

October, 2020

ACCESSIBILITY OF BASIC COURT ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES IN KOSOVO

REPORT OF FINDINGS



REPORT OF FINDINGS

ACCESSIBILITY OF BASIC
COURT ADMINISTRATIVE
SERVICES IN KOSOVO

Author: Roberta Osmani

Supported by: USAID Justice System Strengthening Program (USAID/JSSP)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....	6
INTRODUCTION	7
METHODOLOGY	9
ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS.....	13
PART 1: GENERAL INFORMATION	13
PART 2: COMMUNICATION AT FIRST CONTACT POINT (SECURITY OR INFORMATION DESK)	14
PART 2A: REQUEST DEALT WITH BY THE INFORMATION DESK/SECURITY.....	17
PART 3: COMMUNICATION AT REGISTRY OFFICE.....	19
CONCLUSIONS	24
ANNEX 1: SURVEY	25



Disclaimer:

This publication was produced for review by the United States Agency for International Development. It was prepared by Democracy Plus. 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.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

With the aim of assessing the quality of administrative services that Kosovo's Basic Courts offer to court users, Democracy Plus (D+) and ACDC (Advocacy Center for Democratic Culture) with the support of USAID Justice System Strengthening Program (USAID/JSSP) have undertaken an observational study in three Basic Courts: Ferizaj, Mitrovica and Prizren.

The study, the first of its kind in Kosovo, includes a sample of 1461 court users who have sought administrative services in the three Basic Courts throughout three weeks in August, 2020, and looks into the fairness and equality of interactions between court users and court registry and security staff.

The study is designed based on the way court users are served in Basic Courts when visiting the court for administrative requests. Findings are analyzed and reported in a similar way – focusing on the interaction of court users with the security staff immediately upon entrance in the court building, and then with the information desk/security (in many cases requests are fully dealt with at this point), and finally with the Registry Office. The first part of this report analyses the general information pertaining to security protocol and the treatment provided by security employees, the second part analyzes the communication at the first point of contact (security or information desk), and the third part analyzes observations where the request is dealt with by the information desk/security, or the interaction at the Registry Office.

Findings show that service recipients are generally treated well by court staff at the three points of contact where administrative requests are made and received (security, information desk and Registry Office). Security protocols are respected in the majority of cases and the check procedure is conducted in a polite manner in the predominant majority of interactions that were observed. Additionally, court users' interactions with both the security/information desk

and Registry Office are to a large degree positive. Most of the observed court users who requested translation were provided with the service within a reasonable timeframe, the majority of court users were able to get their request answered within reasonable waiting times, and in general the conduct of the court staff was evaluated as polite and helpful by the observers. In a very small and statistically insignificant number of cases, instances of unsatisfactory staff performance were observed, and even though these are isolated cases, they should be taken into consideration when recommendations for improvement are given. Nonetheless, generally the experiences of court users with administrative services as observed, were rated as positive.

The report offers a number of recommendations for further improvement in administrative service provisions, to the three respective Basic Courts, ranging from translation provision to all court users who need it (also via phone-lines), consideration to change processes for requesting and collecting certificates, informing the public for possibilities of obtaining services online through the courts' website, and making information on court processes visible in the court premises through posters and leaflets. In this way, courts ensure easy and convenient access to justice to all court users, and ensure efficiency in the workload of their staff.

INTRODUCTION

Building on the Court User Surveys conducted in 2017 and 2019 measuring the experience and satisfaction of court users with court services, focusing on access to information, efficiency and prevalence of corruption, Democracy Plus (D+) and ACDC (Advocacy Center for Democratic Culture) with the support of USAID's Justice System Strengthening Program (USAID/JSSP), have piloted an observational study to further analyze issues citizens face in relation to access to information and fair and equal treatment of parties.¹ Specifically, this study was undertaken with the purpose to identify whether there is an observable change in staff treatment according to the personal characteristics of service users or the type of request they are dealing with, or whether staff make necessary adjustments to assist court service seekers with access issues (for example, hard of hearing, illiterate, physical difficulties to access court, inter alia). The study evaluates a number of factors in the interactions between court service recipients and court staff (Security/Information Desk, and Registry Office) that take place in the main area within the court building where administrative requests are made and addressed.

The observation study took place as a pilot project within three Basic Courts: Ferizaj, Mitrovica and Prizren, and lasted for three weeks within August 2020. This is the first initiative that looks into the interactions between court users and court staff who offer administrative services in Kosovo Basic Courts. The study includes 1461 observations of interactions between court users and court registry and security staff of the three Basic Courts where the project was piloted. The objective of this study is to provide feedback for courts following analysis of the data collected, with concrete recommendations for improved efficiency and services, in-

cluding but not limited to provision of information frequently requested by the court in different accessible formats (brochures, posters, online campaigns), provision of translation via phone lines, and highlighting areas where staff training may be beneficial.

This research is intended for Basic Courts, Kosovo Judicial Council, and all other bodies within the judicial system in Kosovo. Additionally, it will be publicized and shared widely for the public as well as interested scholars and researchers who study and/or monitor the judiciary.

USAID 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.

¹ Court User Surveys were undertaken in 2017, 2018 and 2019 by Democracy Plus. As a result, four reports were produced and published: Quality of Services Provided by Kosovo Basic Courts – As Evaluated by Lawyers (2018) <https://dplus.org/en/quality-of-services-provided-by-kosovo-basic-courts/>, Citizens' Scores on Basic Court Services (2019) <https://dplus.org/en/citizens-scores-on-basic-court-services/>, Citizens' Scores on Basic Court Services (2020) <https://dplus.org/en/citizens-scores-on-basic-court-services-2/>, Quality of Services Provided by Kosovo Basic Courts – As Evaluated by Lawyers (2020) <https://dplus.org/en/quality-of-services-provided-by-kosovo-basic-courts-as-evaluated-by-lawyers/>. Additionally, D+'s platform <https://gjykata.dplus.org/en/> contains the aforementioned reports.

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 civil-society organization based in North Mitrovica. ACDC's goal is to improve the engagement of a multiethnic population in the Mitrovica region and raise citizen awareness about democratic culture.

METHODOLOGY

Three Basic Courts: Prizren, Ferizaj and Mitrovica, were selected for the pilot project based on a number of factors, including the high representation of minority communities within the municipalities served by these courts; and primarily following analysis of the 2017 and 2019 Court User Survey scores, where Ferizaj and Mitrovica received higher scores, and Prizren had lower scores in relation to the ease of obtaining case information.²

Enumerators were hired, trained and provided with the survey (annexed) to observe the interaction between court users and court registry and security staff. One enumerator was present in the Basic Courts of Prizren and Ferizaj (each), and two enumerators were allocated to Mitrovica Basic Court (to rotate between the North and South premises). The enumerators identified issues or problems relating to ease of communication / access to information / quality of information provided / equal treatment of all court users, and any other observations noted through the course of the study. A two-day pre-pilot observational study was conducted in the Basic Courts of Ferizaj and Mitrovica on 22 and 23 July in order to test this methodology and the survey format.

The observational study ran for three consecutive working weeks, beginning on August 3rd, until August 24th, 2020, collecting as many observations as possible. Under normal circumstances, courts reported in the region of 150 daily court users, however as expected numbers were somewhat reduced due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.³ Nonetheless, the study managed to obtain a satisfactory number of observations, as delineated in the following section of this report. Enumerators were instructed to treat this observational study with the highest levels of discretion and profes-

sionalism, with the data gathered to be treated with confidentiality at all times.

The selection of court users to observe was based on convenience. When court users entered the court one by one, all of them were observed. When the frequency of court users was higher, those who did not appear to be lawyers or appeared to not be speaking the court's main language were given priority and observed. Additionally, enumerators attempted to observe an equal number of men and women where possible. Parties entering the court for other purposes (for example attending court hearings or meetings with judges) were not observed for the purposes of this study. A suitable distance from court users was maintained to avoid potential changes in behavior of court staff due to being under observation. Enumerators did not interact with court users and maintained a respectful distance. Additionally, enumerators were safely and responsibly conducting the surveys, in full compliance with the measures set forth by the Kosovo National Public Health Institute for the prevention of the spread of Covid-19.

For the purposes of this study, the following definition of bias was used: bias consists of a prejudice / a strong feeling in favor of, or against one thing / person / group in comparison with another, often based on unfair judgment. Additionally, unconscious bias / implicit biases are defined as an underlying attribute or stereotype that people unconsciously attribute to another person or group of people, which will affect how they understand and interact with a person or group. It is acknowledged that bias can be difficult to evaluate, but enumerators were instructed to look out for changing attitudes based on personal characteristics, such as (for ex-

² Supra, footnote 1. Results of the 'Citizens' Scores on Basic Court Services' show that 75.61% of citizens in Mitrovica and 72.93% in Ferizaj were able to get their court business done in a reasonable time, in contrast with 55.15% in Prizren. When asked how helpful the information provided by the court was, 79.52% of respondents in Mitrovica and 96.99% of respondents in Ferizaj found the information somewhat or very helpful; however, in Prizren 46.06% found the information somewhat or very unhelpful.

³ Basic Court of Ferizaj reported an average of 140 court users per day; Basic Court Mitrovica see between 200 and 300 court users in their two locations. Prizren Basic Court were not able to give an estimated figure.

ample) gender, appearance, language, ethnicity, education levels, understanding of information provided / requested. Changing attitudes were defined as body language, use of language, patience levels, professionalism, etc. Enumerators were instructed to include as much information as possible in any case a suspicion of bias or the appearance of bias was observed. The same applies for any form of discrimination, unfair treatment, favoritism, etc.

This study was designed based on the way court users are served in Basic Courts when visiting the court for seeking administrative services. A court user's first interaction is al-

ways with the security staff immediately upon entrance in the court building, and then either the information desk/security fully deals with the request or the recipient is directed to the registry desk (civil or criminal based on the inquiry). Therefore, the first part of this report analyses the general information pertaining to security protocol and the treatment provided by security employees, the second part analyzes the communication at the first point of contact (security or information desk), and the third part analyzes observations where the request is dealt with by the information desk/security, or the interaction at the registry office.

“ The observational study ran for three consecutive working weeks, beginning on August 3rd, until August 24th, 2020, collecting as many observations as possible. Under normal circumstances, courts reported in the region of 150 daily court users, however as expected numbers were somewhat reduced due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. ”

Sample selection, size and demographics

In total 1,461 interactions between the court staff and service recipients were observed and recorded. The sampling method used is convenience (also known as opportunity) sampling, which is a non-probability sampling method. Therefore, court users to be observed were chosen at the convenience of the enumerator. As such, the sample does not necessarily represent the population of court users of each of the Basic Courts of Kosovo, however gives sufficient

information to assess the general quality and quantity of interactions as will be presented within this report.

Of the observed court users, 1,358 spoke Albanian to the court staff, 84 spoke Serbian, 10 Turkish, 6 Roma, 1 English and 2 spoke other languages which the enumerators were not able to recognize and categorize. The table below shows the distribution among the three courts under study, including the breakdown between the Mitrovica Basic Court's North and South buildings.

TABLE 1: OBSERVATIONS PER COURT

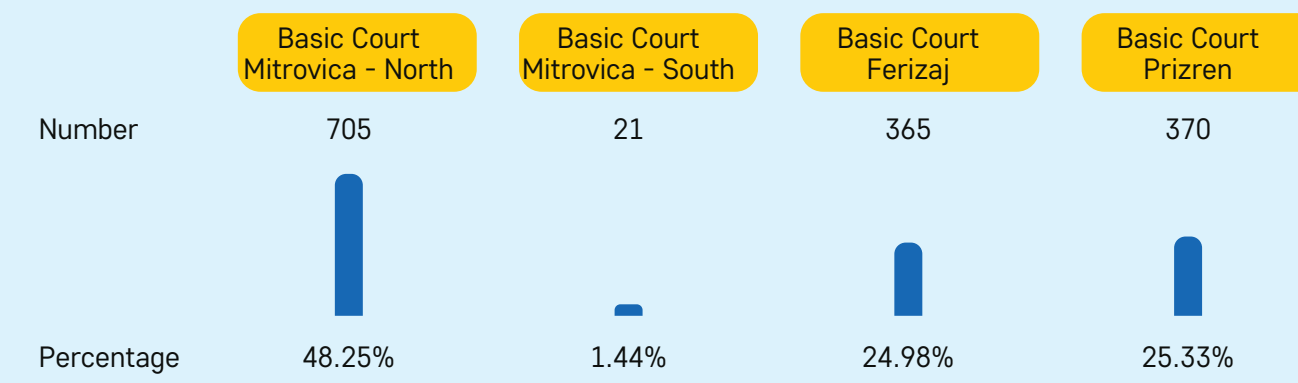
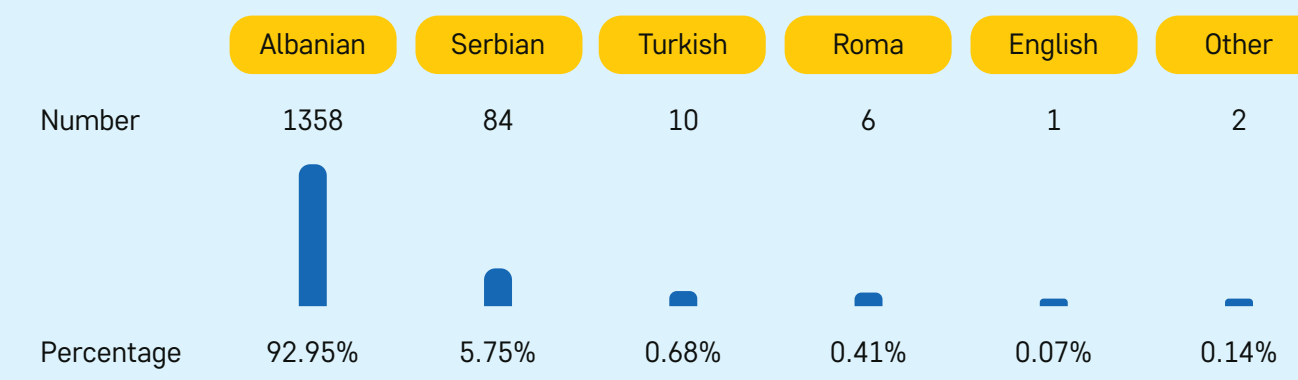


TABLE 2: LANGUAGE SPOKEN BY COURT USERS



Of the observed service recipients, **66%** were men, and **34%** were women, with the majority of them estimated to be under the age of **35** (age estimation was left at the discretion of the enumerator). The predominant majority of observed court users were speaking Albanian (**92%**) in their interaction with the court, followed by Serbian (**6%**), Turkish (**0.7%**) and Roma (**0.4%**). Only **6%** of the service recipients under observation were identified as lawyers (were heard presenting themselves as such, or referred to by the court staff as such).

TABLE 3: GENDER OF OBSERVED COURT USERS

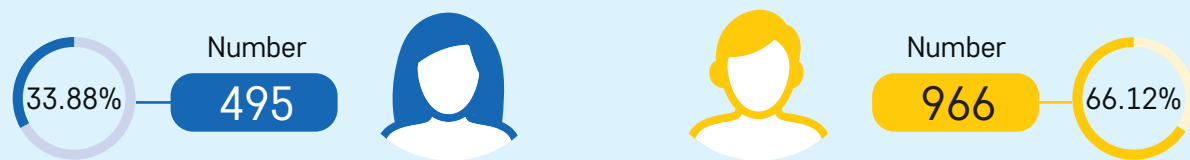


TABLE 4: APPROXIMATE AGE OF COURT USER

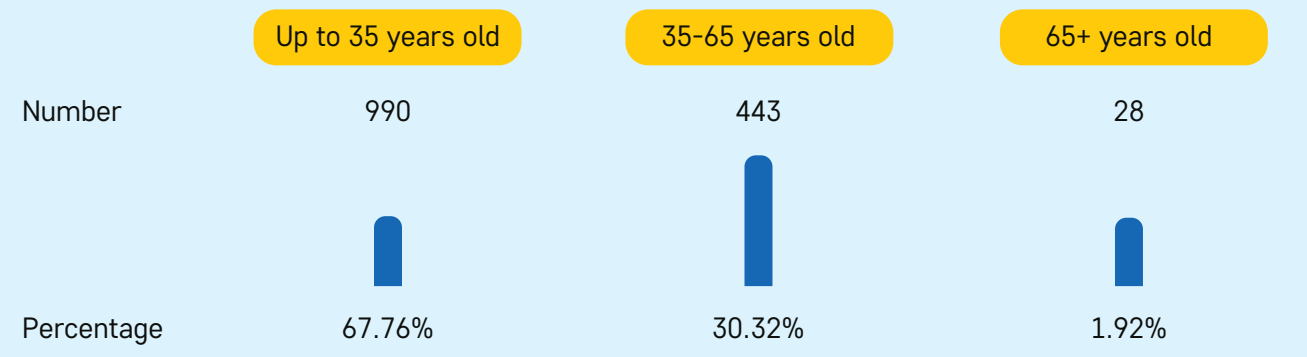
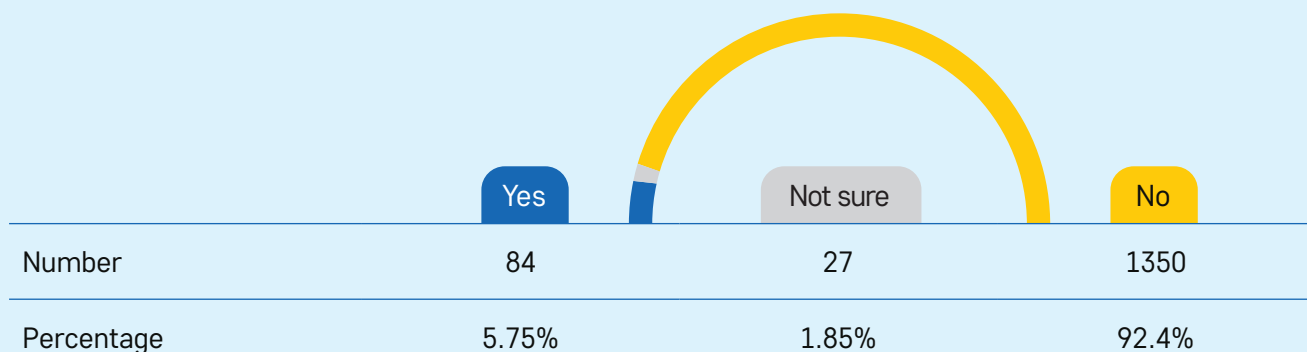


TABLE 5: IS THE COURT USER A LAWYER?



ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

PART 1: GENERAL INFORMATION

For security and safety purposes of the court staff and court users, all Basic Courts have security protocols in place. They entail walking through the metal detector and physical inspection of handbags, which must be followed for all visitors who enter

the court building. Security protocols at all three Basic Courts under study were followed in the majority of the observed cases (91%). Additionally, the security check was polite and respectful in the predominant majority of cases (97%).

TABLE 6: WERE COURT SECURITY PROTOCOLS FOLLOWED?

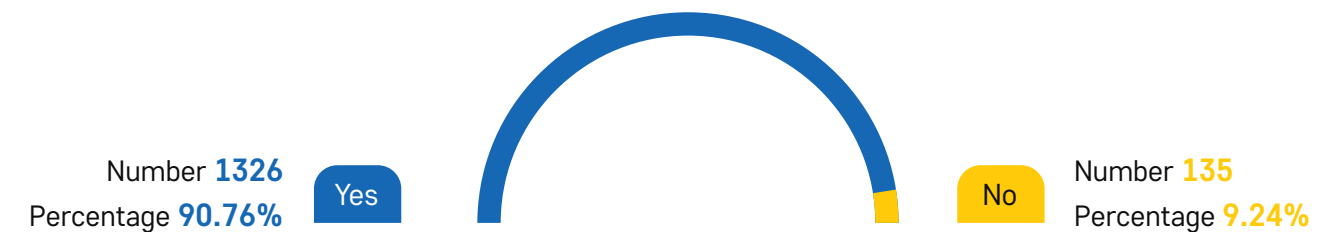
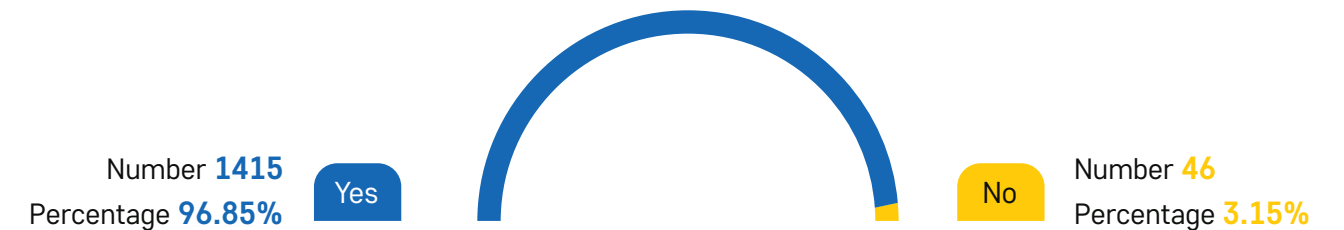


TABLE 7: SECURITY CHECK POLITE AND RESPECTFUL?



In the majority of cases court security protocols were followed and the security check was polite and respectful. Nonetheless, there were 135 cases observed when the security protocols were not followed and 46 cases when the security check was not polite and respectful. In light of this, it is recommended that courts undertake measures such as staff trainings and stricter oversight to ensure that court security protocols are followed for any person entering the court building. Security at the court buildings is especially

important to avoid potential incidents and ensure safety for both court staff and court users. Additionally, the security check should be conducted in a way that is polite and respectful to all court users as this is the first point of direct contact between the court and court users and to increase the trust of the public towards institutions that deliver justice, citizens seeking services from courts must be treated courteously in every interaction, including the security check procedures.

PART 2: COMMUNICATION AT FIRST CONTACT POINT (SECURITY OR INFORMATION DESK)

The first contact point of court users at a Basic Court building is with the security staff or information desk. At this point, a service seeker is usually asked why he/she is at the court, and then the request is either dealt with by the security staff/information desk or directed to the Registry Office. In this interaction, the observation focused on the treatment that the court user received by the court staff in terms of the provision of translation if needed, the time waited for the translator to be made available, the amount of time the court user had to wait to speak to someone from the information

desk and the reason behind the wait, as well as the conduct of the information desk staff. Results from the observation of this interaction are to a large degree positive. In the majority of cases (99%), translation was not required, and in the few cases when it was, it was provided with a waiting time average of 0-5 minutes. There was only one isolated case when translation was requested by the court user and it was not provided. On a positive note, none of the court users who needed translation had to wait for more than 15 minutes for it to be made available.

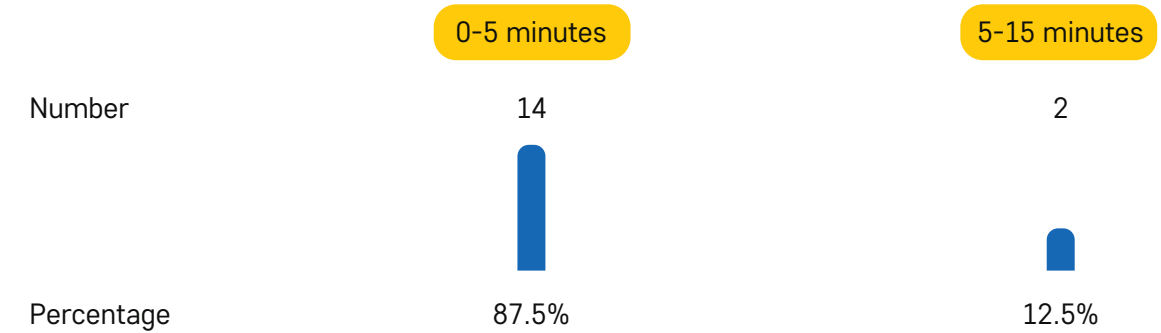
TABLE 8: WAS TRANSLATION REQUIRED?



TABLE 9: WAS TRANSLATION PROVIDED?



TABLE 10: IF YES, WAITING TIME FOR TRANSLATOR



In the majority of observed cases, the court user did not have to wait to speak to someone from the information desk, and in cases when there was a wait (average wait time of 5-15

minutes), it was because the staff member was busy with other court users. The maximum wait time did not surpass 15 minutes.

TABLE 11: DID THE COURT USER HAVE TO WAIT TO SPEAK TO SOMEONE FROM THE INFORMATION DESK?



TABLE 12: IF YES, WHY?

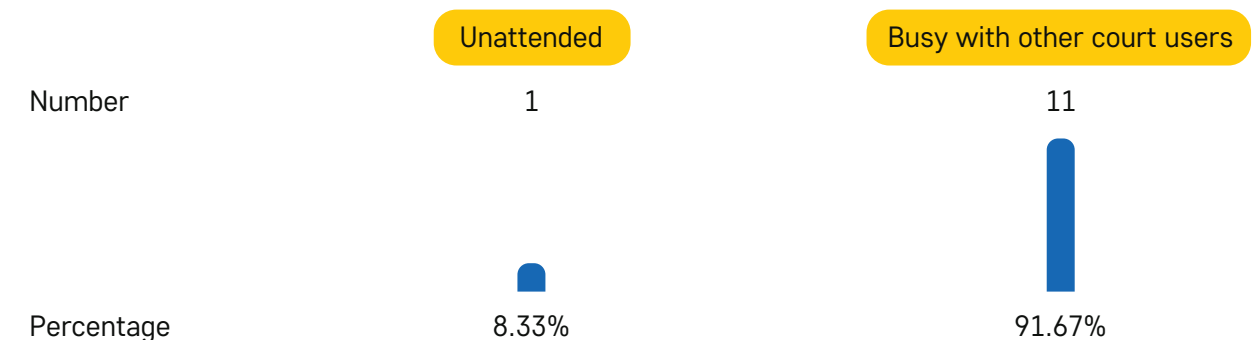
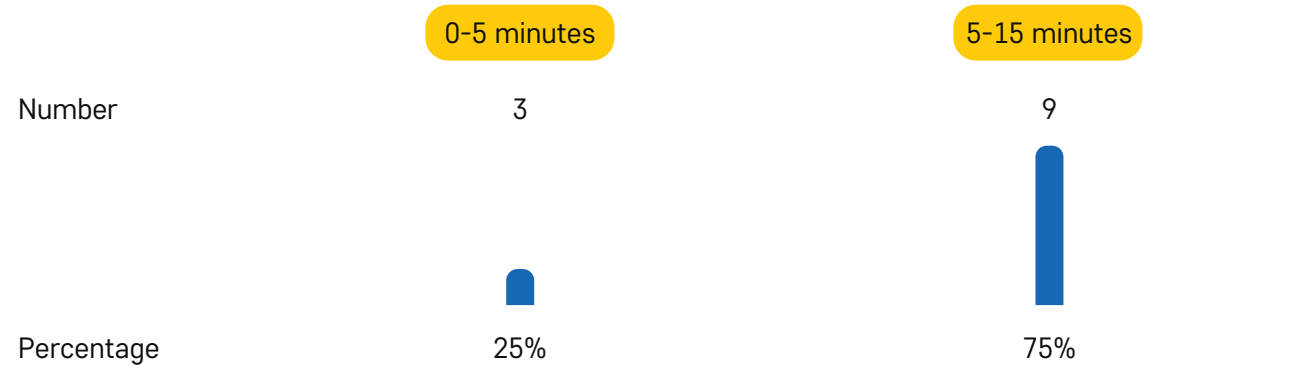


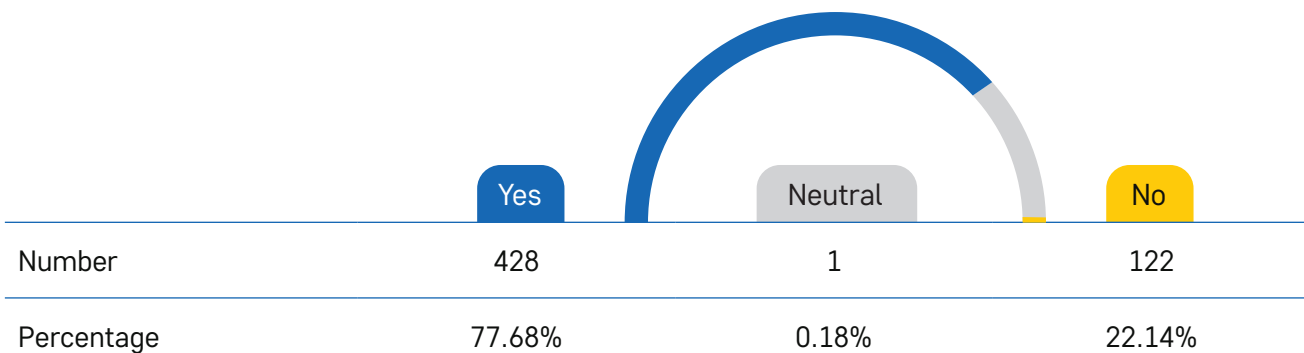
TABLE 13: WHAT WAS THE WAIT TIME?



The conduct of the information desk staff towards court users was considered (by the enumerator) as polite and helpful in almost 78% of the cases. The rest of the observed cases were considered as *neutral* in terms of polite and helpful conduct on part of the information desk staff, and there was only one isolated case when the enumerator considered that

the staff were not polite towards a court user. Thus, in general the predominant majority of the observed court users served by the information desk staff, were treated courteously and were offered help when needed.

TABLE 14: CONDUCT OF INFORMATION DESK STAFF POLITE AND HELPFUL

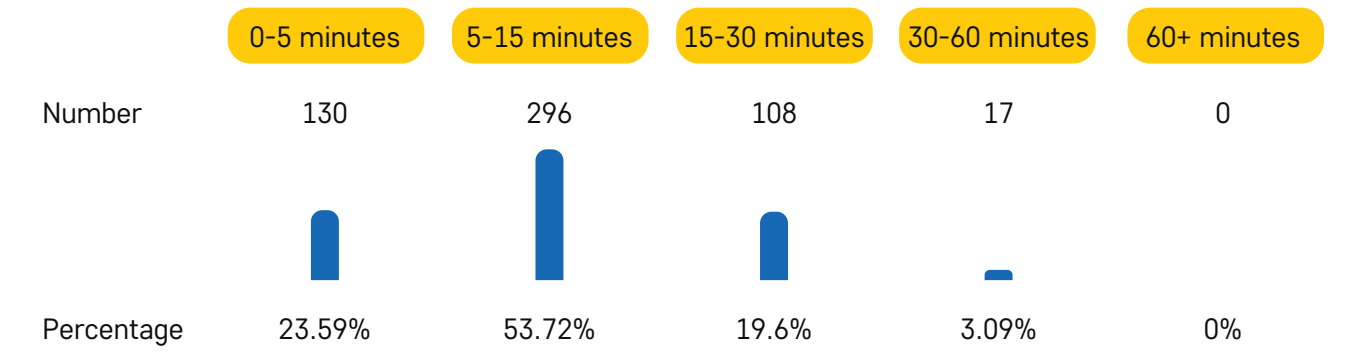


PART 2A: REQUEST DEALT WITH BY THE INFORMATION DESK/SECURITY

551 of the 1,461, or 38% of the observed court users had their requests taken care of by the information desk/security. The sample that was observed, shows positive results in terms of workload management by the court staff, as the information desk/security deals with requests whenever they have the resources/knowledge to answer them, without putting a burden on the Registry Offices. Additionally, these

requests were answered/resolved in a relatively short time frame, with the predominant majority (54%) of observed cases falling in the 5-15-minute time range. A relatively large number of requests (24%) took 0-5 minutes to be resolved and another share (20%) took 15-30 minutes.

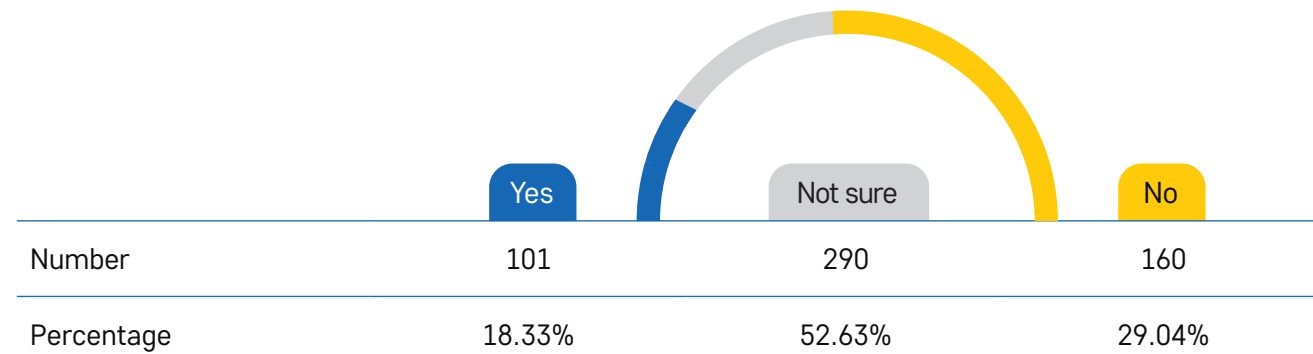
TABLE 15: TIME TAKEN TO DEAL WITH REQUEST



For 53% of the observed court users, the enumerators were not sure whether the court user had to come back on another day to resolve their request. A small portion of the court users who were served by the information desk/security (18%) were told they needed a follow-up visit to have their request taken care of, 29% resolved their requests on that same day. It is important to note that, those who were visiting the court on the day observation took place may have already been on a prior visit, however that is beyond the scope of this study. Nevertheless, having to make multiple visits to the court for

administrative requests may be a burden on the court user as well as on the court administration. Therefore, it is advisable that courts ensure that administrative services offered online are implemented, such as making requests for certificates or documentation using the court's website, in a convenient and easy manner.

TABLE 16: FOLLOW UP VISIT REQUIRED



The overall interaction between the court staff and the court user in over 98% of the observed cases, was assessed as positive, with only four cases (0.73%) when the enumerator reported to have observed any bias or inequality indicator (see below the **Analysis of isolated cases**).

TABLE 17: HOW WOULD YOU ASSESS THE OVERALL INTERACTION BETWEEN THE COURT STAFF AND THE COURT USER?

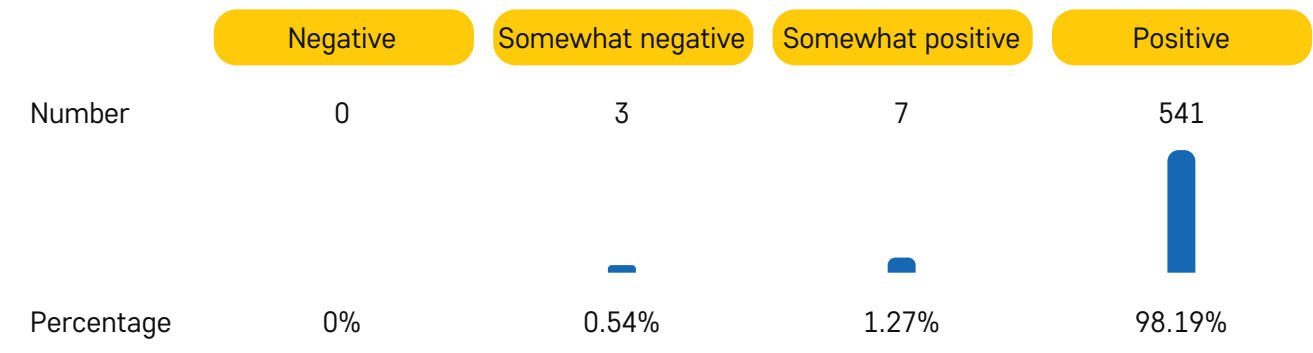
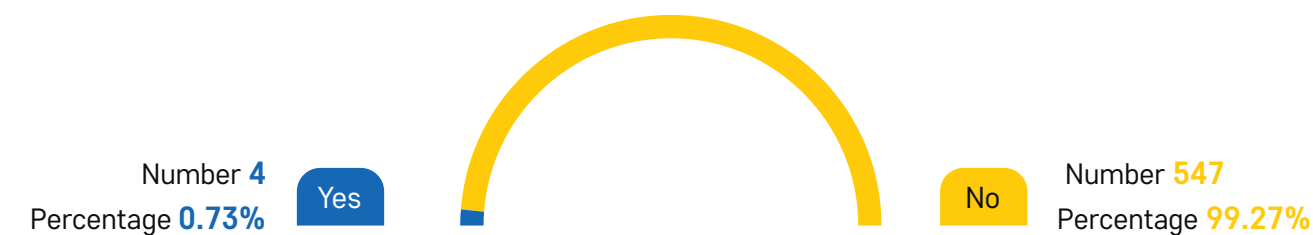


TABLE 18: DID YOU OBSERVE ANY BIAS OR INEQUALITY INDICATORS?



PART 3: COMMUNICATION AT REGISTRY OFFICE

Of the 910 court users who were directed to the Registry Office, 83% were served immediately while only 17% had to wait before speaking to the registry staff. The reason behind the wait in 97% of the cases was because the staff were busy with other court users. In the majority of cases (59%), the wait time was between 5 and 15 minutes. Only 7% of the observed court users had to wait for more than 15 min-

utes. Overall, the time a court user spent waiting to speak to the court's registry staff, is reasonable in the majority of observed cases. Additionally, in cases when waiting was necessary, the reason was legitimate as the court staff was busy with other court users.

TABLE 19: DID THE COURT USER HAVE TO WAIT BEFORE SPEAKING TO COURT REGISTRY STAFF?



TABLE 20: IF YES, WHY?

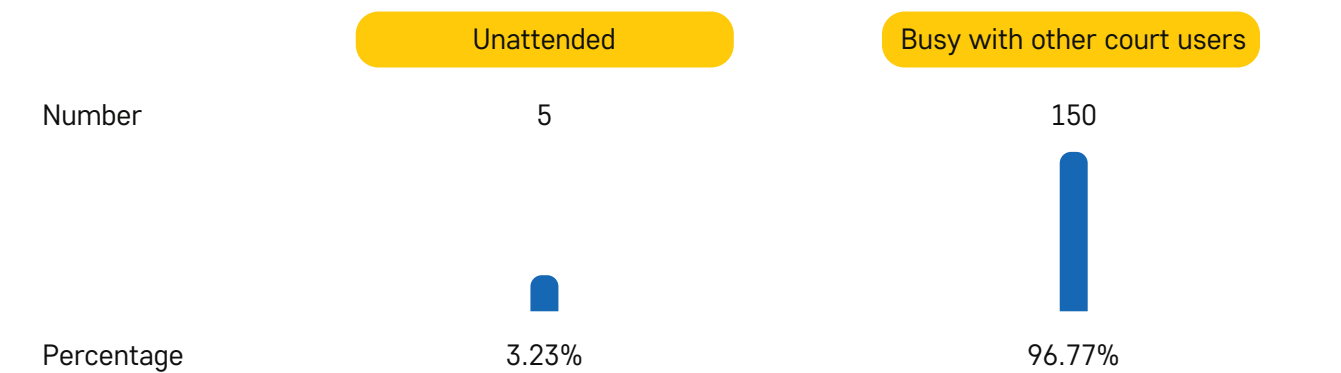
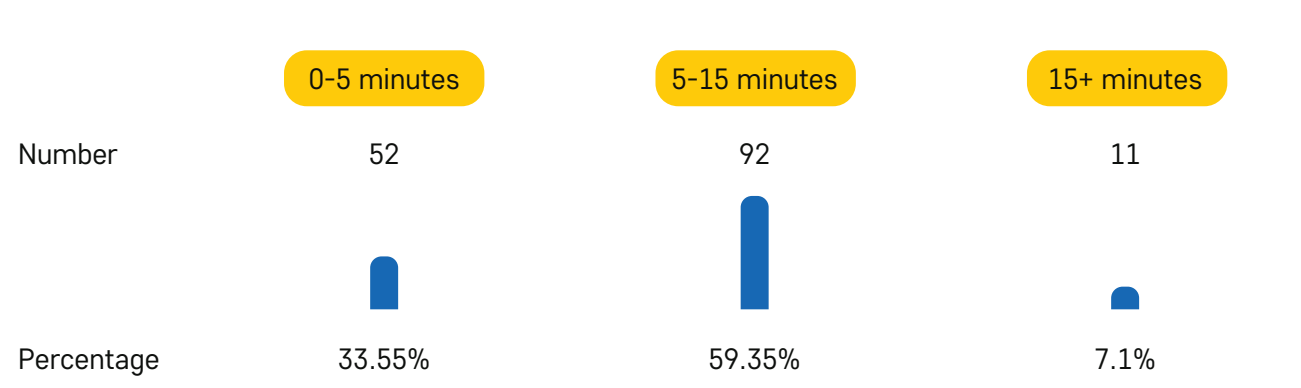


TABLE 21: WHAT WAS THE WAIT TIME?



Translation was not required in 99% of the observed cases, and of the 8 court users who needed this service, 7 of them received assistance within 15 minutes of waiting. As findings show, courts are doing remarkably well in terms of respecting the right of all court users to request translation, and provide it within a reasonable time. Even though only one case was observed of a court user who needed translation and was not offered the service, it merits to note

that all court users who require translation should receive the service as a foundational principle of access to justice. Language can be a barrier to access to justice and no court user should be denied their right to translation. It is advisable that courts have contact details available for translators of all official languages, in order for translation to be provided by telephone in cases when they do not have a translator available in the court.

TABLE 22: WAS TRANSLATION REQUIRED?



TABLE 23: WAS TRANSLATION PROVIDED?

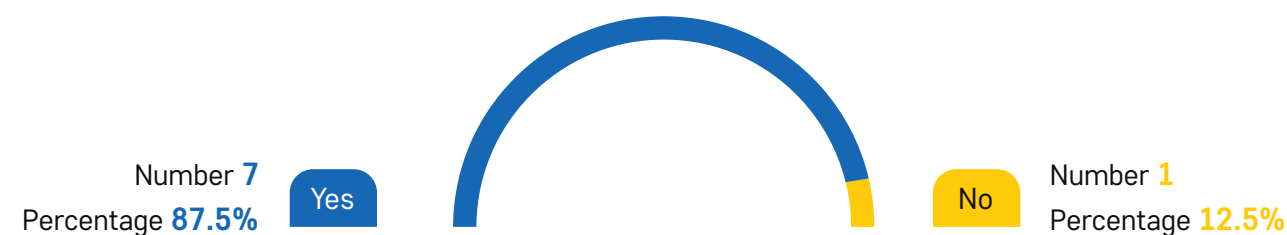
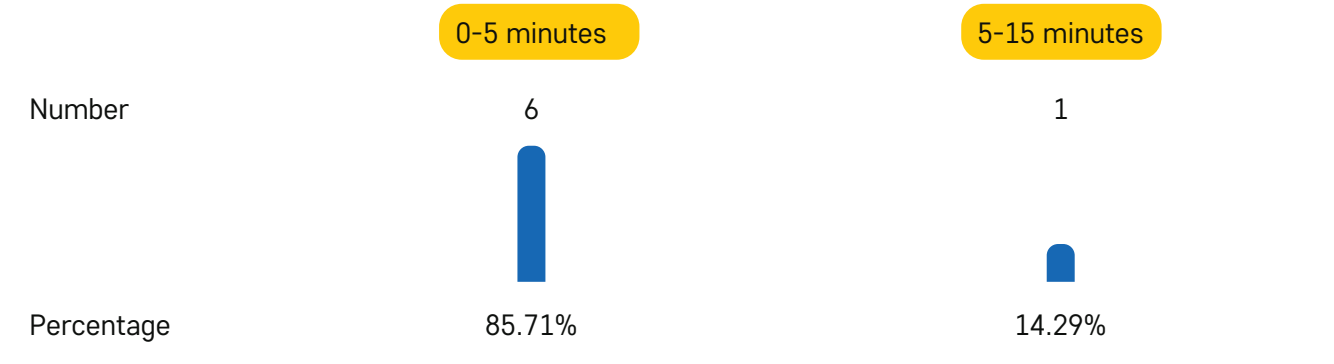
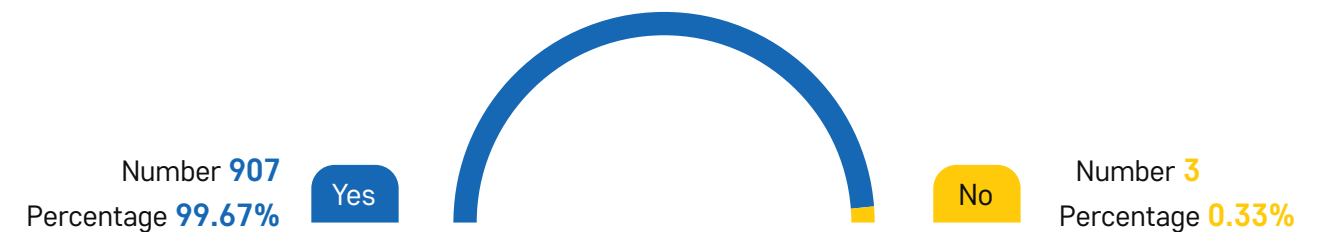


TABLE 24: IF YES, WAITING TIME FOR TRANSLATOR



Additionally, the registry staff was polite and helpful in over 99% of the observed cases.

TABLE 25: CONDUCT OF REGISTRY STAFF POLITE AND HELPFUL



The requests of court users were dealt with in a timeframe of 0–15 minutes in the majority of cases (41% in 0–5 minutes; 44% in 5–15 minutes). Only 13% of the observed court users had to wait up to 30 minutes for their request to be dealt with by the Registry Staff. Over 37% of the court users served by the Registry Office needed a follow up visit to be able to get the job done, 35% had their requests taken care of within the same day, and for the remaining 28% the enumerator was not sure whether a follow up visit was required or not. It is worth noting that as in cases when the request was dealt with by the information desk/security (Part 2A of this report), court users who visited the court on the day they were observed, may have been on a consecutive visit(s) and that is

not known because it goes beyond the scope of this study. However, being able to have simple administrative requests taken care of with one trip to the court contributes to building citizens' trust in the judiciary and ensures efficiency in the work of the courts. Thus, it is advisable that in addition to offering quality services inside the courthouse, courts offer administrative services online as well. Additionally, for court users to be educated upon and use these mechanisms, courts also should ensure adequate public information is widely shared and available.

TABLE 26: TOTAL TIME TAKEN TO DEAL WITH COURT USER’S REQUEST (INCLUDING WAIT TIME)

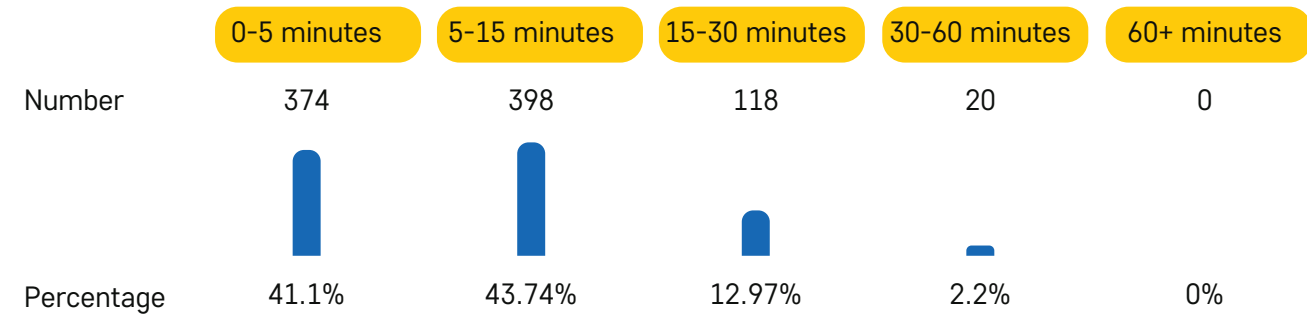
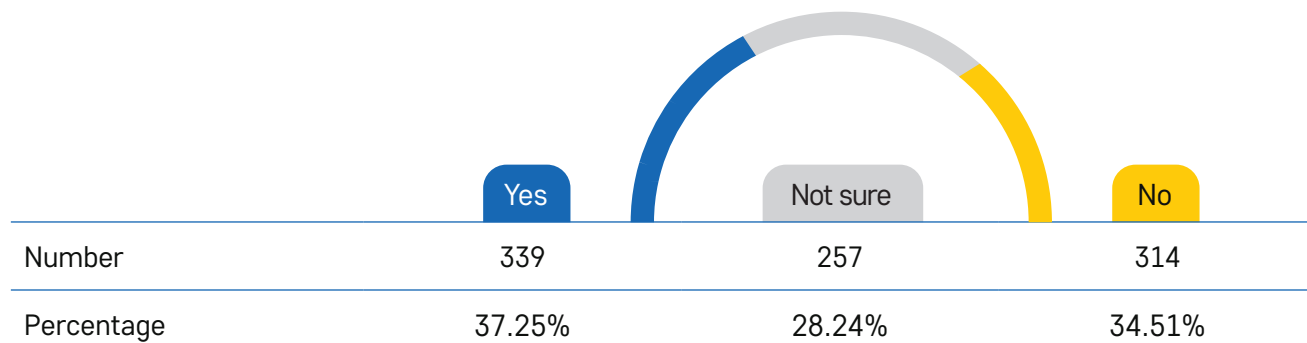


TABLE 27: FOLLOW UP VISIT REQUIRED



The overall the interaction between the court staff and the court user was evaluated as positive in over 98% of the cases, and bias or inequality indicators were observed in only 4 cases, which make up only 0.44% of the court users served by the Registry Office (see below the **Analysis of isolated cases**).

TABLE 28: HOW WOULD YOU ASSESS THE OVERALL INTERACTION BETWEEN THE COURT STAFF AND THE COURT USER?

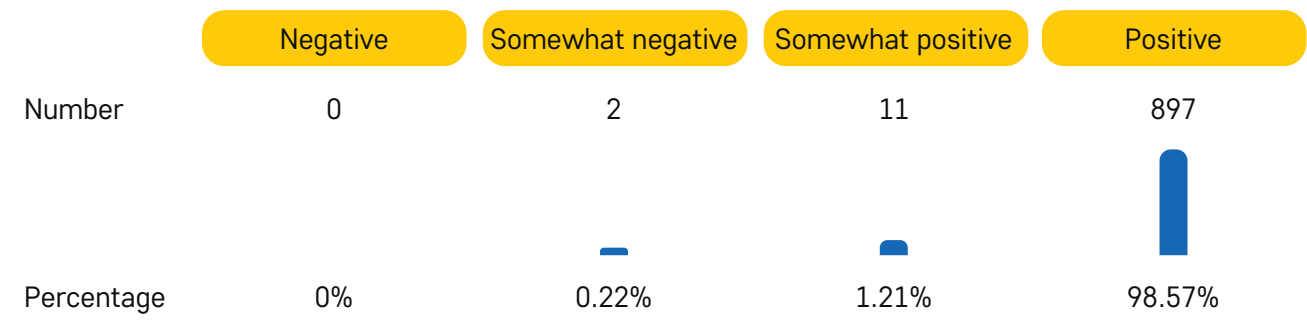
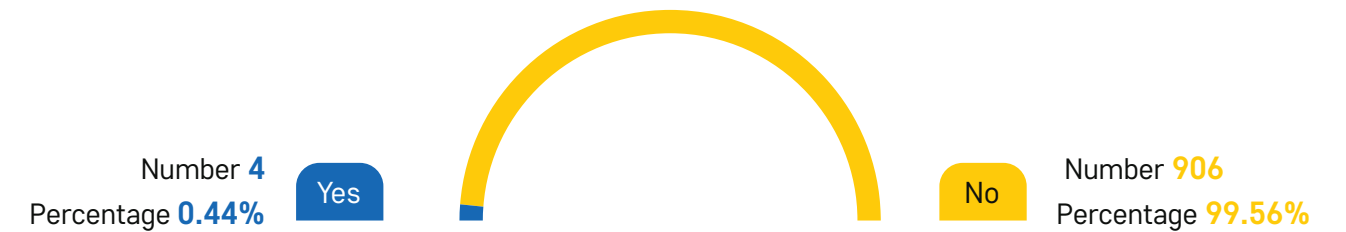


TABLE 29: DID YOU OBSERVE ANY BIAS OR INEQUALITY INDICATORS?



Analysis of isolated cases where the inadequate provision of services was observed

In a very small and statistically insignificant number of cases,⁴ observers noted instances of unsatisfactory court staff performance or discontented court users. No patterns of common practices were found upon deeper analysis of these isolated cases, many of which were noted during times when court staff were busy with high numbers of court users. As mentioned above, in only one case translation was not able to be provided when requested, presenting difficulties for the court user in accessing the court service they required. Other cases of inadequate provision of services includes rude behavior on part of the security and information desk staff, unreasonable waiting times, and/or prejudices due to race and manner of clothing.

Nonetheless, these are isolated cases and insignificant relative to the entire sample of observations, and as such they are exceptions rather than the norm of how court users are treated by information desk, security and Registry Office staff at Kosovo’s Basic Courts.

⁴ 14 of 1461, or 0.009%

CONCLUSIONS

As the findings show, court users seeking administrative services at the Basic Court of Prizren, Mitrovica and Ferizaj have to a large degree positive experiences with the court staff at the security, information desk and Registry Offices.

The security staff respected security protocols for the majority of court users under observation, and conducted checks in a polite manner for most of the observed court visitors. The staff at the information desk and Registry Offices were also polite and helpful in the predominant majority of observed interactions. Court users waited for reasonable amounts of time to have their requests taken care of, and were provided with translation when they needed the service. This shows that Basic Courts are ensuring access to justice and treating court users with due respect and courtesy. The 2019 survey included recommendations to install comment boxes in the three courts where the study took place, and the recommendation has been implemented by the Basic Court of Prizren and Ferizaj already. Additionally, all courts offer users the opportunity to assess court services through their websites. It is important that court users hold courts accountable to provide the best services and offer respectful treatment. However, to ensure that complaint/suggestion boxes and the court service assessment taken are in fact used, court users must be informed that they exist and are encouraged to use the opportunity to express their opinions and/or share their experiences. This should be done through posters close to the complaint boxes and educational campaigns ensuring court users that courts will take their complaints and recommendations into account and act on them.

Recommendations to Courts

- Access to court services is a fundamental element of access to justice, therefore ensure that court staff understand the importance of treating every individual equally;
- Provide training for security staff on the importance of security checks and procedures involved;
- Ensure stricter oversight of security processes;
- Ensure that translation is available for all parties; where a translator is not physically present or available, consider providing translation via telephone;
- Ensure implementation of the system to request certificates or court documents through court websites;
- Ensure that information on court procedures / processes is visible at court (via posters, leaflets);
- Consider a public information campaign on court services that are available through the website, including highlighting the possibility to give feedback directly through the website on court services, and the option of applying for court certificates online.

ANNEX 1: SURVEY

Survey ID number: _____

Date: _____

Section 1: General information

Were court security protocols followed?	Yes	No	Comments
Security check polite and respectful?	Yes	No	If no, why:
Is the court user a lawyer	Yes	No	Not sure
Male or Female	M	F	
Approx age estimation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up to 35 years old • 35-65 years old • 65+ years old 		
Which language is the court-user speaking?	Albanian	Serbian	Other

Section 2: Communication at First Contact Point (security or information desk)

Was translation required?	Yes	No	
Was translation provided?	Yes	No	If yes, waiting time for translator: 0-5 mins 5-15 mins 15+ mins If there was a long wait, was there a reason given (to the extent the observer can hear it)? If no translation was provided, why not?
Did the court user have to wait to speak to someone from the information desk?	Yes	No	If yes: why? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unattended • Busy with other court users What was the wait time? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0-5 mins • 5-15 mins • 15+ mins
Conduct of information desk staff polite and helpful	Yes	No	Not applicable
Directed to which desk?	Civ	Crim	Neither [Proceed directly to Section 3 if court user is directed to the registry desks] [Proceed to Section 2A only if the party is not directed to the registry desk as their request is dealt with directly by the information desk/security]

Section 2A: Where request is dealt with by the information desk / security

Subject matter of request / reason for visit (if known)

<i>Time taken to deal with request</i>	0-5 minutes 5-15 minutes 15-30 minutes 30-60 minutes 60+ minutes		
<i>Follow up visit required</i>	Yes	No	<i>If yes, why?</i>
<i>How would you assess the overall interaction between the court staff and the court user?</i>	Negative Somewhat negative Somewhat positive Positive	<i>Reasons (with as much detail as possible)</i>	
<i>Did you observe any bias or inequality indicators?</i>	Yes or No If Yes: give as much information as possible		

Section Three: Communication at Registry Office

Did the court user have to wait before speaking to court registry staff?	Yes	No	If yes: why? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unattended • Busy with other court users What was the wait time? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0-5 mins • 5-15 mins • 15+ mins
Was translation required?	Yes	No	
Was translation provided?	Yes	No	If yes, waiting time for translator: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 0-5 mins 5-15 mins 15+ mins If there was a long wait, was there a reason given (to the extent the observer can hear it)? If no translation was provided, why not?
Conduct of registry staff polite and helpful	Yes	No	Observations:
Subject matter of request / reason for visit (if known)			

Were any documents submitted by court user	Yes	No	
Total time taken to deal with court user's request (including wait time)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0-5 minutes • 5-15 minutes • 15-30 minutes • 30-60 minutes • 60+ minutes 		
Follow up visit required	Yes	No	If yes, why?
How would you assess the overall interaction between the court staff and the court user?	Negative Somewhat negative Somewhat positive Positive	Reasons (with as much detail as possible)	
Did you observe any bias or inequality indicators?	Yes or No If Yes: give as much information as possible		
Section Four: Any other relevant information not included above (only answer when necessary)			

