



Freedom in the World 2017

KOSOVO *Profile*

FREEDOM STATUS: PARTLY FREE

Freedom in the World Scores

Aggregate Score



(0=Least Free, 100=Most Free)

Freedom Rating: 3.5/7

Political Rights



Civil Liberties



(1=Most Free, 7=Least Free)

Quick Facts

Population: 1,800,000

Capital: Pristina

GDP/capita: \$3,562

Press Freedom Status: Partly Free

Overview:



Kosovo's institutions remain weak, and rampant corruption has given rise to deep public distrust in the government. Journalists face serious pressure, and risk being attacked in connection with their reporting. While Kosovo holds credible and relatively well-administered elections, politics in recent years have been dominated by a polarized dispute over the Association/Community of Serb-majority Municipalities, which is meant to allow greater autonomy for Kosovo's ethnic Serb minority population. Its implementation is key to Kosovo's eventual accession to the European Union (EU), but it is vehemently opposed by parties that believe it threatens Kosovo's sovereignty.

Key Developments in 2016:

- Political opposition, which on a number of instances became violent, hampered the implementation of an EU-brokered agreement to boost autonomy for the ethnic Serb minority, as well as parliamentary approval of a border demarcation agreement with Montenegro that was also backed by the EU.
- In August, a rocket-propelled grenade was fired at the parliament building. Six people, all reportedly members of an opposition party, were arrested in connection with the attack.
- In January, a new war crimes tribunal was established in The Hague, the Netherlands, to handle cases concerning alleged war crimes carried out by the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) during the 1999 conflict.
- The first Serbian Orthodox Synod held in Kosovo since the 1999 conflict took place in May.

Executive Summary:



Opposition protests, some of which turned violent, hampered policymaking in 2016. Three opposition parties—the Movement for Self-Determination (Vetëvendosje), the Alliance for the Future of Kosovo (AAK), and the Initiative for Kosovo (Nisma)—led a campaign against an EU-brokered deal to establish the Association/Community of Serb-majority Municipalities, which is meant to allow greater autonomy for Kosovo’s ethnic Serb population; the opposition coalition also opposed another EU-backed deal on border demarcation with Montenegro, which they argued deprived Kosovo of land. Opposition protests took place both on the streets, where firebombs were occasionally deployed by participants of mass demonstrations, and inside the parliament, where tear gas was released on a number of occasions. In February, such disruptions accompanied the election by parliament of Hashim Thaçi, a leading politician with the Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK), as president. In August, a rocket-propelled grenade was fired at the parliament building. Six people were arrested in connection with the attack, all of them reportedly members of Vetëvendosje.

Meanwhile, in July 2016 the government established a working group, which included Serb representatives, to draft a statute for the Association/Community of Serb-majority Municipalities.

Journalists report frequent harassment and intimidation, and occasional physical attacks. There were at least two instances in 2016 in which media workers with the public broadcaster were targeted by explosive devices, though no one was injured. One attack took place in a reporter’s backyard, and the other at the outlet’s offices.

The constitution guarantees religious freedom. In an encouraging development, the first Serbian Orthodox Synod held in Kosovo since the 1999 conflict took place in May. Two minor security incidents were recorded, but the event otherwise took place peacefully. However, as in previous years, Serbian Orthodox structures were vandalized in 2016.



In January, a new war crimes tribunal was established in The Hague to prosecute former KLA fighters. The opposition had opposed the court's establishment, arguing that it violated Kosovo's sovereignty, but its legal appeal was struck down in 2015.

Political Rights

Political Rights 24 / 40

A. Electoral Process 9 / 12

- A1. Is the head of government or other chief national authority elected through free and fair elections?
- A2. Are the national legislative representatives elected through free and fair elections?
- A3. Are the electoral laws and framework fair?

B. Political Pluralism and Participation 10 / 16

- B1. Do the people have the right to organize in different political parties or other competitive political groupings of their choice, and is the system open

to the rise and fall of these competing parties or groupings?

B2. Is there a significant opposition vote and a realistic opportunity for the opposition to increase its support or gain power through elections?

B3. Are the people's political choices free from domination by the military, foreign powers, totalitarian parties, religious hierarchies, economic oligarchies, or any other powerful group?

B4. Do cultural, ethnic, religious, or other minority groups have full political rights and electoral opportunities?



C. Functioning of Government 5 / 12

C1. Do the freely elected head of government and national legislative representatives determine the policies of the government?

C2. Is the government free from pervasive corruption?

C3. Is the government accountable to the electorate between elections, and does it operate with openness and transparency?

Civil Liberties

Civil Liberties 28 / 60

D. Freedom of Expression and Belief 9 / 16

D1. Are there free and independent media and other forms of cultural expression?

D2. Are religious institutions and communities free to practice their faith and express themselves in public and private?



D3. Is there academic freedom, and is the educational system free of extensive political indoctrination?

D4. Is there open and free private discussion?

E. Associational and Organizational Rights 6 / 12

E1. Is there freedom of assembly, demonstration, and open public discussion?

E2. Is there freedom for nongovernmental organizations?

E3. Are there free trade unions and peasant organizations or equivalents, and is there effective collective bargaining? Are there free professional and other private organizations?

F. Rule of Law 6 / 16

F1. Is there an independent judiciary?

F2. Does the rule of law prevail in civil and criminal matters? Are police under direct civilian control?

F3. Is there protection from political terror, unjustified imprisonment, exile, or torture, whether by groups that support or oppose the system? Is there freedom from war and insurgencies?

F4. Do laws, policies, and practices guarantee equal treatment of various segments of the population?

G. Personal Autonomy and Individual Rights 7 / 16



G1. Do individuals enjoy freedom of travel or choice of residence, employment, or institution of higher education?

G2. Do individuals have the right to own property and establish private businesses? Is private business activity unduly influenced by government officials, the security forces, political parties/organizations, or organized crime?

G3. Are there personal social freedoms, including gender equality, choice of marriage partners, and size of family?

G4. Is there equality of opportunity and the absence of economic exploitation?

Scoring Key: X / Y (Z)

X = Score Received

Y = Best Possible Score

Z = Change from Previous Year

Full Methodology

Explanatory Note:

This country report has been abridged for *Freedom in the World 2017*. For background information on political rights and civil liberties in the Kosovo, see *Freedom in the World 2016*.

REPORT NAVIGATION

Kosovo 

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