.25%	28.12%	15.63%	0.00%	0.00%
	Gjilan	65.31%	20.42%	14.27%	0.00%	0.00%
	Ferizaj	56.76%	27.02%	16.22%	0.00%	0.00%
	Prizren	20.37%	24.07%	55.56%	0.00%	0.00%

4.5 Preferential treatment












The results of the survey show that lawyers who have most of their cases at the Basic Court of Mitrovica (around 73%), Gjilan (around 70%) and Pristina (around 59%), get preferential treatment by judges. Prizren represents the court house where lawyers do not get treated preferentially.

TABLE 4.16: ARE THERE LAWYERS WHO GET PREFERENTIAL TREATMENT BY JUDGES?

		Yes	No
	Pristina	58.51%	41.49%
	Mitrovica	72.55%	27.45%
	Peja	69.39%	30.61%
	Gjakova	29.09%	70.91%
	Gjilan	50.00%	50.00%
	Ferizaj	43.24%	56.76%
	Prizren	12.96%	87.04%





Similar results appear when responses are disaggregated by gender. The majority of men with most of their cases at the Basic Courts of Pristina, Mitrovica, Gjakova and Gjilan, claim that there are lawyers who get preferential treatment, while their colleagues with most of their cases at the Basic Courts of Peja, Ferizaj, and Prizren do not share the same experience. On the other hand, only women respondents from the region of Pristina (11 out of 18) and Mitrovica (4 out of 5) believe that there are lawyers who get preferential treatment.

TABLE 4.16.1: ARE THERE LAWYERS WHO GET PREFERENTIAL TREATMENT BY JUDGES

		YES		NO	
					
		Men	Women	Men	Women
	Prishtina	58.67%	57.89%	41.33%	42.11%
	Mitrovica	71.74%	80.00%	28.26%	20.00%
	Peja	26.09%	44.44%	73.91%	55.56%
	Gjakova	53.33%	0.00%	46.67%	100.00%
	Gjilan	71.11%	50.00%	28.89%	50.00%
	Ferizaj	43.33%	42.86%	56.67%	57.14%
	Prizren	10.87%	25.00%	89.13%	75.00%

Lawyers were asked to elaborate more in depth on the issue of preferential treatment by the judges. Below are the aggregated answers from respondents.

TABLE 4.16.2: IF YES, WHAT MAKES YOU THINK THAT WAY?¹⁶

Number of answers	Reasons
 52.48%	Some lawyers who receive preferential treatment from the judges stems from the close familial, political, and friendship ties between judges and lawyers.
 29.08%	Certain interests shared among judges and lawyers, often involving some form of nepotism or corruption.
 11.35%	Certain lawyers had accumulated the necessary experience to be considered worthwhile by judges.
 7.09%	Certain lawyers get favorable treatment by the fact that some judges had already been lawyers during their careers.

¹⁶ This was an open-ended question and optional, therefore only 141 lawyers answered to it.

5. PERCEPTION OF CORRUPTION

There is a widespread public perception that the judiciary in Kosovo is affected by corruption.¹⁷ This is substantiated by various studies of international and local organizations and stated in the Progress Report of the European Commission for Kosovo for a number of years in a row.¹⁸ The degree to which corruption affects the outcome of legal cases remains unknown. The direct responses of lawyers surveyed did not shed further light on this issue. Only 5 of them reported to have been engaged in bribery discussions. This paradox of highly perceived corruption in the justice system on one side and lack of it as reported by lawyers in this survey is not a sign of a healthy legal system and KJC and court presidents should consider this paradox a warning. The survey on the other hand indicates that ex-parte communication takes place and this is also worrisome. This combined with the fact that friendship, family ties and corruption top the list of opinions for preferential treatment highlight the murky nature of corruption in Kosovo courts.








5.1 Bribery

Results from the survey indicate that the vast majority of lawyers practicing law in all Basic Courts claim have not had any experience engaging in bribe exchanges initiated by judges, court employees or intermediaries. There are however 5 indications of the opposite. Four lawyers with most of their cases in the Basic Court of Pristina and one with most cases at the Basic Court of Gjilan reported that they were asked to engage in bribe transactions. In the follow-up question, *what position did the person hold* two responses were “judge” while the other three stated “court employee” not specifying the position of the employee when asked about that. In another sub-question looking at the underlying reasons for bribing the respondents (2 of them) went with the options of “fast-track processes” and “to have the case ruled in client’s favor” among the four choices.

17 Riinvest Institute. (2016). Assessment Of Corruption In Kosovo. Retrieved from <http://bit.ly/34ilD2U>.








18 European Commission. (2019). Kosovo 2019 Report. Retrieved from <http://bit.ly/2N64qoZ>.

TABLE 5.1: HAVE YOU EVER BEEN ASKED FOR A BRIBE BY A JUDGE, COURT EMPLOYEE OR ANY INTERMEDIARY ACTING ON BEHALF OF THE FORMER?

		Yes	No
	Prishtina	4.26%	95.74%
	Mitrovica	0.00%	100.00%
	Peja	0.00%	100.00%
	Gjakova	0.00%	100.00%
	Gjilan	2.04%	97.96%
	Ferizaj	0.00%	100.00%
	Prizren	0.00%	100.00%

In the follow-up question, *what position did the person hold* two of them said *judge* while the three others said *court employee* (although they had the option of specifying the position of the employee, they chose not to).








TABLE 5.2: IF YES WHAT POSITION DID THE PERSON HOLD?¹⁹

		Judge	Court employee	Other
	Prishtina	2	2	0
	Mitrovica	0	0	0
	Peja	0	0	0
	Gjakova	0	0	0
	Gjilan	0	1	0
	Ferizaj	0	0	0
	Prizren	0	0	0

The second sub question looked at the underlying reasons for what the bribe has been requested. As the respondents had the option to choose more than one option in the questionnaire, *to fast-track processes* and to have the *case ruled in client's favor* are the two most often chosen options.

¹⁹ Due to very small response rate, these data have been presented in absolute numbers instead of percentages.

TABLE 5.3: IF YES, FOR WHAT REASON?²⁰

		To fast-track processes	To obtain the need- ed documentation	To have the case ruled in client's favor
	Prishtina	3	1	2
	Mitrovica	0	0	0
	Peja	0	0	0
	Gjakova	0	0	0
	Gjilan	1	0	0
	Ferizaj	0	0	0
	Prizren	0	0	0








Following in the same line, the question of whether lawyers themselves offered a bribe to a judge or any other court employee, given that bribery constitutes a criminal offense, had all the lawyers surveyed claimed that they had never offered bribery to judges or court employees. All responses for this question had a negative response. All the lawyers across all Basic Courts claimed to have never done so.

²⁰ Ibid.

5.2 Ex-parte communication

Ex-parte communication is considered any type of communication between a judge or any party to a legal proceeding or any other person about the case, outside of the presence of the opposing party or the opposing party's lawyer. In other words, this implies that the communication can have an impact on the final decision on a given case. The results from the table below indicate that, although the majority of lawyers in all seven Basic Courts do not know if ex-parte communication occurs, nearly half of them claim to have knowledge of such communication.

TABLE 5.4: DO YOU KNOW IF THERE IS EX-PARTE COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE JUDGE AND ANY OF THE PARTIES (PROSECUTOR, LAWYER, PARTY TO PROCEEDING?)

		Yes	No
	Prishtina	43.62%	56.38%
	Mitrovica	49.02%	50.98%
	Peja	5.45%	94.55%
	Gjakova	25.00%	75.00%
	Gjilan	30.61%	69.39%
	Ferizaj	29.73%	70.27%
	Prizren	11.11%	88.89%

6. REFLECTIONS FROM NON-MAJORITY LAWYERS

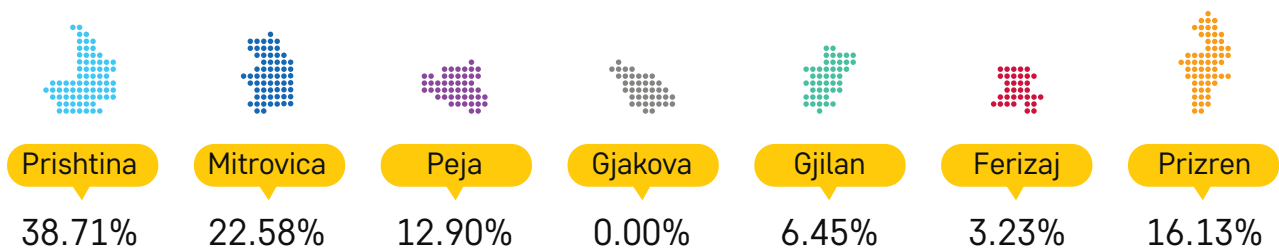
An exhaustive sampling technique was used to capture the experience of lawyers from non-majority communities with Kosovo’s Basic Courts, whereby all non-majority lawyers registered with the KBA were included in the sample. This section, therefore, presents survey results reflecting aspects of this survey for which lawyers from non-majority communities share different views and opinions.

Since the responses from these lawyers have been aggregated in the pool of the whole sample size presented in the previous section of the report, here we selected only a handful of questions on which the non-majority lawyers present a different view from that of Kosovo-Albanian lawyers. Also, another difference is that, the results are aggregated and represented altogether independent of where the non-majority lawyers have most of their cases. This was necessary as in some regions, according to the KBA’s website, there are no non-majority lawyers (Gjakova) and in some there are as few as one or two (Gjilan and Ferizaj), thus preventing us to conduct a statistically meaningful analysis and comparison between the Basic Courts.

6.1 Non-majority lawyers and most of their cases

The total number of non-majority lawyers registered at the KBA is 33 out of which 31 have been successfully interviewed. They have different residential locations throughout Kosovo, however, our main criteria to distribute them among seven Basic Courts is based on where they have most of their cases.

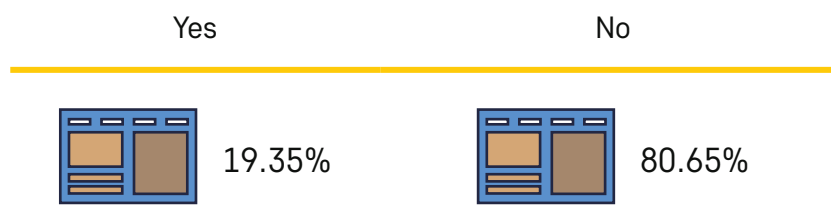
TABLE 6.1: BASIC COURT WHERE YOU HAVE THE MAJORITY OF YOUR CASES



6.2 Information sought by non-majority lawyers

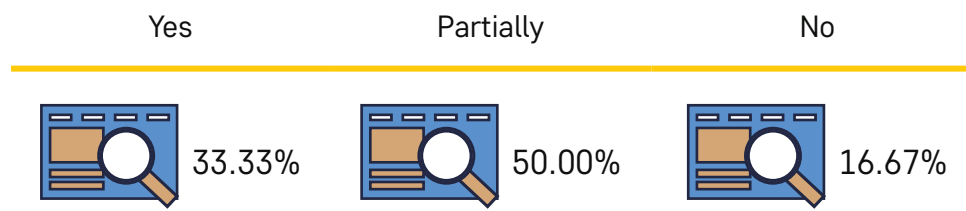
Similar to their colleagues from the majority community, lawyers from non-majority communities do not use the court's website as a source of information. Out of 31 lawyers that were interviewed only six of them claimed to use the courts' website.

TABLE 6.2: DO YOU USE THE COURT'S WEBSITE AS A SOURCE OF INFORMATION?



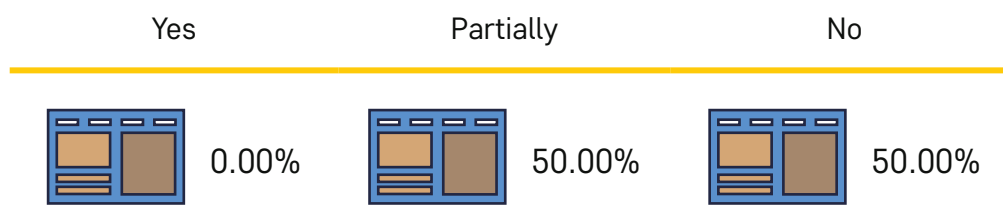
Of those six, only two claimed that they usually find what they were looking for.

TABLE 6.3: DO YOU USUALLY FIND WHAT YOU WERE LOOKING FOR?



Those who claimed to find or partially find the information they were seeking, were asked whether the content of the website is translated to their native language, to which three answered *partly* and the other three said *no*.




TABLE 6.4: IS THE COURT WEBSITE CONTENT THAT YOU NEED AVAILABLE IN YOUR NATIVE LANGUAGE?



6.3 Hearing notifications sent to non-majority lawyers

Receiving notifications about hearings via post mail is the most common answer by all lawyers participating in the study, including those of the non-majority communities. However, when disaggregated from the total number of lawyers, interestingly, lawyers of non-majority communities are notified via other means of communication as well. In fact, a significant 36.3 percent of non-majority lawyers claim to be notified about hearings via phone.

TABLE 6.5: HOW ARE YOU USUALLY NOTIFIED ABOUT HEARINGS?

	Mail	61.36%
	Phone	36.36%
	Email	2.28%

7. REMARKS FROM THE LAWYERS

At the end of the survey lawyers were provided with the opportunity to give any remarks or bring up new aspects regarding court operations. Of those who answered, 34 believed that the administration should be more effective whereas 12 talked about the need for a more transparent administration. Another group of 16 lawyers expressed the view that Basic Courts need to hire more staff, as they think that it would make the court system more effective and would bring new experience within the administration. Among other remarks made by lawyers were for judges to be more professional, to make further progress in the field of digitalization, and to create mechanisms for preventing nepotism, corruption, and ex parte communication between various parties.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this report, the recommendations provided below have been developed by D+ and ACDC researchers in direct response to issues identified in the study as well as good practices which would result in improved court service delivery. The recommendations are grouped into the following areas: Access to information; Efficiency and Fairness; and Prevalance of Corruption.

Access to information

- All Basic Courts must take measures to further curb and eliminate direct communication between lawyers and judges. In particular, the Basic Court of Pristina and Mitrovica are the two courts where lawyers find it very hard to get access to information. These two courts should consider a review of all their channels of information in order to find out and take measures to increase transparency and increase access to the information required by lawyers.
- All seven Basic Courts should do more to promote their website as a reliable source of information, involve users (especially lawyers) in deciding the most useful content of the website, and build the trust of users by updating the websites constantly.
- All seven Basic Courts must provide regular training for their administration staff on technology and digitalization in general.
- Complaint boxes must be installed and located in a visible and easy to access place so that anyone can see and make use of it. Information related to their presence and exact location should be made available to lawyers using professional channels of communication including via KBA.

Efficiency and fairness

- Basic Courts need to undertake/enhance performance auditing in order to improve the pace of their proceedings.
- It takes quite long to resolve either criminal or civil cases generally and this entails extensive costs for all the parties involved, resulting in diminished trust in the judiciary. Basic Courts should be more engaged to increase efficiency by resolving cases at a faster and a more effective pace.
- All seven Basic Courts need to improve their efficiency in reducing the time it takes to resolve both criminal and civil cases, especially for the latter.
- All seven Basic Courts must ensure that the absence of lawyers and prosecutors must not top the lists for hearing delays ensuring penalties are applied when that occurs. Increased efforts should be taken to reduce procedural violations by the court to the minimum. Training and retraining of staff with procedures is always an effective way to tackle this issue especially if combined with added human resources.
- All seven Basic Courts are encouraged to use modern means of communications such as email and phone to notify parties when hearings are canceled or postponed.

Perception of Corruption

- Preferential treatment of some lawyers is a phenomenon in all seven Basic Courts and therefore more efforts are needed to reduce or minimize this behavior.
- Courts should assure full implementation of the new Administrative Instruction on House Rules and prevent ex-parte communication.

9. SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EACH BASIC COURT

Basic Court of Pristina

Access to information

- Better court responsiveness to lawyers' requests on getting the information they need.
- Establish the procedure of providing case numbers to the lawyers before the hearing is scheduled.

Efficiency and Fairness

- Find effective ways to reduce time it takes to the court to resolve civil cases such as: *damage compensation and property claims*.
- Find effective ways to reduce time it takes to the court to resolve criminal cases such as: *organized crime and corruption, homicide and sexual violence*.
- Take measures on reducing the time it takes to the court to schedule the first hearing from the date of filing the *claim* and/or *indictment*.
- Take all necessary measures once hearings are scheduled, they are not postponed unless necessary.
- The most frequent reasons why hearings are delayed or canceled at the Basic Court of Pristina are the absence of "*the other party*", *prosecutors, experts, lawyers* and because the *court staff make procedural violations*. Hence, the court should consider introducing regulation which foresees penalties for each of them, in order to reduce the number of delayed or canceled hearings.
- Begin using email for sending notifications about hearing postponement or other changes regarding hearings' schedule..

Prevalence of Corruption

- The courts management must ensure that the Code of Ethics is being respected and judges treat all the lawyers equally no matter the gender or the years of experience lawyers have.

Basic Court of Mitrovica

Access to information

- Should increase court responsiveness to lawyers request on getting the information they need.
- Improve the content and information items on the website with an emphasis on documents that are mainly on lawyers' interest; court verdicts, status of their cases, hearing schedules and so on.

Efficiency and Fairness

- Should take measures in the attempt to reduce time it takes to the court to resolve civil cases such as: *damage compensation, property claims and labor disputes*.
- Should take measures in the attempt to reduce time it takes to the court to resolve criminal cases such as: *organized crime and corruption, homicide and illegal weapon possession*.

- Take measures on reducing the time it takes to the court to schedule the first hearing from the date of filing the *claim* and/or *indictment*.
- Take all necessary measures once hearings are scheduled, they are not postponed unless necessary.
- The most frequent reasons why hearings are delayed or canceled at the Basic Court of Mitrovica are the absence of “*the other party*”, *prosecutors* and *experts*. Hence, the court should consider introducing regulation which foresees penalties for each of them, in order to reduce the number of delayed or canceled hearings.

Prevalence of Corruption

- The courts management must ensure that the Code of Ethics is being fully implemented and judges treat all the lawyers equally no matter the gender or the years of experience lawyers have.

Basic Court of Peja

Access to information

- Lawyers with most cases at the Basic Court of Peja are generally satisfied with access to information, therefore no specific recommendation on this regard.

Efficiency and Fairness

- Should take measures in the attempt to reduce time it takes to the court to resolve civil cases such as: *damage compensation, property claims and labor disputes*.
- Should take measures in the attempt to reduce time it takes to the court to resolve criminal cases such as: *organized crime and corruption, and homicide*.
- Take measures on reducing the time it takes to the court to schedule the first hearing from the date of filing the claim and/or indictment.
- Take necessary measures once hearings are scheduled, they are not postponed unless necessary.
- The most frequent reasons why hearings are delayed or canceled at the Basic Court of Peja are the absence of “*the other party*”, *prosecutors*, *experts*. Hence, the court should consider introducing regulation which foresees penalties for each of them, in order to reduce the number of delayed or canceled hearings.
- Begin using email for sending notifications about hearing postponement or other changes regarding hearings’ schedule.

Prevalence of Corruption

- Lawyers with most of their cases at the Basic Court of Peja did not report on the prevalence of corruption at this court, therefore no recommendation in this regard.

Basic Court of Gjakova

Access to information

- Begin providing case numbers to the lawyers before the hearing is scheduled

Efficiency and Fairness

- Should take measures in the attempt to reduce time it takes to the court to resolve civil cases such as: *damage compensation and property claims*.
- Should take measures in the attempt to reduce time it takes to the court to resolve criminal cases such as: *organized crime and corruption, homicide and theft*.
- Take all necessary measures once hearings are scheduled, they are not postponed unless necessary.
- The most frequent reasons why hearings are delayed or canceled at the Basic Court of Gjakova are the absence of “*the other party*”, *experts* and because the court staff make *procedural violations*. Hence, the court should consider introducing regulation which foresees penalties for each of them, in order to reduce the number of delayed or canceled hearings.

Prevalence of Corruption

- Lawyers with most of their cases at the Basic Court of Gjakova did not report on the prevalence of corruption at this court, therefore no recommendation in this regard.

Basic Court of Gjilan

Access to information

- Begin providing case numbers to the lawyers before the hearing is scheduled.

Efficiency and Fairness

- Should take measures in the attempt to reduce time it takes to the court to resolve civil cases such as: *damage compensation, property claims and labor disputes*.
- Should take measures in the attempt to reduce time it takes to the court to resolve criminal cases such as: *organized crime and corruption, homicide and theft*.
- Take measures on reducing the time it takes to the court to schedule the first hearing from the date of filing the claim and/or indictment.
- Take all necessary measures once hearings are scheduled, they are not postponed unless necessary.
- The most frequent reasons why hearings are delayed or canceled at the Basic Court of Gjilan are the absence of “*the other party*”, *experts* and because the court staff make *procedural violations*. Hence, the court should consider introducing regulation which foresees penalties for each of them, in order to reduce the number of delayed or canceled hearings.
- Begin using email for sending notifications about hearing postponement or other changes regarding hearings' schedule.

Prevalence of Corruption

- The courts management must ensure that the Code of Ethics is being fully implemented and judges treat all the lawyers equally no matter the gender or the years of experience lawyers have.

Basic Court of Ferizaj

Access to information

- Lawyers with most cases at the Basic Court of Ferizaj are generally satisfied with access to information, therefore no specific recommendation in this regard.

Efficiency and Fairness

- Should take measures in the attempt to reduce time it takes to the court to resolve civil cases such as: *damage compensation and property claims*.
- Should take measures in the attempt to reduce time it takes to the court to resolve criminal cases such as: *organized crime and corruption, and homicide*.
- Take measures on reducing the time it takes to the court to schedule the first hearing from the date of filing the *claim* and/or *indictment*.
- The most frequent reasons why hearings are delayed or canceled at the Basic Court of Ferizaj are the absence of “*the other party*” and *experts*. Hence, the court should consider introducing regulation which foresees penalties for each of them, in order to reduce the number of delayed or canceled hearings.
- Begin using email for sending notifications about hearing postponement or other changes regarding hearings’ schedule.

Prevalence of Corruption

- Lawyers with most of their cases at the Basic Court of Ferizaj did not report on the prevalence of corruption at this court, therefore no recommendation in this regard.

Basic Court of Prizren

Access to information

- Lawyers with most cases at the Basic Court of Prizren are generally satisfied with access to information, therefore no specific recommendation in this regard.

Efficiency and Fairness

- Should take measures in the attempt to reduce time it takes to the court to resolve civil cases such as: *damage compensation and property claims*.
- *Should take measures in the attempt to reduce time it takes to the court to resolve criminal cases such as: organized crime and corruption, and homicide.*
- The most frequent reasons why hearings are delayed or canceled at the Basic Court of Gjakova are the absence of “*the other party*”, *experts* and because the court staff make procedural violations. Hence, the court should consider introducing regulation which foresees penalties for each of them, in order to reduce the number of delayed or canceled hearings.
- Begin using email for sending notifications about hearing postponement or other changes regarding hearings’ schedule.

Prevalence of Corruption

- Lawyers with most of their cases at the Basic Court of Prizren did not report on the prevalence of corruption at this court, therefore no recommendation in this regard.

ANNEX I

D+ and ACDC – Lawyers Questionnaire Transparency/Accessibility & Efficiency of Basic Courts in Kosovo

INSTRUCTIONS: Walk into lawyers' office and proceed with:

Hello, my name is _____. I work as an interviewer for Democracy Plus, a subcontractor of USAID's Justice System Strengthening Program (JSSP). We are conducting a survey to understand what lawyers think about the efficiency and level of transparency of Kosovo's Basic Courts. The survey is anonymous, and all data will be presented as group data and used solely for the purposes of this project. The survey has 26 questions and some follow-up questions, and it will take approximately 15 minutes to complete. Your input in this questionnaire is of high importance to the study, and we thank you for taking the time to answer it.

First, would you please tell us for how many years have you been practicing law?

If answer is LESS THAN 2 YEARS, please do not proceed with the survey.

Thank you for your understanding.

DATE OF INTERVIEW

TIME OF INTERVIEW

NUMBER OF INTERVIEW

OUT OF _____

**BASIC COURT WHERE YOU HAVE THE
MAJORITY OF YOUR CASES**



1. PRISHTINA
2. MITROVICA
3. PEJA
4. GJAKOVA
5. GJILAN
6. FERIZAJ
7. PRIZREN

RESPONDENT GENDER



1. MALE
2. FEMALE

RESPONDENT AGE GROUP

1. AGE 22 – 30
2. AGE 31 – 40
3. AGE 41 – 50
4. AGE 51 – 60
5. AGE 60+

RESPONDENT ETHNICITY



1. Albanian
 2. Serbian
 3. Turkish
 4. Bosniak
 5. Roma
 6. Ashkali
 7. Egyptian
 8. Gorani
 9. Other
-

TRANSPARENCY/ACCESS TO INFORMATION

The experience respondents have in accessing the court

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

		(Please choose one option)
Q.1	In your experience, how easy is it to get information about your cases at the court?	1. Very hard 2. Somewhat hard 3. Somewhat easy 4. Very easy
Q.2	From whom do you get information from the court about your cases?	OPEN ENDED
Q.3	Do you receive information from the court about the number your case was assigned (before the hearing is scheduled)?	1. Yes 2. No
Q.4	Do you talk to the judge directly about the status of your case?	1. Never 2. Sometimes 3. Often 4. Always

TRANSPARENCY

Q.5	Do you use the court's website as a source of information?	1. Yes 2. No If code 2, continue to Q.6.
Q.5a	Do you usually find what you were looking for?	1. Yes 2. Partially 3. No
Q.5b	Is the court website content that you need available in your native language?	1. Yes 2. Partially 3. No
Q.6	Are complaint boxes available inside the courthouse?	1. Yes 2. No 3. I do not know
Q.7	Are there any improvement to access to information compared to last year?	1. Yes 2. No If code 2, continue to Q.8.
Q.7a	Is yes, how?	OPEN ENDED

COURT EFFICIENCY

The experience respondents have in receiving Court services

COURT EFFICIENCY

Q.8	Are you able to get your court business done in a reasonable time?	1. Yes 2. No												
Q.9	In your experience, how long does it usually take for a CIVIL CASE to be decided by the Basic Court from the moment of filing? (approx. months/years)	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Damage compensation</td> <td>Contested Divorce</td> <td>Property Claims</td> <td>Labor Disputes</td> </tr> <tr> <td>_____</td> <td>_____</td> <td>_____</td> <td>_____</td> </tr> </table>	Damage compensation	Contested Divorce	Property Claims	Labor Disputes	_____	_____	_____	_____				
Damage compensation	Contested Divorce	Property Claims	Labor Disputes											
_____	_____	_____	_____											
Q.10	In your experience, how long does it usually take for a CRIMINAL CASE to be resolved by the basic court from the moment of filing? (approx. months/years)	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Theft</td> <td>Illegal weapon possession</td> <td>Organized Crime and Corruption</td> <td>Murder</td> <td>Domestic Violence</td> <td>Sexual Violence</td> </tr> <tr> <td>_____</td> <td>_____</td> <td>_____</td> <td>_____</td> <td>_____</td> <td>_____</td> </tr> </table>	Theft	Illegal weapon possession	Organized Crime and Corruption	Murder	Domestic Violence	Sexual Violence	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Theft	Illegal weapon possession	Organized Crime and Corruption	Murder	Domestic Violence	Sexual Violence									
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____									
Q.11	In your experience, how long does it take on average for the court to schedule the first hearing from the date of filing the claim?	1. Less than 2 months 2. 2 – 6 months 3. 7 – 12 months 4. 13 – 24 months 5. Over 24 months												
Q.12	In your experience, how long does it take on average for the court to schedule the first hearing from the date of filing the indictment?	1. Less than 2 months 2. 2 – 6 months 3. 7 – 12 months 4. 13 – 24 months 5. Over 24 months												
Q.13	In your experience, on average, how often are scheduled hearings postponed?	1. Never 2. Rarely 3. Sometimes 4. Often 5. Always												
Q.14	In your experience, what are the most frequent reasons hearings are delayed for?	(Please check all that apply) Prosecutor's absence Lawyer's absence Other party's absence Experts and/or witness's absence Judge not prepared for the hearing Failure to establish the panel of judges Procedural violations by the court (non-submission of invitations; non-submission of other party's written submissions; not notifying the parties prior to the hearing if the hearing cannot be held)												

Q.15 In your experience, on average, how many hearings does it take to resolve a CIVIL CASE? Number: _____

Q.16 In your experience, on average, how many hearings does it take to resolve a CRIMINAL CASE? Number: _____

NOTICES BY THE COURT

Q.17 Typically, when are you notified about a hearing?

2 weeks in advance
5 – 7 days in advance
1 day in advance
Same day

Q.18 How are you usually notified about hearings?

(Please check all that apply)

Mail
Phone
Email
Other (specify): _____

Q.19 Do you receive timely notifications when hearings are postponed (before you go to the courthouse)?

Never
Sometimes
Often
Always

FAIRNESS

Q.20 Do you believe that you and the prosecutor get treated equally by the judges?

1. Yes
2. No
If code 1, continue to Q.21.

Q.20a If no, what makes you think that way?

OPEN ENDED

Q.21 In your experience, do judges sanction lawyers when they fail to appear for a hearing?

1. Never
2. Rarely
3. Sometimes
4. Often
5. Always

Q.22 Are there lawyers who get preferential treatment by judges?

1. Yes
2. No
If code 2, continue to Q.23.

Q.22a If yes, what makes you think that way?

OPEN ENDED

PREVALENCE OF CORRUPTION

Q.23	Have you ever been asked for a bribe by a judge, court employee or any intermediary acting on behalf of the former?	1. Yes 2. No If code 2, continue to Q.24.
Q.23a	If yes what position did the person hold?	Judge Court employee Other (specify): _____
Q.23b	If yes, for what reason?	(Please check all that apply) To fast-track processes To obtain the needed documentation To have the case ruled in client's favor Other (specify): _____
Q.24	Have you ever offered a bribe to a judge or other court employee?	1. Yes 2. No If code 2, continue to Q.25.
Q.24a	If yes, what position did the person hold?	Judge Court employee Other (specify): _____
Q.24b	If yes, for what reason?	(Please check all that apply) To fast-track processes To obtain the needed documentation To have the case ruled in client's favor Other (specify): _____
Q.25	Do you know if there is <i>ex parte</i> communication between the judge and any of the parties (prosecutor, lawyer, party to proceeding)?	1. Yes 2. No

CLOSING QUESTION

Q.26	Do you have anything to add?	OPEN ENDED
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USAID's Justice System Strengthening Program is a five-year rule of law activity that builds upon USAID's prior efforts to advance the rule of law in Kosovo and ensure that the justice system operates in a professional, efficient, and accountable manner. The program focuses on promoting a judicial system that adheres to high standards of independence, impartiality, integrity, accountability, and transparency, and on supporting the functioning and integration of judicial structures in the North.

Strengthen efficiency and effectiveness in the administration of justice and the delivery of quality services

Through USAID, the Justice System Strengthening Program assists the Kosovo Judicial Council (KJC) and Kosovo's courts in consolidating gains in efficiency and management at the court level. This is accomplished by facilitating the decentralization of administrative competencies and institutionalizing systems and tools for effective court and case management. Activities under this objective reduce case backlog and procedural obstacles to court efficiency and effectiveness.

Enhance the accountability and professionalism of the justice system

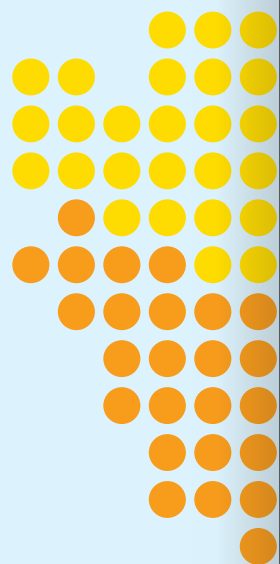
The program works closely with the KJC, judges, and court staff in building capacity to deliver justice professionally and efficiently. It also promotes continuing education and public integrity initiatives as the foundation for a judiciary that is accessible, credible, and effective.

Support the functioning and the integration of judicial structures in the North

The Justice System Strengthening Program supports the KJC and the courts in activating judicial structures in northern Kosovo based on the Justice Sector Agreement that was signed between the governments of Kosovo and Serbia in 2015. This agreement provides for the integration of institutions, court operations, and judicial resources in the north. This USAID program also assists individual courts in the region with case inventories and transfers, backlog reduction, case management, and capacity-building for judges and court staff.

Democracy Plus is an independent, nonprofit and nonpartisan organization founded by a group of activists who believe in further strengthening democratic values in Kosovo. The main objective of D+ is to foster democratic values and practices that will further strengthen the voice of the Kosovar society. D+ aims at contributing in establishing good governance practices, strengthening the rule of law, assisting political parties and the process of free and fair elections, and fostering respect for human rights and social issues. D+ has implemented different projects that aim to bring decision-makers closer to citizens through policy research, facilitation of dialogue and interaction as well as public education.

Advocacy Center for Democratic Culture is a local Civil Society Organization (CSO), based in North Mitrovica, Kosovo, which was established in December 2011. The goal of the organization is to improve the engagement of a multiethnic population in Mitrovica region and raise the awareness of the citizens about democratic culture.



USAID
NGA POPULI AMERIKAN
OD AMERIČKOG NARODA



ACDC
Advocacy Center For Democratic Culture



DEMOCRACYPLUS