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KOSOVO

Need to support minority communities to prevent further displacement and allow durable solutions

Note: In February 2008 Kosovo declared independence from Serbia. The UN General Assembly subsequently voted to refer the independence declaration to the International Court of Justice for an advisory opinion. As of December 2009, 64 countries had recognised Kosovo. For the purpose of this overview, references to the situation in “Serbia” since 2008 do not include Kosovo.

Kosovo’s declaration of independence in 2008 created new uncertainty for 230,000 IDPs from Kosovo residing in Serbia and the 19,700 displaced within Kosovo; this overview focuses on the latter group. Despite initial fears of the contrary, there have been no major incidents targeting minority communities and no further displacement since 2008. Serbia has not recognised the independence of Kosovo, continuing to regard it as a UN-governed entity within its sovereign territory.

Few of those displaced in 1999 have found durable solutions, and prospects are limited: the political, security and economic situation is not conducive to return, and many IDPs face difficulties in repossessing property and obtaining legal documentation. Widespread discrimination against Serbs and Roma people has made it difficult for them to return to areas in which they were in a minority. The rate of return decreased further in 2008 from an already low level, as IDPs waited to evaluate the approach of the Kosovo authorities towards Kosovo Serbs and other non-Albanian communities, and increased only slightly in 2009. Many reconstructed houses remain empty or are being sold as people do not dare to return.

National and international actors have developed projects to help minority communities, whether displaced or not, improve their living conditions, and to prevent further displacement. An increasing number of projects are offering permanent housing in the place of displacement.

General Map of Kosovo



Source: Minority Rights Group International (MRG)
More maps are available at www.internal-displacement.org

Background

In 1999, over 245,000 people fled from or within Kosovo in fear of reprisals from the majority Albanian population after NATO air strikes had forced the withdrawal of Yugoslav troops and ended years of oppression of ethnic Albanians. UN Security Council Resolution 1244 established the UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), but did not rule on the final status of the Serbian province, instead reaffirming the commitment of the UN to the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

UNMIK's mandate was to provide a transitional administration pending a final settlement, support the development of provisional democratic self-government institutions and create an environment in which refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs) could return home. UNMIK established a constitutional framework which included parliamentary, executive and judicial bodies known as Provisional Institutions of Self-Government or collectively the PISG. In October 2005, the UN Secretary-General appointed Martti Ahtisaari to lead negotiations between teams from Kosovo and Serbia over the final status of Kosovo.

In 2007 the resulting "Ahtisaari plan" proposed Kosovo's independence under international supervision with numerous obligations regarding the respect of minority rights. After the Serbian government rejected the plan, and the Security Council did not adopt it, the Kosovo parliament unilaterally proclaimed independence in February 2008. The constitution of the Republic of Kosovo, based on the Ahtisaari plan, entered into force in June. UNMIK's role and administrative capacity was drastically reduced, and the Kosovo authorities began asserting control of an increasing number of structures and functions (USDoS, February 2009). They invited the International Civilian Representative (ICR), in charge of overseeing the

implementation of the plan, the European Union Rule of Law Mission (EULEX) and NATO to assume responsibilities set out by the Ahtisaari plan. The ICR also assumed a role as the EU's Special Representative, providing advice to Kosovo authorities on the European integration process.

As of January 2009, 64 countries have recognised Kosovo's independence. However, the UN Security Council has not taken a position and resolution 1244, affirming the territorial integrity of Serbia, is still officially in force. Not all EU states recognise Kosovo but all have supported the deployment of EULEX to assist Kosovo's authorities develop police, judicial and customs capacity (ICG, February 2009). Backed by Russia, Serbia has rejected Kosovo's independence and continues to regard the area as the Autonomous Province of Kosovo and Metohija. The government of Serbia only liaises with UNMIK under the terms mandated to it by UNSCR 1244, refusing to recognise institutions which have emerged from the Ahtisaari plan and supporting parallel institutions in majority-Serb areas of Kosovo.

Albanian-speakers represent the overwhelming majority of the population in Kosovo, but are a minority in the northern part of Kosovo. Serbs are concentrated in northern areas of the northern district known to Serbs as Mitrovica and to Albanians as Mitrovicë where they constitute an overwhelming majority. The main minorities in Kosovo are Serbs, Roma, Ashkalis, Egyptians (a term of self-identification based on a belief they originate from Egypt), Gorani, Bosnians and Turks. Members of the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities are collectively referred to as RAE.

Displacement patterns and figures

The main wave of displacement took place in 1999, with most of those displaced internally (i.e. who did not leave the region to become refugees)

fleeing Kosovo to central and northern Serbia, and around 19,700 being displaced within Kosovo. In 2004, ethnic violence against non-Albanians (mainly Kosovo Serbs and Roma) displaced another 4,200 people, who mostly sought refuge in mono-ethnic areas within Kosovo. In Kosovo, with the exception of Mitrovicë/a, almost all urban Serbs left towns to join rural enclaves. At the same time internally displaced Roma joined other Roma communities on the edges of towns and cities (DRC, June 2009). Kosovo's declaration of independence has not led to significant new displacement.

More information on IDPs in Serbia can be found in the [Serbia overview](#).

In 2009, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimated the number of Kosovo IDPs at 19,700. Slightly over half of IDPs are Serbs, followed by Albanians (39 per cent), RAE, (8.5 per cent), and others (0.5 per cent). Most IDPs in Kosovo are in the Mitrovicë/a region (14,400). 7,000 Serb IDPs from South Mitrovicë/a and other municipalities are displaced in towns in the north of Mitrovicë/a district such as Zubin Potok, Leposaviq/Leposavic and Zveqan/Zvecan; there are 2,000 Serb IDPs in the towns of Pristina and Gračanica and in surrounding Serb villages, and some 1,200 in Gnjilane/Gjilan. Over 98 per cent of Albanian IDPs (7,400 people) were displaced from the northern to the southern suburbs of Mitrovicë/a. Roma and Ashkali IDPs are mainly located in Pristina and Gjilan/Gnjilane, and Egyptian IDPs in Peja/Pec. (UNHCR Statistical overview, November 2009).

Minority rights and living conditions

People who belong to a minority community have limited access to rights and livelihood opportunities. Discrimination affects all areas of daily life,

including access to jobs, health services, education, justice and property restitution. The lack of integration of minority groups into Kosovo society is the major obstacle to durable solutions for those who are displaced.

Security concerns have a strong impact on minority communities, whether or not they are displaced. While there has been relative calm since the declaration of independence, minority communities continue to face threats, harassment and violence. Kosovo Serbs are particularly affected (UNHCR, 9 November 2009), but also those from RAE communities (UNSC, 30 September 2009). In the majority-Serb northern part of Kosovo, antagonism towards Kosovo institutions and the presence of Kosovo Albanians has been demonstrated by incidents related to the installation of border posts and an UNMIK court in North Mitrovicë/a in 2008 and clashes against Kosovo Albanians trying to rebuild their houses in 2009.

IDP's feeling of insecurity is reinforced by difficulties in persuading the authorities to prosecute perpetrators of violence. A widespread lack of trust in the judiciary, due to the large backlog of cases, the ethnic bias displayed by court officials and the weak representation of minority groups in the judiciary and the police (CoE HRC, 2 July 2009; OSCE, March 2009), has led to under-reporting of inter-ethnic incidents (UNHCR, 9 November 2009).

Accordingly, members of minority communities generally only move within areas where they represent the majority (USDoS, February 2009). Freedom of movement has been further restricted by the introduction of Kosovo license plates which are not permitted in Serbia or in northern areas of Kosovo. In 2007 UNMIK sought to facilitate movements between villages inhabited by minority groups by establishing bus services which later came under the control of Kosovo authorities (Ombudsperson Institution, July 2008). Limitations on freedom of movement affect access to health

services, education, employment, land and the farming activities which are often the only livelihood opportunities for minority communities.

Widespread discrimination has heightened the lack of employment opportunities for minority communities (UNHCR, 9 November 2009); this is particularly true for Serbian and RAE IDPs (DRC, June 2009). The unemployment rate for Kosovo Serbs is 70 per cent but reaches 100 per cent in some returnee villages. An unemployment rate among RAE communities of up to 98 per cent, as a consequence of low levels of education and widespread discrimination, has forced RAE IDPs to rely mainly on social welfare and work in the informal sector such as collection and recycling of scrap material (Ombudsperson Institution, July 2008). Many Serb IDPs rely on employment with parallel institutions and social welfare, often from both Serbian and Kosovo institutions (UNHCR, 9 November 2009; DRC, June 2009). Only ten per cent of state employees in Kosovo come from minority populations, below the 16 per cent government target (USDoS, February 2009). Livelihoods of minorities in rural areas have also been imperiled by numerous land occupations and theft of agricultural equipment (UNIIA, 31 October 2008; IDMC interviews in Vushtri/Vucitrn, May 2009).

Despite the adoption in 2006 of a law intended to support public and private use of minority languages and prohibiting discrimination based on language, non-Albanian communities face difficulties obtaining services in their own language. There are two parallel school systems, with schools in majority-Serb areas run by the Serbian authorities and following the Serbian curriculum. The Kosovo curriculum does not provide schooling in Serbian. The need for children to access education in their mother tongue represents a significant obstacle to the return of displaced families to areas in which they would be in a minority (OSCE, April 2009). The Council of Europe's

Commissioner for Human Rights has called for an independent Commission on Education and the development of a Serbian language curriculum in Kosovo (CoE CHR, July 2009). According to an IDP profiling survey undertaken by the Danish Refugee Council (DRC), school attendance is over 90 per cent for both Serb and Albanian displaced children, but is only 57 per cent in the case of displaced children from RAE communities, who are also affected by a high drop-out rate. The major barriers include poverty, lack of appropriate clothing and the need for the child to augment household income (DRC, June 2009). Discrimination in schools, lack of teaching in the Romani language and RAE children's sometimes limited knowledge of Serbian or Albanian has further undermined their success at school (ROK, 31 December 2008; Ombudsperson Institution, 21 July 2008).

Members of RAE communities are particularly affected by social exclusion and discrimination. During the conflict many Albanians asserted that Roma people sided with the Serbs. All members of RAE communities suffer from discrimination, but the marginalisation of those who are displaced is more pronounced. They face extreme housing conditions, often living in slums without access to water and electricity. Members of RAE communities have their participation in public life limited by the fact that many do not exist administratively since their birth was never recorded in civil registries. In the absence of a birth certificate, it is impossible to obtain further documentation, thus barring members of RAE communities from voting, health care, education, social assistance and from repossessing property. The process for subsequent registration of births and application for ID cards is cumbersome and costly. UNHCR estimated in 2006 that 10,000 of the 35 to 40,000 RAE people in Kosovo lacked documents attesting to their civil status and recognised place of residence. This puts them at risk of becoming state-

less now that Kosovo has declared independence. Recovering property is particularly difficult for RAE IDPs, who may have lived for generations in informal settlements without title deeds. This seriously limits access to programmes providing assistance with reconstruction or property restitution.

In order to address the chronic lack of personal documentation for Roma people, the PISG issued an instruction in 2006 exempting members of RAE communities from fees for late registration of births. In December 2008, the Government of Kosovo adopted the Strategy for the Integration of Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian Communities which includes provisions regarding documentation, education, employment and housing. Since 2006, UNHCR has initiated several legal assistance and civil registration programmes, implemented by the Civil Rights Project Kosovo, a local NGO, which between 2006 and 2009 led over 9,000 people from RAE communities to be registered (UNHCR, 30 November 2009).

Non-Roma IDPs also face difficulties renewing or replacing documents, due to the lack of mutual recognition of documents issued by the Kosovo and Serb parallel authorities. The fact that many personal identification and property records have been relocated to Serbia, destroyed or lost complicates the verification of evidence and encourages forgery.

When it comes to housing, IDPs are particularly disadvantaged. Most are accommodated privately, sometimes occupying other displaced people's property. About half the household expenditure of displaced Kosovo Serbs and Albanian-speakers is spent on rent. Most RAE IDPs live in informal settlements (DRC, June 2009). Over 2,000 IDPs (around 1,200 Serbs, 750 Roma, and 160 Albanians) are currently accommodated in 45 collective centres in Kosovo, of which 17 are run by the Serbian Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR statistics, April 2009; information from Serbian

Commissioner for Refugees, 30 September 2009). Many residents of collective centres are particularly vulnerable, and a high proportion are elderly. They live in very harsh conditions and receive minimal and intermittent assistance at best. Most residents are unemployed and depend on meager pensions or social welfare.

Over 120 Roma IDPs still live in the lead-contaminated camp of Cesmin Lug in North Mitrovicë/a, and 400 in the nearby camp of Osterode (interview with KAAD, May 2009). In 2000 and 2004, the World Health Organisation reported alarming rates of lead contamination (which has serious health impacts, particularly for children and pregnant women) in Roma IDPs living in the three camps in North Mitrovicë/a. This contamination is the result of the proximity of IDP camps to industrial toxic waste but also the unsatisfactory living and hygienic conditions and poor diet (and smelting activities by IDPs in Cesmin Lug camp) which expose Roma IDPs more than other residents of the area to the toxic dust (OSCE, February 2009). NGOs have sought to raise awareness among IDPs of the risks of lead contamination and the importance of personal hygiene, nutrition and sanitation. In 2008 blood tests revealed that the situation had improved for returnees but grave concerns for the health of IDPs living in Osterode and Cesmin Lug continued (CoE CHR, July 2009). With international and national support, some 125 families (around 570 people) have returned to Roma mahalla in South Mitrovicë/a, the neighbourhood of origin of 70 per cent of the displaced families (UNSC, 30 September 2009).

Property issues facing IDPs

As noted, a key obstacle to durable solutions is the difficulty in repossessing property. There has been widespread illegal occupation and expropriation of houses and land left behind by displaced (mainly Kosovo Serb) people. The restitution

process has been slow and is far from complete. Out of 40,000 claims submitted to the Kosovo Property Agency (KPA), the institution in charge of addressing property claims, some 18,000 had been decided as of September 2009 (COE CHR, 2 July 2009) and 6,700 of these decisions had been acted upon. Of those, almost 4,000 properties have been put under KPA administration by owners who do not yet want to return. Over 2,400 of these owners have expressed their intention to join a rental scheme under which the KPA lets property on their behalf.

However, fewer than 900 rental agreements have been signed and little rent has been collected (CoE CHR, July 2009). This relative failure is due to the fact that flats are usually run-down and (particularly in North Mitrovicë/a) because failure to evict occupants and tenants does not encourage them to pay. Out of 360 properties under KPA administration in North Mitrovicë/a, rent has only been collected in eight cases, while rents have been collected from 105 of those living in the 242 KPA-administered properties in the southern part of the town (Ombudsperson Institution, July 2008).

Only 770 of the decisions handed down by the KPA have resulted in physical repossession by legitimate owners (EC Kosovo, 14 October 2009). This reflects the reluctance of IDPs to return and the difficulty in ensuring KPA decisions are implemented through police-supervised evictions. According to the KPA, there were 850 cases pending eviction as of May 2009, of which 630 were in Mitrovicë/a.

After evictions, properties have often been looted and vandalised by departing occupants. Very few of those who have ransacked property have been prosecuted (IDMC field mission, May 2009). Some properties have been re-occupied, forcing owners to embark on time-consuming litigation (Praxis, 10 June 2009).

Lack of access to the property registries which moved from Kosovo to Serbia has slowed down the KPA's restitution and decision-making processes. This has worsened since the Serbian authorities closed KPA offices in Serbia after the declaration of independence, preventing the KPA from verifying the ownership status of many disputed properties and putting on hold 3,500 cases (Praxis, March 2009). A memorandum of understanding signed in August 2009 between the KPA and UNHCR could improve the situation by allowing the opening of UNHCR property offices in Serbia. [For more information see [Serbia overview](#)]

The limited access to records kept in Serbia and the destruction of some registries in Kosovo, have combined with an ethnic bias against Kosovo Serbs to result in numerous procedural irregularities. Occupants have forged documents to show in court that they have legitimately bought properties from displaced people, and the courts have often been insufficiently diligent in locating and identifying the alleged sellers (OSCE, 6 April 2009 and August 2009; Praxis, March 2009; Ombudsperson Institution, July 2008). IDPs may not be informed of claims against their property, and so may be unable to defend their rights. In the absence of a written contract, courts have been using the doctrine of positive prescription, whereby an individual can acquire rights to property after a certain number of years of occupation (OSCE, 6 April 2009). Some courts have tended to attach more value to witness testimonies than to written documents. KPA decisions can, in theory, be contested by appeal to a proposed special chamber of the Supreme Court, but this body was still not functional in mid-2009 (CoE CHR, July 2009).

Some 20,000 compensation claims submitted before Kosovo courts in relation to destruction of property during 1999 and 2000 have been temporarily suspended by UNMIK. These now represent half of the civil courts' backlog (CoE CHR, July

2009). In addition, numerous illegal expropriations and constructions have been reported, where IDPs find on visits to their places of former residence that their house has been demolished and replaced by a new building.

Durable solutions

Ten years after the conflict, some 19,700 people have returned to areas where they represent a minority in Kosovo, of whom 15,000 were IDPs in Serbia (12,200) and Kosovo (2,800) (UNHCR, November 2009). Up to 2008, over half of returning IDPs were Serbs and 32 per cent were from RAE communities (USDoS Kosovo, February 2009). Since independence, RAE IDPs have shown more willingness to return than Serbs: in 2008, RAE communities represented 48 per cent of returnees and Serbs only 32 per cent. In general, programmes have focused on return to rural areas, rather than more politically contentious returns to urban areas (Ombudsperson Institution, July 2008).

Since the violence against Kosovo Serbs and Roma people in 2004, despite the subsequent stabilisation of the security situation, the rate of return of IDPs and refugees to Kosovo has continued to fall (CoE CHR, July 2009). Returns reached their lowest level in 2008, after Kosovo's declaration of independence, when there were only 680 minority returns from within the Balkans region, compared to 1,800 in 2007 (UNHCR, June 2007; UNHCR, 30 November 2009; UNSC, June 2009). This trend was slightly reversed in 2009, with some 1,000 minority returns from within the region as of November 2009. Of the IDPs among them, 540 had been displaced in Serbia and 215 within Kosovo (UNHCR, 30 November 2009).

The sustainability of returns, and hence the validity of return statistics, have been contested (OSCE, June 2009). According to the Government of Serbia and to UNIJIA, an umbrella organisation of

Kosovo Serb IDP associations, only around 5,000 IDPs have returned sustainably (IDMC interview with UNIJIA and Ministry for Kosovo and Metohija, May 2009). Returns to mono-ethnic villages and the return of displaced RAE people have proved the most sustainable (interviews with UNHCR and UNDP Pristina, May 2009).

The main reasons behind these low return figures and the lack of sustainability stems from the daily difficulties faced by minority communities. These include the volatile security situation, their limited freedom of movement, restricted access to public services, lack of economic prospects in the area of return and difficulties repossessing property or rebuilding houses. Donors have often been reluctant to provide funds for return and reconstruction due to prolonged non-occupation and the sale of reconstructed houses by beneficiaries (interviews with UNDP and UNHCR Kosovo, May 2009). Another reason for the limited number of returns is the fact that, after a decade of displacement, some IDP families have decided not to return and would rather integrate in their place of displacement.

IDPs' preferred durable solutions varies depending on the place of displacement and their ethnicity. The DRC survey found that IDPs from Kosovo in Serbia prefer local integration (only 24 per cent of Serbs and six per cent of people from RAE communities favour return). IDPs within Kosovo also prefer local integration but their interest towards return is higher (34 per cent of Serbs and 48 per cent of RAE IDPs in Kosovo prefer return), possibly in relation with the relatively stable security situation. However, the overwhelming majority of Albanian speakers prefer the return option. When asked about their assistance needs, IDPs mentioned support for housing, house reconstruction, legal assistance to contest property expropriation, and income-generating programmes (DRC, June 2009). Their testimonies confirmed the need to di-

verify support to durable solutions beyond mere facilitation of return.

National and international responses

Government of Serbia

Despite Kosovo's declaration of independence, Serbia is still active in Kosovo, particularly in Mitrovicë/a and the municipalities north of the town. Soon after the declaration of independence, Serbia took several initiatives to assert its role and presence in Kosovo, and prevent further Serb displacement by reinforcing its parallel municipal institutions directly competing with those of the Republic of Kosovo in areas such as health, education, welfare and infrastructure (ICG, 12 May 2009). These actions do not only confirmed the Serbian authorities' role and presence in Kosovo but have provided jobs which have helped Kosovo Serbs remain in Kosovo.

The Serb strategy of creating parallel institutions has had limited impact in areas outside the northern part of Kosovo, where Serbs, displaced or not, are more scattered. Many of them have adopted a pragmatic attitude, approaching Kosovo institutions for documentation or social assistance (ICG, May 2009; IDMC interviews of Kosovo Serbs, May 2009). While many Serbs employed by the PISG stopped going to work after the declaration of independence, most heeded a deadline from the Kosovo authorities and returned to work by the end of June 2008 (UNSC, September 2009). The participation of Kosovo Serbs in November 2009 municipal elections, which set up decentralised municipalities with wider responsibilities, was higher than anticipated. The decentralisation process was one of the key elements of the Ahtisaari plan to engage Serbs in Kosovo institutions and convince them that they have a future in Kosovo (ICG, 12 May 2009).

The Serbian Ministry for Kosovo and Metohija is also active in the area of return. [See Serbia overview]. Like the return projects supported by Kosovo institutions and the international community, Serbian government programmes also support "return to locations in Kosovo" other than the former place of residence. This reflects the fact that many Kosovo Serbs previously living in areas where they constituted a minority would prefer to settle in areas mainly inhabited by Serbs (interviews with Kosovo Serb IDPs, May 2009).

Kosovo Ministry for Communities and Return

The Ministry for Communities and Return (MCR), led by a Kosovo Serb, is the main national body supporting minority communities, IDPs and returnees through community development activities, return, social housing and local integration projects. An Office for Communities also exists within the Prime Minister's Office. In 2009, the MCR budget was €7.5 million (\$10.8 million) of which €3 million was dedicated to community development, and the rest to return and local integration in Kosovo (UNSC, September 2009). This represents a greater emphasis on economic support to facilitate the social integration of minority communities and should indirectly encourage the return of displaced populations. This emphasis is in line with an ongoing revision of the Manual for Sustainable Return a document previously drafted by UNMIK and the PISG describing Kosovo's return policy and procedures. The revised version puts more focus on community stabilisation and should simplify the cumbersome procedures required to finalise and implement return projects.

In 2009, MCR supported return and local integration projects for 181 families (UNSC, September 2009). MCR also supported return projects with the international community, notably with UNDP which is the agency leading the rebuilding of houses for returnees. UNDP's main return programmes are: Return and Reintegration in Kos-

ovo (RRK), supporting return through the strong involvement of municipal and central government, and strengthening of administrative and accountability mechanisms; Sustainable Partnership for Assistance to Minority Returns to Kosovo (SPARK), which supports both spontaneous and organised returns; and the Rapid Response Return Facility (RRRF) which supports only spontaneous return. The RRK (UNDP, 24 July 2009; UNDP website, accessed 28 October 2009). In 2009, MCR was due to assist 180 displaced families through the RRK programme. In 2009, 88 returnee families were selected for assistance through RRRF (UNSC, September 2009). A return and IDP database was created in 2009 (UNSC, September 2009).

International community

Following the declaration of independence, the international community and both Serbian and Kosovo authorities, have increased their support to minority communities in Kosovo to address their social and economic marginalisation and allow them to stay in Kosovo. In parallel, and in view of the limited number of returns to place of origin, more projects have supported construction and social housing projects to facilitate local integration of those displaced within Kosovo, or settlement in new localities for IDPs returning to Kosovo.

In addition to return projects, UNDP supports the Roma Regional Project which involves capacity building of local and central government bodies

and civil society. A UNIJA project on prevention of displacement seeks to respond to the challenges faced by minority communities and IDPs since the declaration of independence. In municipalities considered at risk of displacement, Community Councils have been established, bringing together IDP associations and municipal officials to plan and implement projects to realise economic empowerment of returnees, small public infrastructure works and the construction of community resources such as cultural centres.

UNHCR facilitates go-and-see visits for IDPs to give them a better idea of the environment in their place of origin, supports monitoring of return and capacity-building of municipal authorities through KAAD, a local NGO, and leads a regional programme of civil registration to address the RAE communities' lack of documentation and mitigate the threat of statelessness.

UNMIK now focuses on monitoring of returns, confining its contacts with minority communities and authorities to issues related to this.

The Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Mission in Kosovo monitors human rights and legal issues affecting return. These include housing and property rights, non-discriminatory access to public services and employment, issuing of civil documentation, security, freedom of movement, and access to justice (OSCE, 19 June 2009).

Note: This is a summary of IDMC's internal displacement profile on Kosovo. The full profile is available online [here](#).

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About the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre

The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, established in 1998 by the Norwegian Refugee Council, is the leading international body monitoring conflict-induced internal displacement worldwide.

Through its work, the Centre contributes to improving national and international capacities to protect and assist the millions of people around the globe who have been displaced within their own country as a result of conflicts or human rights violations.

At the request of the United Nations, the Geneva-based Centre runs an online database providing comprehensive information and analysis on internal displacement in some 50 countries.

Based on its monitoring and data collection activities, the Centre advocates for durable solutions to the plight of the internally displaced in line with international standards.

The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre also carries out training activities to enhance the capacity of local actors to respond to the needs of internally displaced people.

In its work, the Centre cooperates with and provides support to local and national civil society initiatives.

For more information, visit the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre website and the database at www.internal-displacement.org.

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